

TIME OF REFLECTION

“When Jesus wept with Mary, the Word of God stood silent.”

~Makoto Fujimura, American artist

“Each person’s grief is as unique as their fingerprint. But what everyone has in common is that no matter how they grieve, they share a need for their grief to be witnessed... The need is for someone to be fully present to the magnitude of their loss without trying to point out the silver lining.”

~David Kessler in *Finding Meaning: The Sixth Stage of Grief*

“Sorrow... turns out to be not a state but a process. It needs not a map but a history.”

~C.S. Lewis (1898-1963), in *A Grief Observed*

“Only people who are capable of loving strongly can also suffer great sorrow, but this same necessity of loving serves to counteract their grief and heals them.”

~Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910), Russian novelist and moral philosopher

“We can make the right answer sound old hat, but I guarantee this: God will surprise you. He will make you stop. You will struggle. He will bring you up short. You will hurt. He will take his time. You will grow in faith and in love. He will deeply delight you. You will find the process harder than you ever imagined—and better.”

~ David A. Powlison (1949-2019) in *God’s Grace in Your Suffering*

“Christianity teaches that, contra fatalism, suffering is overwhelming; contra Buddhism, suffering is real; contra karma, suffering is often unfair; but contra secularism, suffering is meaningful. There is a purpose to it, and if faced rightly, it can drive us like a nail deep into the love of God and into more stability and spiritual power than you can imagine.”

~Tim Keller in *Walking With God through Pain and Suffering*

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth... And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be ... 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.’”

~Revelation 21:1-5

Worship through the Word

SERMON – “Jesus and Grief” – *Scott Sottosanti*

SERMON PASSAGE – *John 11:1-7, 11-17, 20-28, 32-37 (ESV)*

¹ 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. ⁷ Then after this he said to the disciples, “Let us go to Judea again.”

¹¹ After saying these things, he said to them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him.” ¹² The disciples said to him, “Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover.” ¹³ Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep. ¹⁴ Then Jesus told them plainly, “Lazarus has died, ¹⁵ and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.” ¹⁶ So Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

¹⁷ Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days...

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.” ²³ Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” ²⁴ Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” ²⁵ Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?” ²⁷ She said to him, “Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.”

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.”

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.”

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. ³⁴ And he said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Lord, come and see.” ³⁵ Jesus wept. ³⁶ So the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” ³⁷ But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?”