

## Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> November Clive Jackson

### Luke 19:41 – as He approached Jerusalem and saw the city He wept over it...

Hello, Good morning, and welcome to our devotion this morning. In these troubled days there are many things and if you listen to the news you could easily get a little bit disturbed, whether being American elections or people fighting over this or that, or the other, or COVID, or whatever it is and I find great comfort in the stability of our knowledge of Jesus and just who He is. And I delight myself in being able to sort of roll around, as it were, in these great truths; the Word of God which remains stable for me. And I find that Jesus is... no one can take him over, He is magnificent in every way. And the more I read of Him, the more I read of His word, the more convinced I am. And the more delighted I feel in Him and I can easily go there and make my daily delight in Him.

And so today, I want to talk about a few things about Jesus just to talk about him and just how magnificent He is. And there are a couple of places in the New Testament, I think there's only two places where it says, it talks of Jesus weeping. I'm sure that He wept at other times, but on these particular occasions, and someone said the other day, he said, He wasn't weeping for himself. But He was weeping for us. And I had to really think about that, because I thought, well, is that true? You know, but then the first passage, is found in Luke 19, I'll just read it to you. It's when Jesus was entering into Jerusalem just before he was crucified. And as he approached the city, it's in Luke 19, verse 41, it says, 'As He, (Jesus), approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it', and said, if you, even you had only known on this day, what would bring you peace'... Then he goes on to describe some of the consequences of their rejecting Him. And at the end of the passage, just in that particular paragraph, He says, Because you did not recognise the time of God's coming to you.

And so here's Jesus, He's riding into Jerusalem, He's conscious of the fact that Jerusalem, as it were, represented the Jewish nation. All the religious leaders were there, all their thinking was there, all their scribes and Pharisees and teachers of the law were there and all the people were there. And yet, He had come and walked amongst them, been magnificent in the midst of them, done miraculous signs and wonders, brought teaching which was outside their understanding, outside their comprehension, their remit or what they knew, and He was bringing beautiful things to them. And yet they rejected Him and they just wouldn't receive Him. And it was like the whole of the Old Testament, led up to this moment and from the beginning, it's an unfolding story of the coming of the Messiah, the coming of the Saviour. And yet they didn't recognise Him when he came. And He was, He knew there would be consequences for that, because they had rejected Him. It says in Isaiah 53, 'He was despised and rejected'. So He was weeping for what they had lost, and what they had missed. He wasn't weeping for being rejected, although I'm sure He felt that, just as any of us would, but it was because He was weeping for He knew they'd lost. And then again, of course, we have the story, the magnificent story in John 11, where Jesus visits a family that he's very friendly with and close to in His ministry, in His life. And that's a family in Bethany, that's Mary and Martha, and Lazarus. And some of you will be familiar with the story. It's a story of where Lazarus falls ill, seriously ill. Martha and Mary, who know Jesus well, and He's obviously eaten there many times, and Mary had anointed His feet with oil and dried His feet with her hair, and so on, remember the story. And it's well worth just quietly sitting down and reading through chapter 11 of John, because it's a magnificent insight into a part of who Jesus was. And suddenly Lazarus is really ill and they send word to Jesus, to say come and help us, because they knew that He was able to help them. And of course Jesus delays coming, He stays where He is for a little while longer and I don't want to really stay on that part of the story. The whole story is amazing in itself and of course we have the classic verse that is read out at most Christian funerals, which is where Jesus said to Martha, 'I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me though he dies, yet shall he live'. Of course, that very significant statement that those who believe in Jesus, you know, we do not die, we may physically die, but there is a continuum for us, where we then continue in our eternal life and spiritual life with Him, which is in itself comforting and amazing. But what happens in the story is Jesus delays in coming.

And Martha and Mary, you know, but in this time, Lazarus dies, Martha and Mary are clearly, naturally very upset. They love their brother, they, it's obviously a premature death for him seemingly. And so they're mourning his death, and they're desperate to, I don't know what they're thinking. I imagine they're thinking all kinds of things. And we see a distinction in the story because of the different temperaments of Martha and Mary, because Martha's sort of, out there and pragmatic, in your face a little bit, but it says beautifully at the beginning of the story that Jesus loved Mary, He loved Martha, and He loved Lazarus. And so it wasn't that He loved one more than the other. He loved them all. He loved all types of people. And so Martha, when she hears that Jesus has arrived, even before He can even get into the village of Bethany, she goes out to meet Him. And she's kind of in His face a little bit, she said, 'Master, if you had been here, this would not have happened'. And then you have this glorious dialogue, which has been recorded of where Jesus talks about Himself being the resurrection and the life and that verse, which I've already quoted, come from this passage. And so you have this thing going on. But there's an absence and interesting thing at the end of it. You know, she says, she believes in Jesus, that He is the Son of God, and He is the one, the Messiah who has been promised and that there will be a resurrection at the end. But of course, now she's living with the dreadful prospect of the fact that her brother's dead, and all the memories and all that goes with that. So then, after the conversation with Martha, Martha then goes back to the house, where Mary is. And I want you just to come with me a little bit and see that Mary had a slightly different temperament to Martha. And I think that Mary couldn't really face Jesus at that moment and so she stayed hidden as it were, back at the house, I think she may have been disappointed in Him. She may have not known what she was going to do with how He was treating this whole situation, I'm sure that when she was back at the house, her mind was constantly 'I wonder what Jesus is saying to Martha', what's going to happen next, and so on.

