

Part 3 -Man of Sorrows

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[0 : 00] The entire chapter as we have in the past. John 11, starting in verse 1. Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha.

It was Mary who inured to the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent to him, saying, Lord, he whom you love is ill.

But when Jesus heard it, he said, this illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it. Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.

So when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. Then after this, he said to his disciples, let us go to Judea again. The disciples said to him, Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and you're going there again?

Jesus answered, are there not twelve hours in the day? If Amon walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of the world. But if Amon walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.

[1 : 12] After saying these things, he said to them, our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him. The disciples said to him, Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover. Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought he meant taking rest and sleep.

Then Jesus told them plainly, Lazarus has died, and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him. So Thomas called the twins, said to his fellow disciples, let us also go, that we may die with him.

Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother.

So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. Martha said to Jesus, Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.

But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you. Jesus said to her, your brother will rise again. Martha said to him, I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.

[2 : 19] Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live. And everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?

She said to him, yes, Lord. I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world. When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, the teacher is here and is calling for you.

And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him. When the Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there.

Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying, Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled.

And he said, where have you laid him? They said to him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. So the Jews said, see how he loved him. But some of them said, could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?

[3 : 33] Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave and a stone lay against it. Jesus said, take away the stone. Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, Lord, by this

time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days.

Jesus said to her, did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God? So he took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing there. They may believe that you sent me. When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, Lazarus, come out.

The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound within his strips, his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, unbind him and let him go.

Many of the Jews, therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him. But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. Let's pray.

[4 : 35] Lord, I thank you for this story and all the pictures and representations that are in here. I pray that you would help us tonight as we look at this to see you, to see your grace, your mercy for us.

That you would help us to be awed and more in love with you because of the picture that you have preserved of yourself in here. In Jesus' name, amen.

Last time we looked at Jesus and his talking to Martha. He told her, I'm the resurrection and the life. We saw that even though Martha kind of flip-flopped between looking in the past and looking to the future, Jesus reoriented her to the present and reoriented her to himself.

Martha confirmed her belief in Jesus. She said he was the Messiah who was coming to the world. Tonight we're going to look at Mary's interaction with Jesus. We'll see how Jesus responds to the circumstances around him.

And finally, we'll look at what application this means to us. So the current situation is, Martha had just finished talking to Jesus. She met him outside the town.

[5 : 43] She leaves him there to go get Mary. We don't have it recorded here, but Jesus must have told her to get Mary because in verse 20 she tells Mary, The teacher is here and he's calling for you.

We're told that Martha told Mary privately, maybe to avoid a scene, because the house was full of mourners from Jerusalem coming to weep with these sisters after their brother had died.

But Mary doesn't wait after hearing that Jesus is calling for her. She quickly jumps up and goes to him. Naturally, this group of Jews who are in the house follow her.

And so we've got Mary, a flock of mourning Jews, and Martha returning to where Jesus is outside the city. And when this large group of people arrive outside the city to where Jesus is, Mary throws herself at Jesus' feet.

She says, Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. That sounds familiar, doesn't it? Those are the exact same words that Martha had said. If you had been here, my brother would not have died.

[6 : 46] Both sisters said the exact same thing, the same comment, the same phrase to Jesus. I cannot but think they may have been talking to each other the past few days about this exact phrase.

Oh, Mary, I wish Jesus had come. I wish Jesus had come here in time. If he had been here, maybe Lazarus would not have died. But I take this as a warning.

We need to be careful when we are struggling in circumstances that we don't talk to each other during painful trials in ways that diminish God or disparage God or assign malice to God.

It's too easy for a simple, well-meaning statement to sow seeds of doubt or fear or disbelief or anger in the middle of our trials. Job's friends were guilty of this.

They sat with Job. They sat quiet for a while. Then they began to wax eloquent about God, telling Job all these things about himself and about who God is and why he's in trouble and why he's having these trials.

[7 : 56] We can weep with those that weep and encourage them and point them to Christ. And there are good times for that. Good times for encouragement. Good times for just sitting quietly. We looked at Martha's statement last time.

We saw similar phrases in the Psalms where the psalmist would say to God that his life was in the pit or that things were going terribly for him. And we saw that it's one thing to complain to God about the things we're going through, the struggles, the pain that we have, but it's something totally else to complain about God, to say to God, why are you doing this?

