

Week5
Jesus and the Hurting
7/23/23

Welcome & Sermon Intro

Good morning. My name is Jon and I'm one of our pastors here..

We're in a series called Jesus & ___ looking at Jesus interacting with different kinds of people in different situations, so we can gain insight on how Jesus might interact with us when we are going through different situations and dealing with different kinds of people.

We're also hosting this series as family gatherings where our elementary students are in the room so right up front I want to give a shout out to the kids in the room. Kids, if you can hear me, make some noise?! Awesome. How's your summer going? Good. You've got about 3 weeks of summer left, so whatever your big goals were for the summer, better get on that.

Our message today is "Jesus & The Hurting" as we'll look at Jesus' interaction with two grieving sisters in John 11.

John 11: *Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. 2 It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. 3 So the sisters sent to him, saying, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." 4 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." 5 Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. 6 So, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.*

Jesus knew Mary and Martha and Lazarus well. Says he loved them. The sisters call their brother "the one you love." He's been to their house. Eaten meals with them. He's ministered to their family. Same Mary and Martha we see Jesus teaching in Luke 10.

So these loved friends of Jesus, get word to Him that their brother is sick. And not just a little sick. He's very sick.

And Jesus responds kinda weird. He stays where He is for two days... even though time is of the essence. It's urgent. And we don't have time, but if I had enough time we might camp on the fact that God's timing in the midst of our pain and suffering is not always in line with our timing and sometimes that can feel extra painful.

But Jesus says right at the front of this whole story, something bigger is going on than what they can see. Something is going on that will bring glory to God and Jesus... the Son of God. Funny when people say Jesus never called Himself the Son of God. Yes He did. Right here.

After delaying for 2 days, Jesus goes to Bethany... but Lazarus has died. Skip down to v. 20:

20 So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. 21 Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." (skip to v. 28)

28 When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." 29 And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him. (skip to v. 32) 32 Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

This story is one of many times we see Jesus interact with those who are hurting.

Which is good news because reality in the broken world we live in is there's no way through life without going through pain. Seasons of deep hurt. Many of us in this room are currently dealing with something painful in our lives. Some of us are hurting very deeply. And Jesus doesn't flee from that. He enters into it and engages with hurting people.

Kids - Don't shout it out, but answer this question in your head - "What is the most painful thing you've ever experienced?" Write it down when you think of it. Maybe you broke a bone? Maybe a friend or someone in your family got really sick or died?

Adults - How about you adults? What are the most painful things you've been through? Are you walking through painful circumstances right now? Have you gotten to the point where you feel weary from the sheer volume of bad things happening to you, to your loved ones and/or in the world around you? Do you have one of those jobs where you work with people in the midst of their pain everyday?

For Mary and Martha they are going through the kind of pain when someone who you love deeply is hurting. And they are going through grief - the loss of a loved one who has died.

I find it interesting that the text paints the picture of Mary and Martha in their grief as a mixture of **faith... and other stuff**. Faith and confusion. Faith and hurt. Faith and anger.

Both sisters tell Jesus - you could have stopped this. You could have kept my brother from dying. There is faith there. They know Jesus' power. Martha says, "Even now... I know that whatever you ask from God... He'll do it." a.k.a. "I don't even know how but I know You can still fix this!" Incredible faith.

And there also seems to be a bit of accusation mixed in. "Jesus, You could have stopped this" ... a.k.a. Why didn't you? Why'd you get here late? Why did you let this happen?!

It's a poignant picture of how we often handle suffering. Often, there's a mixture of faith and _____. Faith + confusion. Faith and hurt. Faith + anger. Faith + running to sinful coping strategies.

Without a doubt, one of the biggest things that causes people to struggle with faith is the reality and frequency and intensity of suffering in their lives and in the world. When we have to deal with immense pain, especially for an extended period of time, it can become really difficult to believe God is good and loving and also allowing this much pain to exist.

