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## **Grief: Victory Over a Lonely Darkness**

In the little village of Bethany there lived an unmarried man named Lazarus, and his sisters, Mary and Martha. This happy family loved the Lord Jesus Christ and was often blessed with his company. Sadly, “man is born to trouble” illness comes and grief is a regular visitor to every home. We read that Lazarus is mortally sick. His sister’s first thought is to send a message to Jesus. A word from their dear Friend would restore their brother to health. Upon hearing of Lazarus’ condition Jesus sends back a comforting answer, “This sickness is not unto death.” However, poor Lazarus does not recover. Lazarus dies and his sisters grieve over his corpse.

When Jesus arrived in Bethany he found that Lazarus had not only died, been placed in a tomb and the stone rolled to the entrance, but worse he had been dead for four days and had become putrid. Jesus stood at the entrance of the tomb and a wave of emotions stirred His heart. There was the anger at the powers of darkness, grief for Lazarus’ bereaved sisters, sorrow over the Jews who stood by in unbelief, and the disquieting realization of a fallen world and the consequences; death. The Lord’s indignation was aroused. His whole nature was distressed however; He did not speak threatening words, nor pronounce curses and judgments. The only evidence of His inward disturbance of heart was a shower of tears; for “Jesus wept.”

The Scriptures record others that wept. Abraham, when he buried his precious Sarah, wept; Jacob wept and prevailed over the angel, we continually read of David that he wept. David and his friend Jonathan wept together. It says of Hezekiah that he wept sore, and of Josiah that he wept over the sins of Judah. Jeremiah wept and earned the title of weeping prophet. The list could go on and on. You would not be surprised, with all the

sin and sorrow in our fallen world, that it could be said of any man or woman, “he wept” or “she wept.” This world is filled with tribulation and tragedy. Is there anyone who has not wept? The wonder and amazement is that it can be said of the sinless Son of God; “He wept.”

“Jesus wept” is proof that He took upon Himself our nature; He was truly man. He was born of a woman; He ate, drank, and slept. He hungered, thirsted, and grew weary. He took upon Himself our humanity, but without sin. The fact our Lord wept demonstrated he had human friendships. There is nothing more natural to men than they have friends that they love. Jesus was truly human in His sympathies. He came to the tomb and saw Mary, Martha and others weeping and Jesus was moved by their grief and “He wept.” His first love was His Father in heaven, but He loved the ones His Father had chosen and His sympathy toward them had no limits. “Jesus wept” does not mean he got teary eyed, but the word means the tears flowed freely. He was deeply moved and wept openly, unreservedly, and continually. His love made Him weep.

Jesus wept with the full knowledge that His friend Lazarus was safe and in a better place. Moreover, Jesus knew He was going to raise Lazarus from the dead; yet “He wept.” I have heard well-meaning believers try to comfort a friend who has lost a loved one by saying, “Your loved one will rise again;” or “they are safe and happy now” and therefore, “do not weep for them”. Why shouldn’t we weep for a loved one even though they are safe and in a better place; “He wept.” It is not a sign of little faith to weep for a departed friend. Jesus with full knowledge of where Lazarus was, knowing He would soon raise him up, and with full assurance that Lazarus’ death glorified the Father, wept. It is not a sin to weep for one that God has taken. There was no sin in Christ weeping. He wept, but He did not murmur and become angry. Jesus wept in sweet submission and not rebellion to His Father.

Jesus is our fellow-sufferer, and this should be a great comfort to us as we consider the subject of grief. When we go to Him in our grief, we find One who knows what it means to mourn, and have His heart broken. Jesus is “A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief” therefore, a solace to us when we grieve (Isaiah 53:3). You weep, my brother my sister, in good company for your Lord wept.