To tell others that God is failing or not fulfilling the desires of your heart. But back at this scene, we've got Mary at the feet of Jesus.

It's a familiar place for her. Mary's the one in Luke 10 who sits at Jesus' feet while her sister Martha works around the house. In that scene, Jesus commends her for listening, saying that she had chosen the better path, the good portion.

In the next chapter, just days before his death in John 11, Mary will anoint Jesus' feet before his burial. And it would be good to do a beneficial study of these two sisters, to compare them, to compare their traits and the ways they respond to circumstances differently, their personalities and propensities.

[9 : 23] But in the interest of time, let's just look at the different ways they approach Jesus with this statement. They both have said the same phrase. Lord, if you have been here, my brother would not have died. Martha keeps going.

Martha continues, But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you. She seems to approach Jesus slowly, even maybe matter-of-factly, compared to Mary who threw herself at Jesus' feet.

She tells God, I know whatever you ask of God, God will give you. She has faith. Even though it may be small or imperfect, she expresses that faith, even though it's too late.

She trusts that Jesus can ask God for anything. And Martha and Jesus start a theological discussion. They talk about the resurrection, and when that's going to be, and Christ being the resurrection.

But there's no dialogue with Mary, no reassurance about him being the resurrection and the life. Why? Why does Jesus take time to wax and talk to Martha, but not to Mary?

[10 : 36] There are other times, if you look in, when Jesus has raised people from the dead, he dealt with them differently. When he raised the widow's son of name, he simply told her, do not weep.

And then he raised her son. When he raised Jairus' daughter, he told everybody in the house to stop weeping, because she wasn't dead, but sleeping. And I think we can take comfort in this fact, that Jesus doesn't talk to, or approach us, or comfort us, all in the same way.

We shouldn't see it as Jesus caring for Martha, but not for Mary, or caring for one sister, not the other. We should see Christ dealing with his people, each person, each group of people, with a specific purpose.

The ultimate purpose here is to show God's glory, but also to deal with them according to their needs. Isaiah says that the suffering servant will not break a bruised reed, or snuff out a faintly burning wick.

Martha needed that theological reassurance. Mary, and a large crowd not forming, needed to see the miracle that was about to occur. He deals with them tenderly, but that means different things for both of them.

[11 : 49] We're told in verses 33 to 35, what Jesus' response was to this scene. It says, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit, and greatly troubled, and said, where have you laid him?

They said to him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. Jesus responds to Mary's statement, and the weeping around him with emotion, with strong emotion.

He was deeply moved, and greatly troubled, and he weeps. It's easy to just jump to the conclusion that he's probably just upset, because the one that he loved has died.

And I think that's there. I think we can say that there's sadness here, the death of Lazarus, but I don't think we can say it's the same sadness, or pain that we would feel, at the loss of a loved one. Some people, when explaining this passage, have given some pretty interesting ideas, as to why they think Jesus is weeping. Some of them are downright heretical. Some say his divine nature was at fighting his human nature.

[13 : 02] His human nature wanted to weep, but his divine nature was unable, was able to control it. Besides misunderstanding what that means, Christ's humanity and divinity, it assumes that Christ, in his humanity, gave in a temptation, but was able to regain control, which makes Christ less than perfect.

There are other explanations that are not necessarily heretical, but maybe not complete. Some people say he's just upset, upset at the weeping, upset at everybody crying. He's being

sympathetic.

Maybe he's just upset that they're crying, and he's going to raise him. Some say he's genuinely sad that Lazarus has died. His humanity is truly sad, and the people he loves are in pain.

And some say it's just his anger at death, that he's seen death, he's staring at death, and he's angry at it. Which of these is it? Why is Jesus moved with emotion?

Why is he upset at this graveside? Is he angry that sin and death are present?

[14:10] Is he upset that Lazarus has died? Is he upset because of everybody's lack of faith? Yes, I think it's all of these and more. When Jesus encountered this situation, he's working it out to God's glory, but he's also showing us he truly is a man of sorrows.

It's not just one thing here that causes Jesus sorrow. It's not just one thing that causes him to weep. It's everything. That brings me to my one and only point tonight. That's that Jesus is the true man of sorrows.

