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**Grace Fellowship Church, Port Jervis, New York**

**December 7, 2014**

**Jesus Wept**

**John 11:35**

**Prayer:** *Father God, we do praise you and thank you for your goodness, we praise you and thank you for your grace, we praise you and thank you for the gift that you've given us of your son and Lord, we just celebrate this time of the year when we just recognize that incredible gift at Christmas. And Lord, each month we set aside a Monday to remember what it is that you've done for us on the cross and this is that Sunday, and so we pray this day, Lord, that you would give us grace, peace, power, and the ability to open up your word and by your Holy Spirit, to understand anew and in a different way and in a deeper way, we hope and pray, what it is you've done for us, and so we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well, once again this is the first Sunday of the month and this is the day that we remember Jesus Christ and his cross. And as we speak each month, we remember that he met with his disciples for a final Passover supper, and it's contained in Matthew 26:26-29 which says this, it says: *Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and*

after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." Jesus took bread and he took wine and he offered them up as symbols of his flesh and his blood and then he asked his disciples to eat the bread and drink the cup in order to symbolically eat his flesh and drink his blood. And then he asked them to remember this on a regular basis and this is what we call the Lord's table and we celebrate it once a month here at Grace and we do that by meditating on what it is the Lord Jesus Christ did on the cross, by examining ourselves, by asking God's Holy Spirit to convict us of sin, by confessing our sins, and then by participating in the these elements. In *John 6:53* it says this: So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you."

Now we've been following the life of Jesus and we've worked our way to the 11th chapter of the gospel of John, and this is all about Lazarus, Lazarus's being raised from the dead. *John 11:1-4* says this, it says: Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the

village of Mary and her sister Martha. It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent to him saying, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." 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." Well, I think we all know the story pretty well, we've heard it many, many times and for our time this morning, I just want to focus on what is arguably the shortest verse in scripture, as Peter tells me in English it's the shortest, there's actually single words in Greek but it is the two words that describe Jesus's response to everything that was taking place at the site of the tomb of Lazarus. Verse 34 of John 11 says: *And he said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see."* And then verse 35 contains just two words: *"Jesus wept."* Now, those two words, "Jesus wept," simply state the facts of the matter, and we want to get beyond that. We want to ask the standard reporter's questions to see if we can get some further insight into actually what was going on. We want to ask the who, the what, the when, the where, and the how, and most importantly we want to ask the why. Why did Jesus weep?

Well, the first two questions are answered with the first two words. I mean, the first is "who," and that's Jesus. The second is "what," and that's wept. Okay. So far so good. We know Jesus

wept. I mean, those are the bare bones facts that we are dealing with. It gets far more interesting when you start asking the next set of questions, and that would be, first of all, the "when" question. Now, the scripture is very clear that when Jesus was informed that his good friend Lazarus was ill, his response to finding this out was absolutely mystifying, because his response was to do nothing. So the answer to the question "when" really is we don't know. Jesus didn't make a lot of sense with that answer. And last time we looked at this issue, we looked in terms of understanding and trusting God when he doesn't seem to make a lot of sense. You see, it's not normal for somebody who is in a position to help someone to know that he's in that position and to do nothing. To hear that Lazarus is gravely in need and to do nothing, but that's exactly what Jesus appears to do. And so we asked the question last time how do we make sense of that? And we saw that much of what Jesus was about, much of what he was doing with his disciples was in building them in their faith. We have to understand that faith is not something that God takes at all casually. *Hebrews 11:6* says: *But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.* So what matters most to God here is faith. It's the source of our being made right with him. *Romans 4:3* says: *For what does the scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for*

*righteousness.*" And so if faith is the source and the ground of our being made righteous in God's sight, does it not follow that God would be about the business of growing faith in his disciples? I mean, this is precisely what we see Jesus doing in the lives of Lazarus and his family and the disciples, what we see is that he is growing their faith, and he is growing it by stretching it, by testing it, by trying it, often times by engaging in things that don't seem to make a great deal of sense at the time. The sisters tell Jesus that his beloved Lazarus is ill and instead of hurrying to help his friend, Jesus answers the "when" question by baffling all of those around him. By baffling the disciples. So Jesus answers the "when" question by lingering until his friend is gone. He says in *John 11:14*: "*Lazarus has died.*" And again we spoke last time about how confounding Jesus's actions were. You see, when it seems he should be speeding off to take care of a friend, he resists until the friend is dead, and then and only then he begins to address the "where" question. Now he says we have to go to Lazarus. I mean, now that his friend is gone, Jesus is anxious to go to a place that we know is full of threats, that we know is filled with people who would like to see him dead, that we know wanted to stone him the last time. Again, how mystifying is that "where" question to the disciples. They simply resign themselves to following their Lord even when the where decision makes no sense at all to them. And we saw that summed up in

Thomas, his devotion and his despondency are expressed when he says: *"Let us go, that we may die with him."*

