

Grounded in Grace

LIVING IN-BETWEEN

HURT, HOPE AND HEALING PT 6

Grieving Well: The Tearful Savior

33 When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. 34 "Where have you laid him?" he asked "Come and see, Lord," they replied. 35 Jesus wept. 36 Then the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" John 11:33-36 (NIV)

In the beginning of this year, I started this series, "Living In-Between: Hurt, Hope and Healing." As it has been God's providence, I have been living in this series the last few months. I had no idea my dad was going to pass away. As God so commonly does with our hearts, he puts us in positions to live and ponder what we teach, preach or talk about to others. So I began to ponder how Jesus is moving me through the hurt of losing my dad to healing and then to the power of hope. Or, to be more precise, how do you grieve a loss well?

Let me set up the scene for you. Jesus had relationships with Lazarus, Mary and Martha. Jesus finds out that Lazarus is sick and providentially delays his travel to them. During his delay, Lazarus dies and is buried. Mary and Martha are distraught over Jesus not coming in a timely manner. In a dialogue, Jesus gives his reasoning about himself and about life and death. (We may return to this later.) And then he does something very powerful that we can't miss. He weeps and cries. God shows his tears. We have a tear-weeping God. And as I pondered seeing his tears, I pondered the significance of his tears.

1. The Power of Tears

Jesus has not only witnessed the troubling arguments of Mary and Martha but also the troubling tears of their souls. Instead of just stoically giving rational arguments or saying, "It will be okay," or "I am in control," Jesus shows his emotions. He cries with and for his friends whom he loved. He gives them the privilege of seeing his heart. He comforts those he loves by his tears. In order to weep well, we need to find our own tears and realize the honor of giving them to others. There is power in weeping the losses of this life.

2. The Time for Tears

It is interesting that John just stated Jesus' actions in two words. He actually gives a little more description beforehand, but the shortness of the sentence gives it power. "Jesus wept." Jesus took time to weep. We don't know how long, but what we do know is that he wept. There is power in taking time to weep. There is power in just letting the Lord hear the cries of your soul. Tears allow us to dialogue with the Lord on the deep-seated hurts of the heart; but, even more so, they allow the Lord to meet us in our deepest need.

3. The Vulnerability of Tears

The Lord showed his vulnerability of emotions in front of two women and in front of the whole town. He does not hide his emotions from others but allows his emotional self to connect with the reality of the situation. Many people have stated that tears are for the weak. However, in reality, they are for the strong. It takes a powerful man to admit he does not have it all together. It takes a strong person to display that he or she is hurt with the realities of this life. Real power comes from weakness. And real weakness displays the vulnerability of confusion and hurt that often interrupts our soul and allows others to intercept us as we struggle through our losses. Tears are a pathway to healing.

4. The Trouble of Tears

If you noticed, Jesus was “*deeply moved in spirit and troubled.*” Why was he troubled? We really don’t know, but I believe it was not only because Lazarus his friend had died but that this world was not and is not supposed to be this way. Death was not supposed to have victory - even a short one at that. Mary, Martha and Lazarus lived under the shadow of the fall. Jesus lived looking at the trouble sin had caused, the brokenness of this world and the ultimate process of death. The deeply moved soul was grieving about what was not supposed to be, but unfortunately was. Grieving tears shout out that there must be something better over the horizon.

5. The Hope of Tears

Troubling tears gaze beyond our situation and call out for hope. And this is exactly where Jesus guides Mary and Martha. He gives them hope. The hope is in his power. The hope is in his resurrection. The hope is that the world will not succumb to the death of decay but to the power of life. The hope of tears allows us to be real with our hurts. This realness allows us to walk along the pathway of healing and toward a destination of hope. May you walk along the healing pathway with the tearful Savior who walks with you toward the home of hope!

By Dr. Steve Benson