--> *So in light of that reality, I'd argue that it's vital for our faith that we know how Jesus responds to those that are hurting. To us when we're hurting. I want to look at 3 ways Jesus responds to these sisters in their pain, that happen to be three ways Jesus responds to us in our pain as well.*

1. Jesus calls to us in our pain.

We get that from verse 28. After Martha meets with Jesus, 28... *she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you."*

Did you catch the different ways Martha and Mary responded as Jesus arrived. Look back at v 20 - 20 *So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house.* Martha went out to meet Jesus. But Mary remained seated in the house. Martha draws near to Jesus but Mary stays seated in her grief. We don't know exactly why:

- Maybe Mary didn't come initially because she likes to process internally. #introverts
- Maybe Mary didn't come because she wasn't ready to talk about it yet.
- Maybe Mary didn't come to Jesus because of her disappointment. I mean she asked Him to help and He didn't. Maybe she's wondering if Jesus even wants to talk to her?

Whatever the reason, Mary is content to sit in her pain.

But Jesus is not content to let her stay there. He calls to her. Don't just sit there alone in your suffering. Come to me! Bring it to me!

Now maybe I'm in here with a bunch of Martha's and in your pain, you easily... instinctively... naturally run straight to Jesus with all of it: your whole mixture of faith and anger and confusion and doubts. Just give it all to Him... Boop! No more anxiety. I'm good now.

But just in case there are any Mary's in the room. Just in case any of you struggle to draw near to Jesus when you're hurting. Just in case the confusion and frustration and disappointment ever makes it God seem far away. Just in case any of **ya'll** struggle to even be honest with yourself when you're angry and you don't want to draw near to Jesus right now...

Just in case... Let me speak to the Marys in the room for a minute. I want you to know something that is true now and every single day of your life... Jesus is here, and He is calling for you. Jesus is calling you to come to Him in your grief and pain and suffering, right now.

This is not just a one off moment with Jesus' interaction here with Mary. It's God's call and command to His people over and over. One of my favorites we reference a lot is in Psalm 62:

Psalm 62:8 *Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him;*

Trust in Him... when? "**At all times**". The good times and the bad. Easy times and hard. Clear times and confusing. But I'm struggling to trust Him! Great. Pour out your heart to Him.

Kids - you know how you love to knock over your cups and pour it all over the table just for fun?! That's what Jesus says to do with our hearts. Pour it out! Don't hold anything back.

- **Jesus is calling us to pour out our emotions.** You're sad? Good. Come to Him sad. Angry... Come to Him. Disappointed... Confused... doubting... Come with all of that!
- **Jesus is calling us to pour out our questions.** Why did you let this happen? God why won't you make this stop? God is something wrong with me that I deserve this?
- **Jesus is calling us to pour out our statements.** God I hate this. God this just feels like too much. God I don't know how to trust you right now. God I'm angry.

Can I say something I hope will help set you free a bit? ...

Jesus is big enough to handle whatever you've got to bring.

Hurt? He can handle it. Frustration? He's got it. Emotional mess you can't even put into words? He's big enough. Wrong-headed, totally-backwards, bad theological heartbroken accusations? Pour 'em out! He wants you to come. With all of it.

--> That's the first way we see Jesus respond. He calls to us. He wants us to draw near. Maybe that's tough for you to believe right now and I would want to ask you is it possible that you being here right now hearing these words could be evidence Jesus is calling to you in the midst of your pain? Jesus' second response is one of God's character attributes I find most incredible:

2. Jesus hurts with us in our pain.

Pick up where we left off in v. 32 - *Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."* (Mary falls at Jesus' feet overcome with emotion: "You could have stopped this!") How does He respond? Does He rebuke her? Correct her bad theology? V. 33 - *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.*

The Greek word translated as "**deeply moved**" is a word used to describe what animals do when they snort with anger. Often translated as groaning. It's a raw and emotional response.

And He was "**greatly troubled**". It means "to have your mental calm and peace disturbed".

Jesus responds to their pain with a groaning snort as if His internal water's been shaken.

Now think about this. Did Jesus already *know* Lazarus was dead? ... yes. Yes He did. Did Jesus already *know* how this story was going to end? YES. Right up front in the story. He already told us this sickness wasn't going to lead to death and the whole thing was going to glorify God and He *knows* exactly what He's planning to do and how this is going to end.

And still. When He looks on Mary's weeping, He snorts. He's emotionally moved in response. He chooses to hurt with her. He mourns with those who mourn. He allows Himself to be bothered and disturbed by what was bothering and disturbing them.