Well, so far we've got four of our six questions answered. I mean, the "who" is Jesus, the "what" is weeping, the "when" is only after Jesus knows that Lazarus has died, the "where" is the site of Lazarus's burial, a place that is incredibly hostile to Jesus, and the next question we want to ask is the "how" question. And that is how is it, how did Jesus weep? And again, scripture is not silent here. It says in *John 11:33: 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. And he said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus wept.* We see Jesus was deeply moved and greatly troubled and then he began to weep. This verb, there is a verb that describes how Jesus wept, and the verb is associated with the snorting of a horse. It implies great sorrow but it also implies great indignation. It's the kind of cry you might expect from somebody who's lost his little girl to a drunk driver or a young mom of four who's lost a husband to cancer. There's something other than deep sorrow that's going on here. There's this sense of deep, deep indignation, a sense that this is not the way things were supposed to be. And of course all that is compounded by the fact that we know that within hours these very people who have caused Jesus to

weep, they're all going to be rejoicing, they're all going to be celebrating the resurrection of Lazarus. And so we see Jesus weeping and we know that he alone knows that their sorrow's about to come to an end. So the big question is why then is he weeping?

As the elders begin distributing the bread, I want us to consider this morning the tears of Jesus. You know, we worship a God who was literally driven to tears by our situation. We already know the who, the what, the when, the where, and the how of his weeping. The big question that we want to address this morning is the "why." We'll look at that next. But as the communion is being distributed, I want us to consider first the warning that God gives about communion itself. *1 Corinthians 11:28-32* says this, it says: *But a let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.* You know, I say this every time, I say communion is extremely serious business, and to enter into it in a -- an unworthy manner is to literally court disaster, I mean, what the scripture was talking about, not to beat about the bush, God was talking about killing people who enter into communion

in an unworthy manner. So I say if you're not absolutely confident that you're a child of the king and if you first need perhaps to be reconciled with your brother before you bring your sacrifice to the altar, well then as the elements come to you, just pass them on. I say this each time, I say, nobody's going to look at you strangely. They may well think that you're wise for doing that. On the other hand, I also want to point out that a mistake we could make of thinking that unless we're spotlessly perfect we're not really worthy to receive communion. That, too, is a mistake. Being a child of the King doesn't mean that you never sin, it doesn't mean that you never fail, and what it does mean is that salvation is a gift that nobody is capable of earning. As Dane Ortlund puts it: "In the kingdom of God, the one thing that qualifies you is knowing that you don't qualify, and the one thing that disqualifies you is thinking that you do." It also means that when we do fail, because we have God's Holy Spirit within us, we are enabled to understand God's conviction, we grieve as children who know that we have a father who longs to forgive us, who longs to cleanse us. God says in *1 John 1:9*: *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* So being a child of the King doesn't mean that we are without sin, it means that when we sin, we have an advocate with the Father, that is to say we have someone in heaven who is speaking out on our behalf. *1 John 2:1* says: *My dear children, I write this to you so*



*that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father -- Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. Because we have Jesus's righteousness and not our own righteousness, we are free to eat from his table. So if you love your Lord, don't deny yourself the privilege that Jesus has purchased for each us. You know, he lived the life we were supposed to live and then he died the death we all deserved to die in our place so that we could be made worthy of heaven. And Jesus, the scripture tells us this morning, was deeply moved and greatly troubled, not just for Lazarus' situation, but for all of our situations. Jesus was deeply moved and greatly troubled to the point of tears. Contemplate for a moment the fact of Jesus, God himself, weeping for us.*

*1 Corinthians, the 11th chapter, 23rd verse says this: For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." So take, and eat.*

Well, we want to address that one question that lingers in all of the other reporter's questions that are there and that's the "why" question. So why is it that Jesus wept? Well, I can't say for certain because scripture doesn't give that specific detail, but we

can reverently speculate a bit, that is to say we can take some selective guesses based on what the scripture tells us about Jesus. There are at least five different reasons why Jesus might have burst into tears at the site of Lazarus's tomb. The very first one might have been Lazarus himself. You see, the curse of Adam that every one of us has inherited means that every single one of us in this room has inherited a death sentence. I mean, we may hope for a long, healthy life, and we may exercise and eat all the right things and do all the right stuff just hoping that we have that kind of health, but absolutely none of us gets a guarantee, and we all know that. So every time we get sick, every time we take a medical test, every time we go through the process of aging, we become more and more aware of the fact that we're all under this death sentence, and it tends to hang over us all the time. I mean, we live with the notion that eventually every one of us is going to have to come face to face with death. Lazarus had to face that twice. The scriptures says in *Hebrews 9:27*: *It is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment.* You know, it was only Lazarus and a small handful of others who were raised from the dead to whom that doesn't apply because actually they had to go through the process of dying not once, but twice. I mean, Lazarus first went the way of sickness. I imagine he just grew sicker and sicker and he knew that the end was coming and he went through it only to have that process reversed by the supernatural power of the

voice of God. We can assume Lazarus was a believer in Jesus Christ who had by faith entered into something about to be eternal life when somehow or other for God's purpose he got pulled back from that. He found his journey was going to be interrupted. And so Jesus gives Lazarus life once again but it wasn't eternal life, the same eternal life that he's promised to all of us. And so Lazarus literally had to go through the process of dying twice. Perhaps Jesus was weeping for that.

