

## Sermon for 29<sup>th</sup> March 2020 – 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent – John 11:1 – 45

**Let the word of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable to you, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. (Psalm 19:14)**

For once, I don't have to worry about if people have forgotten that the clocks have gone forward and they turned late to church. Although that is one worry less, I am worrying about so many other things as I'm sure you are too.

When we read the passage appointed to us from John's gospel today, we may think how unfortunate reading it is, especially times we live right now. See, Jesus was told that his friend Lazarus was ill yet he didn't go to him immediately. Instead he waited until Lazarus had died and only then he arrived and was met by very disappointed Martha and Mary and others. After all, they knew how Jesus had healed many people and they had expected him to do the same for Lazarus.

In the midst of the emotions, anger and disappointment, Jesus does something unexpected at the tomb. *Jesus wept.* And that is the heart of this story for us today.

*Jesus wept.* And his weeping is comforting because it acknowledges the grief so many of us feel these days; our earthly lives gains and losses, our sorrows and joys.

*Jesus wept.* And his weeping is comforting because it takes into account how sometimes there is nothing to be said; how sometimes tears are our best and only language to use. Through his wordless tears, Jesus alerts us to pause, he shows how sometimes silence is faithful, and sometimes, silence is love.

*Jesus wept.* And his weeping is comforting because it takes into account where we are in our faith journey. Both sisters of Lazarus were very disappointed of Jesus and blamed Jesus for their beloved brother's death. Yet at the same time through their words and physical posture, they showed their deep and unwavering belief in the Lord.

*Jesus wept.* And his weeping is comforting because doing so he is acknowledging his own mortality. It also shows us how sorrow is a powerful catalyst for change. The powerful catalyst for change happened when Jesus called Lazarus out of the tomb and restored his life, setting the events rolling that ultimately led to his own death. By trading his life for his friend's, Jesus offers a glimpse of Easter truth for Lazarus and his family and for us, as we begin Passiontide today and follow Jesus all the way to Golgotha and the cross, until we woke up once again for Easter glory.

*"I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die,"* says Jesus.

In calling Lazarus out, Jesus doesn't call him into physical life only but into the eternal life. Same way that Lazarus was called out into new life, so are each one of us through Jesus' death on the cross.

What we don't know is daunting. But what we do know is beyond glory. The hardest part, day to day, is to keep our perspective wide, and so we recall, in the trials and challenges of each day, that we are living on the broad canvas of eternity, and that God created the world to be with us, and will never leave us alone. If we live or if we die, we are in Christ. Yes, everything changes; except the thing that matter most.

*Jesus wept.* And his weeping is comforting because during these last weeks of Lent, starting today the Passiontide when prepare for Jesus' own death and resurrection, we have Jesus' tears to help us to be tender, open, humble, generous and brave. We have Jesus' tears to help us to serve God who calls us to life. Our journey is not to the grave, but through it. The Lord who weeps is also the Lord who resurrects and that is the Good News today.

**Amen.**