It doesn't always feel that way does it? Sometimes, especially in the midst of our pain, it can feel like God is very far away and uncaring. Nothing could be further from the truth. God is near. And He is grieved by the brokenness of planet earth more than we ever will be...

EVEN THOUGH He already knows the end. Even though He knows how He's working to bring good and the salvation of many people. Even though His theology never gets shaken.

STILL Jesus is hurt by your hurt. Jesus is grieved by your grief. He is pained by your pain.

Every other king and self-proclaimed god in human history uses their power to stay away from pain. Jesus lays down His power to enter into our pain with us. He hurts with us.

--> Which sets us up for Jesus' third response to these sister's in their pain:

3. Jesus promises to end all of our pain.

The conclusion of this story is dramatic and amazing and completely unexpected even though Jesus hints at it, predicts it... and plenty of you may already know it. Go to v. 38

38 Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it.

Jesus is standing in front of the tomb... and there's that phrase again. He's **deeply moved**. Angry snorting, groaning with frustration at death and all of the pain and tears that suffering is causing these people He loves. All the pain sin has caused in the world. Look what happens next:

39 Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Now unless you know the end of this story. This is the wrong thing to say. "Nah Jesus. We're not doing that." It's exactly what Martha, being particularly logical says -> 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." (These people don't see how anything good is possible at this point. The battle is lost. Dead is dead. It's over. But Jesus sees the battle differently) 40 Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" 41 So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. 42 I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me." 43 When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." 44 The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

Incredible.

See Jesus knows that at this tomb, a knockout battle is brewing. Death vs life. Darkness vs light. The curse of sin itself, the cause of all death and suffering in the world, against the Son of God.

And He's already told Martha earlier on how it's going to go. We skipped this verse but back in v. 25, Martha is suffering, she's just told Jesus "You could have saved my brother from dying." **25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life.**

This is one of Jesus' great I am statements, Fascinating that He doesn't say to her "It's ok. I'm your comforter." Though He is. He doesn't say "I am Emmanuel, God with you." though He is.

Jesus knows how this showdown is going to go down and He points to something even bigger.

So at the climactic moment, Jesus is standing in front of this tomb, groaning. Snorting. Mourning.

Weeping... And, He looks death in the face, and rips it to shreds.

He shows Mary and Martha I'm not just the Savior who calls you to me in the midst of your pain. I'm not just the only God who chooses to enter into and hurt with you in the midst of your pain.

I am the One who will end all of your AND ALL OF ALL pain once and for all.

And their brother Lazarus walks out of the tomb.

Can you imagine this moment? In an instant, Martha's and Mary's tears just dry up. They're weeping turns *snap* straight into rejoicing. This funeral turns into a barbecue. And you may be thinking, "Yea, but that hasn't happened for me! I'm just left with my grief. I've prayed for weeks or months or years. And He hasn't ended my suffering!"

And if that's you, I get it. I really do. We don't have time today but if we could go grab lunch or a coffee, I'd trade stories with you for hours. Not to compare but I promise you I'm in it with you.

And so especially if you're in the midst of it right now, I need you to catch something about this story... the truth is as incredible as this moment is... It's not the end of their story.

Sure here in v. 44, Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead and turns Mary and Martha's tears to joy!

But Lazarus is not *still* alive walking the earth today, is He? Lazarus died again. His loved ones had to grieve His death twice! This resurrection was not the ultimate victory that they needed. They need a greater victory! They, just like us, needed a greater work from the One who is the resurrection and the life to crush, defeat, and rid them of the source of their grief!

And thank God, that this wasn't the last time that Jesus had a showdown with death. Because just a few days later, Jesus allowed all the sin and death and darkness and brokenness of this world to come crashing down on Him when in the cross. And like Lazarus, He even borrowed a tomb for a few days in the process... but on the third day, He defeated death again offering eternal life for all who believe in Him.

And the book of revelation tells us that in the end... when its all said and done... like Mary and Martha, we will have our tears dried up. We will have our weeping turn to rejoicing. We will have our pain turn to gladness. Not just for a little while but forever.

This life will have much pain in it, and our hope is that in the midst of our pain, we have a Savior who calls to us, who hurts with us, and who promises to one day put an end to all of it. **Pray.**