We're told of many other times that Christ wept. In Luke 19, he weeps over Jerusalem and a rejection of him and his coming destruction. Hebrews 5, 7 says, In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplication with loud cries and tears to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence.

In the days of his flesh, while he was on earth, in the garden of Gethsemane, he offered up prayers and supplications to God with loud cries and tears. He cried. He cried physically to God in prayer. He cried physically over the nation that rejected him. Isaiah prophesied that this suffering servant, Christ the Messiah, would be a man of sorrows and well acquainted with grief.

[15:34] Isaiah 53, verses 3 and 4, says, He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

And as one from whom men hid their faces, he was despised and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we esteemed him shrunken, smitten by God and afflicted.

At this graveside with Mary and Martha and the crowd of Jews, there's an exchange happening. One that I think I can give a better, one that can give a better insight into why Jesus was deeply moved and why he wept.

What does it mean in Isaiah 53 that Jesus bears our griefs and carries our sorrows? What does it mean that he, a man of sorrows, is carrying our sorrows?

He doesn't just see our sorrows and our griefs. He doesn't just sympathize with them. He does those things. But he takes them. He takes them and he makes them his own. The emotional, sorrowful man that we see in John 11 is not weeping only because his friend has died.

[16:50] He's not weeping just because he sees everyone else weeping. He's not weeping because he's upset at himself for being emotional. Jesus weeps because he is visibly showing us he is the man of sorrows, bearing our griefs and carrying our sorrows.

But he's not just showing us. He's doing it. By weeping with those that weep, by weeping with those who are sorrowing, he's taking and carrying their sorrows.

He's owning those sorrows of his disciples. He's making them his own. He's taking the sorrows of Mary and Martha and exchanging them, preparing in moments to give them peace and joy.

Aaron reminded us this morning in mutual ministry that while Christ lived on earth, he was treated by men in terrible ways. He was kind and forgave, but it wasn't free.

Christ's forgiveness and Christ's love to mankind cost him his life. Think of those times in the New Testament when Jesus has told people, your sins are forgiven. When Christ says to somebody, your sins are forgiven, he's taking their sins.

[18:05] He's saying to them, your sins are forgiven, I'll take them, I'll carry them to the cross, I'll suffer for them, and I'll give you my righteousness. When Christ takes something, suffering, sorrow, or sin, he takes it and makes it his own and gives us what was his, his righteousness, peace, and joy.

And so when Christ weeps with those who weep, he's not simply sad. He's not simply experiencing the sadness they're experiencing. He's not simply upset in the same way that they're upset. He's experiencing the pain and sorrow.

He's carrying it. Any comfort or peace he provides comes at his own expense. Raising Lazarus in just a few moments will eventually and essentially sign his own death warrant.

Giving Mary and Martha a vision of God's glory and a resurrected body of Lazarus would cost him his life. There's a story that captures this transaction clearly called The Ragman written by Walter Wengelin.

It begins, Even before the dawn one Friday morning, I noticed the young man, handsome and strong, walking the alleys of our city. He was pulling an oak cart filled with clothes, both bright and new.

[19 : 28] And he was calling in a clear, tenor voice, Rags! Ah, the air was foul and the first light filthy to be crossed by such sweet music. Rags!

New rags for old. I take your tired rags. Rags! Now this is a wonder, I thought to myself, for the man stood six feet four and his arms were like tree limbs, hard and muscular.

His eyes flashed intelligence. Could he find no better job than this, to be a ragman in the inner city? I followed him. My curiosity drove me and I wasn't disappointed.

Soon the ragman saw a woman sitting on her back porch. She was sobbing into a handkerchief, sighing and shedding a thousand tears. Her knees and her elbows made a sad axe.

Her shoulders shook. Her heart was breaking. The ragman stopped his cart. Quietly he walked over to the woman, stepping around tin cans, dead toys and pampers.

[20 : 26] Give me your rag. He said so gently. I'll give you another. She slipped the handkerchief from her eyes. She looked up and laid across her palm, he laid across her palm, a linen cloth so clean and knew that it shined.

She blinked from the gift to the giver. Then as he began to pull his cart away, the ragman did a strange thing. He put her stained handkerchief to his own face.

Then he began to weep, to sob so grievously as she had done, his shoulders shaking, yet she was left without a tear. The story continues that the ragman visits many other people in the city, treating rags with a girl with a head wound, clothes with a maimed man, and a blanket with a homeless drunk, leaving the path of joyful, restored, righteous, and sober people while himself weeping, weak, hurt, and maimed.

