

What Made Jesus Cry?

1. Warm-up Question: Do you cry often? What kinds of things tend to make you cry? Tell us about something that caused you to cry recently?
2. Although Jesus probably cried many times during his life, there's only one Gospel passage where we're specifically told he cried. John 11 tells us that, after Jesus' dear friend Lazarus died, Jesus wept. At first blush, we assume Jesus cried because of the pain of losing a dear friend. But on Sunday, Jeff suggested that's not why Jesus cried. Let's take a look, starting with the first part of the story. Read John 11:1-16.
 - a. Later in the story, Jesus will call Lazarus out of his tomb and back to life. Jesus seems to have anticipated this outcome from the outset of the story. Look again at verse 4. What does that tell us about what Jesus expected to happen?
 - b. Look again at verses 11-15. What does this tell us about what Jesus expected to happen? In Jesus' mind, was there any doubt about what would happen?
 - c. Look again at verses 5-6. Why did Jesus wait two long days before beginning the long journey to Bethany?
 - d. Have you ever been in a situation where you were waiting for an ambulance to arrive to help someone in grave need? How did it feel while you were waiting? How do you think Mary and Martha felt when it took much longer for Jesus to arrive than they expected?
3. Read John 11:17-37.
 - a. Look at verse 20. Why do you think Mary elected to stay home, rather than to go out and meet Jesus as he approached? Why do you think Martha elected to go out to meet him?
 - b. Bear in mind that Jesus was close friends with Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. Whenever he travel through the area, he chose to stay in their home because that's where he was comfortable. They had shared wonderful moments together. You might say Mary, Martha, and Lazarus were BFFs with Jesus. Yet when they most needed him, he didn't respond. Look again at what Martha says in verse 21. How do you imagine her speaking these words? What was her tone and her state of emotion? What do you make of the verses that follow? Do you think Martha expected a miracle might still occur?
 - c. How do you imagine Mary speaking the words of verse 32? What was her tone and her state of emotion?
 - d. As friends and family watched all this unfold, they were overheard saying things like, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man

from dying?” (vs. 37.) As Jesus heard what Martha, Mary, and their family were saying, how do you think he felt?

4. On Sunday, Jeff suggested that Jesus wept, not because he thought he had lost Lazarus, but because it pained him to have disappointed Mary and Martha. “What made Jesus cry,” Jeff said, “was feeling the pain of Mary and Martha’s disappointment in God – and in him – for not answering their pleas to save their brother. There’s nothing quite as painful as feeling abandoned by God.”
 - a. When in your life have you felt most disappointed in God? When have you most felt like crying out in anguish, “Where were you, Lord, when I needed you?”
 - b. If we walk with Jesus and serve him over many years, should we expect special favors from him? Should we be treated better than others?
 - c. Instead of scolding Mary and Martha when they expressed their pain, anger, and disappointment at his lack of response, Jesus could have gotten up on his high horse and rebuked them for daring to question the Son of God. Instead he grew quiet, humble, and gentle. Instead of rebuking them, he wept with them. What does that tell us about who Jesus is and what he’s like?
 - d. Jeff shared a true story about a young mother named Jan who, hospitalized after a long illness, felt sure she was dying. All alone in her hospital room in the middle of the night, sitting on the toilet in pain, out of the silence she heard a strange sound – someone crying. In her spirit, she instantly knew it was Jesus. Have you ever felt profound spiritual comfort in the midst of great pain? What happened?
5. The story of John 11 doesn’t end with Jesus’ tears. Let’s read the rest, John 11:38-54.
 - a. Verse 45 says many of Mary and Martha’s family and friends came to believe in Jesus because Lazarus was raised from the dead. They, in turn, told many others who also believed (vs. 48), so much so that the religious elite decided that they had to kill Jesus (vs. 53). The ups and the downs of this story are profound. Jesus delayed his arrival and Lazarus died – that’s bad. Jesus raised Lazarus and many believed – that’s good. But then the Pharisees decided to kill Jesus – that’s bad. But Jesus’ death saved us and made his resurrection possible – that’s good. What do you think we’re supposed to learn from all of this?
 - b. Read I Corinthians 13:12 and Isaiah 55:8-9. What do you hear these verses saying?
 - c. Take a look at the logical argument laid out on the next page. Do you agree or disagree? And why?
 - d. Tell us about something happening in your life right now that “makes no sense.” Based on what we see in John 11, how should you frame that situation in your heart and mind? What should your perspective be on what’s happening to you?

A Logical Argument When Life Makes No Sense

- ✓ We live in a reality created by an infinite being.
- ✓ But we are finite beings.
- ✓ “Infinite” means limitless. “Finite” means limited.
- ✓ By definition, limited creatures cannot understand a limitless reality.
- ✓ ERGO: It makes sense that life doesn’t make sense.
- ✓ If life did make sense to us, that would either mean we’re infinite or God is not.
- ✓ Therefore, if God is and God is infinite, it only makes sense that life doesn’t make sense much of the time.

Do you agree or disagree? And why?