

Ps 30:2,3
 Ps 39:4,5
 Ps 90:2,5,6,7
 Hy 51:4-8
 Ps 116:1,2,3,4,5
 John 11:1-54
 John 11:35

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Beloved Congregation of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Funeral, death, sickness: we find weeping to be such a real part of life. On one hand we know death is part of existence, and so can't be surprised when loved one dies. On other hand, it so painful, so final; we hate death. Breaks hearts..., so cry, sometimes with others, sometimes alone, even into pillows....

- Now read Jesus wept at death of friend Lazarus. We find this comforting; He empathizes with us, this is Hebrews 2:17a; ∴ 4:15.
 - Yet more here than empathy. Here's gospel of Jesus' triumph over death – so that the grave does not have the last laugh.

JESUS' TEARS GIVE US SONGS OF JOY.

1. The reason for Jesus' tears,
2. The mandate in Jesus' tears,
3. The comfort of Jesus' tears.

1. The Reason for Jesus' Tears

We cry at a funeral. Why? We say: because loved one gone. True....

- Yet deeper: we powerless to bring loved one back. If we could, we wouldn't cry; we'd get to work restoring him.
- Jesus wept, and some concluded that His tears were shed for same reason as we cry at a funeral, ie, loved one gone. Cf vs 36.
 - But others: vs 37. Jesus could do something, couldn't He? At least heal sick, stop death.... Cf John 9 re blind man; recall John 5 re paralytic.
 - ∴ Q for us: aren't Jesus' tears a bit hypocritical?? Surely, He not powerless in face of death! So why cry?!

Jesus Christ is Word become flesh, ie, with God in glory from eternity. So: knew God well, thinks the thoughts of God, does the will of God.

- Lord God created perfect world in beginning, cf Genesis 1:31. ∴ angels shout for joy, cf Job 38:4.
 - In this world all things directed to God, ie, He the full measure of reality and happiness. He God of *life* (created all, sustains all, gives all their purpose), so all focused on Him. ∴: no death, no tears, no sorrow.
 - Lord Himself delighted in His perfect work also.
 - ∴: told covenant partner too how to maintain perfect world, ie, stay focused on God of life, ie, no rebellion, no disobedience, cf Genesis 2:17 (Romans 6:23).

- Yet partner rebelled, cf Genesis 3:1ff. ∴ death = distance from God, cf Genesis 3:24. More, curse of God, cf Genesis 3:17ff. Eventually physical death, cf Genesis 5:5 – refrain.... ∴ Ps 90:9f; Ecclesiastes 3:19f → note helplessness, powerlessness....
 - This what we find so frustrating....
 - But this collapse of His perfect world and anguish of man not leave God cold! Grieved Him greatly! (cf Isaiah 63:10, etc)
- In compassion for fallen people God sent Son into world. Mandate: address problem of sin, ie, pay for sin. In so doing, take away *results* of sin.
 - Jesus did so, cf John 2 re wine shortage; John 5 re paralytic healed; John 6 re feeding 5000; John 9 re sight to blind. Undoing of curse of Genesis 3!
 - But it in death specifically that depth of effects of fall into sin become to real.
 - With death of friend Lazarus Jesus confronted personally with bitter effects of sin: its devastation, pain, grief. With this death Jesus confronted too with holy justice of God and misery of man.
 - ∴ His weeping
 - ∴ important to note terms used to describe Jesus' weeping.
 - Vs 33: “deeply moved” = used elsewhere as anger. Ie, anger is His reaction to death and its resulting pain/sorrow. This not just sympathy with grieving, but indignation at what death is/does, ie, what sin does.
 - Vs 35: weep – when see tomb itself, ie, finality of death. Weep = burst into tears, sob with the others.
 - But His not a weeping in hopelessness, for He knows what He shall do, cf vs 11: “awaken”; 23: “will arise”; 25f
- ∴ 2nd point:

2. The Mandate in Jesus' Tears

Why does holy God confront Jesus now with death?