This now weak, frail man goes out of town and dies. Days later, on Sunday, he comes back to life. The story finishes, there was the ragman, forwarding the blanket most carefully, a scar on his forehead, but alive, and alas, and besides that, healthy.

There was no sign of sorrow nor of age. All the rags he had gathered shined for cleanness. This is what Christ has done. Christ has become the man of sorrows, taking our sorrows, our sins, our rightly deserved death upon himself and giving us his joy, righteousness, and eternal life.

[22 : 09] So two points of application. We still have sorrows today. We still encounter things that give us grief and sorrow and pain. We are, by the rest of creation, groaning, waiting for the redemption of our bodies.

While we may not fully experience all of the benefits that Christ has purchased, we still hurt, have pain, and experience situations that bring us sorrow. But we can rest on Christ now.

We can receive the comfort of the Holy Spirit and look forward to that great day described in Revelation 21, verse 4. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more. Neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away. Even though it's not sinful for us to weep, we weep because of the effect of the fall.

We weep because the things that cause pain are a result of sin. When God makes all things new, there'll be no more need for our tears. Finally, we've been seeing over and over again, John has written this story in this gospel so we would believe.

[23 : 22] The story is included so we may believe and by believing have eternal life. We've seen tonight how Christ, even now before his death on the cross, is a man of sorrows.

Acts chapter 8 has a story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch who's reading about this man of sorrows in Isaiah 53. Let's turn to Acts chapter 3. Sorry, Acts chapter 8 verses 30 to 35.

In this scene, the spirit had called Philip to go talk to an Ethiopian eunuch who was traveling. Verse 30. So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, Do you understand what you are reading?

And he said, How can I unless someone guides me? And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. Now the passage of scripture that he was reading was this. Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shears is silent.

So he opens not his mouth. In his humiliation, justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth. The eunuch said to Philip, Philip, About whom, I ask you, does this prophet say this?

[24 : 41] About himself or somebody else? And beginning, Philip opened his mouth and beginning with the scripture, he told him the good news about Jesus.

Philip asked this eunuch, Do you understand what you are reading? Do you understand who this is talking about? That's my question to you tonight. Do you understand?

Do you see this man of sorrows who would bear our griefs and our sorrows? Not only bear them, not only bear our griefs, not only our sorrows, but will be pierced for our transgressions, who will be crushed for our iniquities.

Do you see this man? The man that God will be pleased to crush who did no wrong? The people in verse 37 and verse 46 of John 11 saw this man.

They saw him weep. They saw him later on in verse 46, raise a man from the dead. And they mocked and doubted. They even went and told the Pharisees that Jesus had raised a dead man.

[25 : 50] These people rejected Jesus at Bethany. They rejected Jesus in front of Pilate. They rejected him at the cross. In a matter of minutes, we're going to celebrate the Lord's Supper, where we will celebrate Christ's body being broken for us, his blood being shed for us.

And as usual, we'll fence the table and the warning will be given. The table is for those who repented of their sins, trusted in Christ, and been baptized. The Lord's Supper is to be celebrated by those who've been saved by it.

But if you are here and you haven't come to Christ, if you haven't bowed your knee and accepted his sacrifice to cover your sins, you are still carrying your grief, sorrows, and your sins.

If you've not confessed with your mouth the Lord Jesus Christ and believed that God has raised him from the dead, none of the things we've talked about belong to you, but they can.

Christ died to save sinners. Sinner, repent of your sin, trusting God. Come to him. He will never cast you out. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.

[27 : 02] Yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. Let's pray. Lord, I thank you that you would choose to leave heaven where you were worshipped and in perfect fellowship with God the Father and come to earth and walk on dirt and be born in a stable and suffer your entire life, be subject to sorrows and grief and pain, and then at the end of your life be punished for all the sins that we've committed and transferred to us your righteousness.

Lord, I pray that you'd help us tonight to be thankful as we take your supper. Help us to be thankful for you, for the ways that you've carried our griefs, carried our sorrows, that the picture you have of you in John 11, weeping, shows us that you are a God who carries and takes care of our sorrows and our griefs.

In Jesus' name, Amen.