

John 11:32-45 (NIV)

³²When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

³³When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled.

³⁴“Where have you laid him?” he asked. “Come and see, Lord,” they replied.

³⁵Jesus wept.

³⁶Then the Jews said, “See how he loved him!”

³⁷But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

³⁸Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance.

³⁹“Take away the stone,” he said. “But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.”

⁴⁰Then Jesus said,

⁴¹So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me.

⁴²I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.”

⁴³When he had said this,

⁴⁴The dead man came out, his hands and feet, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”

⁴⁵Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, put their faith in him.

43-11-02-The Grief of the God-Man

death, emotion, tears, resurrection, restoration

John 11:32-45

Our human grief is overshadowed by the response of God’s grief.

INTRODUCTION:

–John reported 7 miracles of Jesus to show 7 of God’s concerns for us:

1. Water to wine at Cana affirmed His blessing on *marriage & family*.
2. Healing the official’s son showed *His concern* for *parental concern*.
3. The lame man’s healing affirmed His care for interwoven *physical, psychological* and *relational needs in our fallen human condition*.
4. Feeding the 5000 showed how He meets *hunger in soul and body*.
5. Walking on water affirmed *His power over nature’s limitations*.
6. The healed blind man showed *His will for our clear spiritual vision*.

–This 7th and last miracle John reports, confronts the most devastating element in the human condition: death. While displaying *God’s power over death*, Jesus showed *His feelings about it*. He became one of us to defeat death, but the Incarnation also allowed Him to express the divine grief that motivated His salvation plan. **HOM.idea.** We see this in:

I. God’s Grief over Faith’s Frailty– v.33, *When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled.* [lit., “grievously upset” and “internally agitated”]

A. Mary’s (r)approach “troubled” Him– v.32, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” [i.e., “Why weren’t you here sooner?”]

1. She (*and we!*) are distraught when God *is slow* to answer prayer.
2. Martha asked the same question earlier but she *had qualified it* in v.22, “But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.”

B. Mary had faith, but it was feeble and frail. (She once knelt before Jesus to listen in faith; now “she fell at his feet... weeping” *in despair*.)

TRANS: Her tears of *human grief* and *faith’s frailty* were echoed by those “*who had come along with her also weeping*.” They expressed a similar doubt in v.37, “*Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?*” Their doubts “*troubled*” Jesus. In dealing with Martha’s doubt in v.25-26, Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” “Yes, Lord,” she told him, “I believe that you

are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world.” Her faith-focus was what Jesus sought in this grieving group, and He continues to seek in us— John 5:24-25, “I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. This death-defying salvation was initiated because of...

II. God’s Grief over the Sinner’s Situation— v.34-36, “Where have you laid him?” he asked. “Come and see, Lord,” they replied. Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, “See how he loved him!”

- A. In our fallen world, bodily death is universal— Rom 3:23, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and Rom 6:23a, for the wages of sin is death. (But don’t stop there! God’s grief responded to this death— Rom 6:23b, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.)
- B. Jesus missed his friend’s death and burial on purpose, because He planned on turning a believer’s death into a mere metaphor— v.11 (NKJV), “Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up.” (Jesus promised, “whoever lives and believes in me will never die,” because, while the body “sleeps” until Resurrection Day, He says in John 8:51, “... if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.”)

TRANS: Jesus said “Come and see” to those seeking a relationship with Him. On hearing those same words on His way to “wake” Lazarus, He “wept.” “Come and see” was always lost humanity’s cry to God, but our grief over sin’s devastation was eclipsed by His! He responded to our “Come and see” with a salvation plan based on His own Incarnation. We needed our sins forgiven, but that alone couldn’t defeat the death sin unleashed. What made Him “Come [down] and see” and save us? It was...

III. God’s Grief over Death’s Dominion— v.38, *Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance.*

- A. That heavy “stone” symbolized death’s finality: “Make your deposit but no return!” (As before, Jesus was “deeply moved” [or “grievously, upset”] at the sight of that grave, knowing what it symbolized.)
1. God pronounced “very good” over the union of His breath with earthly dust to make “a living soul,” (Yes! Jesus was deeply upset with death, because it dissolved “what God has joined together.”)
 2. When He said, “Take away the stone,” Martha—who was all too familiar with death’s dissolution and decay—protested, “But

Lord... by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.” (As He did earlier in the chapter, Jesus confronted her doubts— v.40, “Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?”)

- B. All this time, Jesus had been praying, because, when the stone was removed, He “looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.” (The revelation of God’s glory is always a joint work of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and it has one reason: so people believe in and find life in Jesus.)
- C. After this verbal prayer revealed His silent praying, “Jesus called in a loud [lit., mega; fig., an “earthquake-like”] voice, “Lazarus, come out!”
1. 4 days of decay fled as his restored body obeyed this command. (And “wrapped with strips of linen” hand and foot, blinded by “a cloth around his face,” even his exit from the tomb was a minor miracle.)
 2. Next, “Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.” (At a bodily healing or a spiritual redemption, Jesus isn’t done until He enlists His church to help those recently healed or redeemed.)

CONCLUSION:

–Our human grief is overshadowed by the response of God’s grief.

But His grief over human unbelief, sin’s results and death’s dominion didn’t end with this capstone miracle reported by John. Yes, we see in v.45, Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, put their faith in him. But in the very next verse: “... some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.”

–Christ’s temporary show of power over death was the miracle that pushed the religious leaders to bring Jesus to the Cross. There our Lord would win the ultimate victory over humanity’s fallen condition. There Jesus would gain for believer’s the gift of grief’s final removal.