And so Martha comes back to the house where Mary is still there with all the mourners. So she kind of quietly takes her to one side and she says to her, 'the Lord is here'. And then she makes this kind of interesting statement: she said, 'He's asking for you, He's asking for you'. Now if you can imagine that moment, in Mary's own heart, she's thinking, 'Oh, he's here, but when He said 'He's asking for you' it was like, really? and it was all that she needed to take courage and go and meet with Him; was the fact that He had taken the initiative in it. She couldn't because of her delicate state, or wounding or temperament, or whatever it was, or maybe her own disappointment. But Jesus had been conscious even in the middle of all this, of where's Mary, and I'd like to see her. And of course, she immediately picks up her things and she makes haste and she goes to meet Jesus, who by this time hasn't even got into the village.

And she says the very same thing to Jesus. She says, 'Master if you've been here', but she falls at His feet, and she's weeping and with her the Jewish mourners are also weeping and it's like something happens inside Jesus at that moment. He was moved with compassion and it talks about Him groaning, it talks about him sighing, and those things are kind of sanitised in our language because they make it seem as if He just went aah, but it was a lot more than that. In fact, on the second occasion, when He looks at their weeping and at the moment where it says that He himself wept, it says that He groaned a deep groan, much though most people that don't like to think of this, but when you look up the Greek for that word, it means He snorted angrily like a warhorse. And that's the kind of thing that I think of Jesus that really stirred something in Him. So you can see this interaction between the man Jesus who was God, but He was also a man and He was there. And He is moved with compassion for those who are mourning and are in great pain. He's stirred by that and so Mary's coming, was a bit of a trigger for Him, to fulfil what He knew His Father wanted to fulfil all along; because Jesus wasn't crying because He lost Lazarus, because He knew He was going to raise him from the dead, it wasn't... He was crying and weeping because of the pain that this death had caused to all His friends, and to the people that were there. And that's what made him weep. I'm sure He was crying, you know, because of that sort of natural loss thing. But here He was and then, of course, the story unfolds, as everybody knows, who's read the Bible, they see that Jesus then asked where they've laid him. And then there's the objection from Martha that He will stink because he's been there for four days. And then he tells them to roll away the stone, and He calls out in a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come forth'. And Lazarus comes out of the tomb wrapped in his grave clothes and then He tells them to unwrap him.

But I think the thing that I wanted to just remind ourselves of today was the kind of, Jesus, the man who was in relationship with His family, as He is and he calls us all into a relationship with Him and friendship with Him. That His compassion, and His love and His tenderness and His magnificence, you know, He's magnificent, whatever you want to do with Him. And just to remind ourselves, that He's even conscious of our own journeys, of where we are, in, you know, sometimes we get wounded, sometimes we get a little bit offended, sometimes we get, we feel a bit, I don't know, all kinds of things get thrown at us in life and what happens is that we want to shut down and hide away a little bit like Mary, not come to see Jesus, because we think we don't quite know what we're going to do when we get there, because we don't know what we're going to say. And I want to say to you today, if you're in that place, and you know Him, the master is asking for you.

He's saying, why don't you come? Why don't you come and see me and let me do some miracle for you. Why don't you come, don't stay hidden away, don't stay wounded, don't stay upset, because my love for you is far greater than you can ever imagine. And all I wanted to do, even saying to Mary and Martha, all I wanted to do was to show you that I am who I say that I am. And I am the answer. And it's not all over. It's okay. And I think Jesus is saying that to us. I mean, often I want to hide away, I've felt oh dear, I don't know if I can face this. Whatever you're going through right now, I'm just encouraging you as Martha and Mary in those stories which are in the Bible, which tell us a little insight into the way that Jesus related to his friends. I want you to know that He is your friend, and He's calling you.

And so I'd like to just finish with a prayer. And pray for you that if you want to just come to Him if you're in that place, just take courage, He's asking for you. So Father, we thank you that your love for us is far greater than anything that we could ever imagine. It's deeper, it's higher, it's wider, it's more than we can imagine. And Lord, we thank you that you remain the same in a changing world, in a world that throws all kinds of things at us that could make us anxious. And sometimes we've been disappointed not, maybe not rightly, but with how we perceive situations, we become disappointed. But Lord, we thank you that you're there. And we come to you. When we ask that you will come and I ask this morning that you will come for those who are listening to this, with your Holy Spirit and the great comforter and comfort our hearts and strengthen us and encourage us and let us go forward into the day, with great cheer and great joy and great understanding of what a wonderful Saviour we have. I ask this in Jesus' precious name. Amen.

God bless you.



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