



Calvary of Albuquerque

The Strangest Funeral Ever - John 11:33-44

From the Series, Believe:879

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MESSAGE SUMMARY

According to one source, there are approximately 2 million funerals in America per year, which means that about 5,479 funerals take place every single day! Most of those funerals are pretty typical: a formal service followed by an interment. But the funeral service we're looking at was really different--and not just because of a resurrection. Here Jesus does three things that are pretty normal for most people at a funeral, but strikingly odd for Jesus.

OUTLINE

- I. His Tears (vv. 35-37)
- II. His Anger (vv. 33-34, v. 38)
- III. His Approach (vv. 39-44)

I Have Some Questions For You:

1. How much trouble do you have believing that God will work in your life? What can you do to increase your faith in God's power?
2. Is it surprising to read that Jesus wept? How does this make you feel? What does this say to you as a representative of Christ?
3. Why do you suppose the human body is so important to people; i.e., why such an emphasis on having a fit physique? Why does God want to resurrect our bodies?



DETAILED NOTES

Death is a very real part of life; everyone who lives will die--unless the Lord comes back before that. How many people return from the dead on the day of their funeral? Lazarus has been dead for four days. It is the strangest funeral ever, because Jesus will perform his most famous, greatest miracle. Jesus has resurrected others: the daughter of Jairus, after a short time (Matthew 9:18-26), and the son of the widow at Nain, after about a day (Luke 7:11-16).

As we study our text, we have considered Jesus' delay and the interaction between Mary and Martha with Jesus. Now we come to the main event: ultimate proof of Jesus' claim in John 11:25, "I am the resurrection and the life."

400 years BC, as Socrates lay on his deathbed after drinking hemlock, his friends asked, "will we live again?" Socrates replied "I hope so, but no one can ever know." Jesus action here blows that notion out of the water.

- I. His Tears (vv. 35-37)
 - A. Weeps differently from Mary, Martha, and the rest
 1. Κλαίω Klaio- properly expressing uncontainable audible grief- (Mary, Martha)
 2. Δακρύω dakryō -to silently weep burst out silently in tears (Jesus)
 - B. Why does Jesus weep?
 1. You'd think he would say "Stop crying!"
 - a. He knows He'll raise Lazarus from the dead
 - b. He knows Lazarus' sisters will soon embrace him
 2. Our God really cares about the sorrowful; it moves Him
 - a. "For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin." (Hebrews 4:15)
 - b. "The Love of God" by Frederick M. Lehman
The love of God is greater far
Than tongue or pen can ever tell;
It goes beyond the highest star,
And reaches to the lowest hell;
Could we with ink the ocean fill,
And were the skies of parchment made,
Were every stalk on earth a quill,

And every man a scribe by trade,
To write the love of God above,
Would drain the ocean dry.
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,
Though stretched from sky to sky.

3. Couldn't He have kept Lazarus from dying?
 - a. Reflects the attitude of Mary and Martha. Why did He let Lazarus die? Remember, he healed the blind man (See John 9) a stranger, but he let his friend die.
 - b. Predictable argument: How can a good God allow suffering?
Like a loving parent, discipline demonstrates you do love them.

II. His Anger (vv. 33-34, v. 38)

- A. He groaned
 1. Root word means snorting of a horse
 2. He gave way to such distress of spirit as to make His body tremble
- B. He was troubled: Ταρασσω tarassó agitate, stir up, trouble
- C. Not surprising for others to be angry
 1. Second stage of grief according to Elizabeth Kubler Ross
 2. Jesus was first to know Lazarus was dead
 3. Knew he would raise Lazarus from the dead
- D. He is angry at death itself and the sin that caused death
 1. Death was not God's plan to begin with
 2. We all hate death
 3. When someone dies we know it's wrong
 4. Jesus shares that anger; it's why He came
 5. Jesus is about life
 - a. "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." (John 1:4)
 - b. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)
 - c. "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. I am the bread of life." (John 6:47-48)
 - d. "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." (John 10:10)
 - e. The Gospel of John theme: Jesus is about life (47 times in this gospel)
- E. We are powerless to do anything about death
 1. Powerless to redeem, save or keep ourselves from the grave.
 2. "For the wages of sin is death," (Romans 6:23)
 3. Myth: The only thing you need to go to heaven is to die
 4. Myth: If you want to get to heaven, do good things or be a good person
 5. Lazarus will be resurrected—to die again

III. His Approach (vv. 39-44)

- A. With His face filled with tears and a heart filled with anger, Jesus goes to the Tomb
Tombs - no embalming, bodies buried on the day of the death; natural cave or room carved in a rock, with shelves on wall for 8 corpses; body wrapped in bandages with aromatic spices in the folds to hide the stench for a few days. Bodies laid in state for 1 year, then the bones collected and placed in an ossuary (bone box) and placed on the shelved.
- B. Jesus prays publicly
- C. He cried out with a loud voice (with the loudness of a multitude)
 1. Jesus is about to do a powerful miracle, voice matches the deed
 2. Wizards would cast spells by muttering; He distinguishes Himself from that black magic
 3. Put's His credibility on the line
 4. To get His audience's attention
 5. Shouting Lazarus limits the response
- D. Lazarus came out
- E. He could have performed this from any place, but he went to the tomb
 1. As he had with the nobleman's son (See John 4:46-54)
 2. Could have directed Mary and Martha to go to the tomb
- F. Preview of coming attractions
 1. We will be raised from the dead
 2. "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth--those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation." (John 5:28-29)
 3. We will be physically resurrected at the rapture of the church—"For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord." (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17)
 4. The resurrection of our bodies completes our salvation
 - a. Salvation from the past penalty of sin (justification)
 - b. Salvation from the present power of sin (sanctification)
 - c. Salvation from the future presence of sin (glorification)
 - d. The Lord created us as body and soul and has plans to redeem both
- G. Had the men move the stone away and loose and let Lazarus go
 1. Only God can raise the dead

2. We should do what we can do
 3. Picture of ministry: we do what we can, He changes lives
- H. "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." (Revelation 18:7)

Figures Referenced: Socrates, John Van Doren, C.H. Spurgeon

Publications Referenced: "The Love of God" by Frederick M. Lehman

Greek Terms: Κλαίω Klaio- properly expressing uncontainable audible grief; Δακρύω dakrýō -to silently weep burst out silently in tears; Ταράσσω tarassó agitate, stir up, trouble

Cross References: Matthew 9:18-26; Luke 7:11-16; John 1:4; John 3:16; John 4:46-54; John 5:28-29; John 6:47-48; John 9; John 10:10; John 11:25; Romans 6:23; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17; Hebrews 4:15; Revelation 18:7