

Sermon for the Fifth Sunday in Lent

'And Jesus wept.'

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My Lord has come to this wasted humanity. He has heard of His friend Lazarus. *'Lord, he whom you love is ill.'*

The name Lazarus means in the Hebrew tongue 'God shall help him.' And indeed, the Lord shall help this Lazarus, for so He has come, that He might *lay down His life for His friends.*

Who then, is not in need of the Lord? Who then, is not surrounded by death, even as this poor sickling? A plague is about us, and we are told to hide from all humanity, that we might flee from death. You buy yourself time, dear Christian. But God has no care of time, but of timelessness. He has not come to give you time, but eternity. So it is that He will not deliver you from your death in time, for death is what we have all wished for, what we have all desired.

So do as the earthly authorities demand. This is also God's will. But it will not save you from death, for death comes to all, even as it was invited into human existence by Adam.

Again I tell you, we all wished for death, and our every day affirms this wish, our every day lives out the fear of death, which we chose over life.

We lust, for we think marriage, a commitment to one, shall grow cold and boring. Therefore we turn our eyes after other thrills, even if only in our imagination, for we believe we shall live for a time, then die forever. Therefore, we must enjoy the thrills of this life before it is all over. You fools.

We thirst and hunger, for we seek after easy pleasures, that we may have as many as possible, thinking that at the end of this life, there shall only be darkness; the end of sensation. So it is best that we indulge in such easy pleasures while we can, before it is all over. You wretches.

We long after possessions; things; objects that we feel we can have as our own, even though our every prayer confesses that we own nothing, but have all only from the grace of God. Yet we forget this, and believing that we will not have long to enjoy our possessions, we spend, we collect, and if we cannot for lack of money or power, we covet; we wish to inherit trinkets in this life, for we forget that we shall inherit worlds without end in the life of the world to come. You lovers of money.

We hate, for we demand justice now, for hatred is just a longing for a wrong to be made right. Every day, calls for justice are shouted from every corner and every news channel and every politician. For they believe that if justice is not achieved now, justice shall never come, for there is nothing after the 'now'. But a judge is coming. This you confess every Sunday in the Creed. You hypocrites.

We envy, for we look upon our neighbor and believe that whatever he has, we cannot; that since he is handsome, we are ugly; that since he is wise, we are foolish; that since he is talented, we are unskilled. For in the shortness of our mortal life, one cannot be all things. We have forgotten that our life is not mortal, and that in the final end of things, God shall reveal the reason for His creating us all, and that we shall *have all things in common*, our neighbor's blessing being a blessing to ourselves and to the angels of heaven. You small souls.

We are arrogant, for we will to build an empire of this world for ourselves. But know you not that you were baptized into a kingdom not of this world? Princes you shall be, of powers beyond power. Yet this you have forgotten. You forgetful ones.

How could the Lord not look upon us, His friends, and not weep? We who have fallen into unending snares, who have hung ourselves from so many gallows; and have even delighted in it? We have all known suicides, and we all know the sorrow of being the friend of one. We all grow weak with grief, wondering, 'if I had only been there.'

How much more, then, shall the Lord weep for us? An entire humanity that lives with a noose around its neck, [ready to kick the chair out beneath]? We indeed, whom the Lord *has loved, are ill*. In our deepest being, we, as Lazarus, are sick.

Yet Jesus, who is now *with us*, does not weep when He hears His friend is sick. Rather, He tells His disciples: '*Lazarus has died, and for your sake I rejoice.*'

In death, the Lord rejoices. For our Lord knows that death shall be slain by His own death. And that from death shall come eternal salvation, for we *believe in the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come*.

On the fourth day, after Lazarus' death, Christ comes to Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus.

Mary weeps, for she has lost her brother, and though she believes in the resurrection of the flesh, yet now she must live out her days in longing for the one she has lost, for so love demands of her.

It is written that the Jews also wept, for recalling the recent death of Lazarus, they are reminded of their own mortality; they cannot but grieve.

Yet the Lord, as He enters Bethany; Him who rejoiced when He heard of the death of Lazarus; He too cries. He asks '*where have you laid him?*' They said to Him '*come and see.*'

And Jesus wept.

Yet Jesus does not weep as the Jews, nor as Mary and Martha. For He sheds no tear for having lost Lazarus, His friend; but in lifting Him up, He weeps.

We, who live *in the shadow of death*, weep for all that we will lose. The Lord, who is *the resurrection and life* weeps for all that He shall gain.

How could Our Lord not look upon us, His friends, and not weep?

We speak of missing our family, our friends. This word 'missing'. It as if we have lost part of ourselves. We are missing something. And when we are joined again to those we love, we find our joy; we are made whole. The Lord is missing that which has left him.

It is only human nature to cry tears of joy when *one who is lost, is found; when*

one who was dead is alive.

Christ has taken on human nature. And when the world is washed away with all its cares and worries, and we who are in the Lord are raised again, we who need His help, shall He not weep, as He finds we who are lost, and makes alive we who are dead [in flesh, dead in sin]? [Yet] We are His friends, and for endless ages, He has missed us. It is only human nature.

Therefore, it is written:

'Jesus wept.'

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*Preached by Pastor
Fields*

*Sermon Texts: Ezekiel
37:1-14; Romans 8:1-11; John 11:1-45.*