- Notice wider setting:
 - John 10:31 – seek to stone Him; cf 11:8
 - John 11:50 – cf 51f, especially 53, 57.

Ie, by leading of sovereign God, Jesus approaching His death. And Jesus, of course, knows it. Come into world for reason.
- This too plays role in Jesus' tears. As sees Lazarus' tomb, recognizes own future. More, recognizes why He to die, ie, because of mankind's sin.
 - Then true: Martha says tomb has odour, cf vs 39, ie, decay of death. But odour present here not ultimately decay of death but the stink of sin. Death is here because of sin, and this sin is driving Jesus to His death; already the Jews are plotting to kill Him.
 - Stink of sin touches all life; tears in our pillows not only because of death but because of so much brokenness and hurt in fallen world.
 - This stink of sin to touch also Jesus' life. Does in the death of His friend; does even more in hatred of Jews against Son of God – to point they want to kill Jesus. That stinks, stinks to high heaven, and is offensive to God!
 - There's the Q: how shall Jesus cover that stench? How prevent curse of God from destroying those who would destroy God's dearly loved Son??

- One way: He must give Himself as a sacrifice for sin. Cf Genesis 8:21; Exodus 29:18,25; Leviticus 1:9,13, etc.
 - Here Jesus sees His mandate; He must die as Lazarus died – and in so doing face the anger/hatred of both man (already on horizon) and God, ie, pain of Luke 22:44; Mt 27:46 – fullness of Genesis 3:24.
 - Jesus’ tears in 11:33,35 is beginning of that anguish; bitter fruit of sin upon Him.
- This the road Jesus walked. Ie, after raising Lazarus Jews plot to kill Him, cf 11:50,53.
 - Result: arrest, crucifixion, death. Fulfilled God’s mandate for Him....
- ∴ 3rd point:

3. The Comfort in Jesus’ Tears

Jesus wept, then gave command: take away stone, cf vs 39. Then 43: Lazarus, come out.

- Result: Lazarus comes out, ie, alive.
 - Surprising? Not at all, cf Genesis 2:7. With God nothing impossible.
 - ∴ we sure: Martha & Mary jubilate; tears turned to laughter, sorrow to joy, cf Ps 30:11.
 - And we envious in relation to our dead....
- But: was Lazarus’ resurrection really gain?
 - Not for Lazarus No longer in glory of God....
 - As to whether he had memory of what heaven was like, we not told. Presumably not, for we’d expect to see some trace somewhere....
 - Not for sisters either.
 - Sure, brother back..., but for how long? Next year, five years, 20: buried again, another funeral, with tears.... Nothing more than delay.... Death still real.... Meanwhile, Lazarus still subject to illness, pain, grief....
- Yet was something so encouraging in Lazarus’ restoration. How so?
 - Here foreshadowed Jesus’ own resurrection, ie, His payment for sin and so His breaking sin’s curse.
 - Here foreshadowed Jesus’ words of John 19:30, ie, Luke 23:43,46! John 17:1
 - ∴ Easter! John 20:17 → return to Father!
 - ∴ peace for sinners, John 20:21
 - This is John 11:25f
 - ∴ our resurrection follows, cf John 5:25,28f
 - Cf 1 Corinthians 15:51ff; 1 Thessalonians 4:16ff
 - Ie, treasure of 1 Peter 1:3ff so true – inheritance!!
- Grave not have last word!! ∴ not grieve as those who have no hope!
- We confronted with death; continue to find funerals hard, we grieve loss of loved ones.
 - But Saviour presses upon us that death is not the end; life follows!
 - Today beginning of comfort; tomorrow Rev 21:1ff.
 - Meanwhile, today Saviour does understand our tears. Bite of sin so painful, breaks so much. But promise of Saviour is greater: I have overcome!!
 - ∴ joy!!

“Therefore, encourage one another with these words.”