The second and most obvious reason for why Jesus was weeping was the overwhelming grief and the sorrow that he saw in Martha and Mary and the rest of the family. And all of that makes perfect sense until you factor in the point that Jesus knew that within a matter of minutes, all of that grief was going to be replaced with rejoicing. So why was Jesus moved to weep? Well, the third reason is that it wasn't this death per se that Jesus was weeping about, but death itself. That Jesus had seen firsthand and knew and experienced what it is the curse of Adam had accomplished. See, only Jesus knew fully what man was intended to be, of what Adam had in his grasp and had freely given up. Perhaps Jesus was weeping about how far we had fallen from where we once were in the garden. Perhaps he was weeping over the hold that death now had on us over a creature who was never destined for death in the first place. I mean, consider what Jesus is facing. He is about to encounter the

rotting flesh of his dear friend Lazarus. Perhaps it was that fact that drove Jesus to tears. You see, death and decay were complete strangers to the Garden of Eden but now they're very familiar enemies to Jesus, to Martha, to Mary, and certainly to Lazarus. Jesus alone knew exactly how God had intended for their lives to be as exalted bearers of His image. Jesus alone knew exactly how far they had fallen from that lofty design.

You know, a while back I mentioned I had seen a video, a very disturbing video of a Chinese circus. I spoke about this a couple of years ago. It was a Chinese circus, and in that circus, one of the featured acts was a bear dressed in a tutu holding a parasol riding a tricycle. I mean, it was grotesque for me to see this apex predator like an American brown bear reduced to a carnival side show. I mean, it was absolutely degrading to the animal, it was degrading to those who watched, but it may contain a clue as to why Jesus was weeping. You see, we are not just an apex predator like that brown bear was. We humans are the apex of all of creation. We are the crown jewel of the same God who made eagles and whales and bears. However, in all of creation there's only one creature whom God says in *Genesis 1:26*: "*Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.*" And I think we seldom take the time to contemplate the enormity of the privilege that was, that we have been called to be the bearers of the *imago dei*, the image of God.

You know, an eagle may capture some of God's glory in its majesty, a bear may capture some of it in its power, a whale can capture some of it in its immense strength, but at best, those are only little pieces of what it means to represent the glory of God. God gave to only one creature the privilege of representing his glory to the universe. It is we humans alone who bear the image of God. So in all of the created universe, there's no other creature that can make that claim and yet because of Adam's fall, we are now creatures captured by the curse of death itself, creatures that are rotting in a tomb that Jesus is addressing. And Jesus, whose love for Lazarus was personal is now faced with seeing Lazarus's whole family devastated by the curse of the fall and the death that it brought working itself out in the lives of the people that he loves. It wasn't supposed to be this way.

As the elders begin distributing the cup, there's a fourth reason why Jesus might have wept. It's another reason that's backed up by scripture, and that is for the hardness of man's heart. You know, there's only two accounts recorded in scripture of Jesus weeping. We have Jesus here weeping at Lazarus's tomb, and the other account is Jesus's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Those are the only two places in scripture where it speaks of Jesus weeping. And as Jesus was coming into Jerusalem, he began to weep at that moment as well, and this is what he said in *Luke 19*, he said: "*Would that you,*

even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation." Jesus wept over the destruction of Jerusalem, and it was a destruction that took place because they refused the only one who could have ever rescued them. Jesus may well have wept at Lazarus's tomb because it revealed the hardness of heart that promised the very same kind of reaction, the very same kind of destruction. Just put yourself in the position of those who witnessed the miracle of Lazarus's resurrection. I mean, you know all of the people in that area, they know Lazarus is dead, they know that he's been dead for a while, they know that he is rapidly decomposing in that tomb. And you see Jesus command him to come out of the tomb and there steps forth Lazarus. You know, the scripture describes two very different responses that people had to this miracle. In *John 11:45* it says this, it says: *Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him.* That's the first group. Then the scripture spends a whole lot of time speaking about the second group: *But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the Council,*

and said, "What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation." But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all. Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish." He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. So from that day on they made plans to put him to death. What a stunning division this describes. You have one group that says Jesus is Lord, we need to worship him. You have another group that says Jesus's miracles, they're indisputable. He's raised somebody from the dead but he's a threat to our way of life. We need to kill him. I mean, if you ever needed scriptural proof of the impossibility of convincing people of the truth of the gospel by logic or argument or persuasion or even by signs and wonders apart from the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit, then this is it. 1 Corinthians 1:18 says: *For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.*

But you know, before you consign Caiaphas and his ilk to the

uniquely wicked, consider that they represent every single person who refuses to believe the truth of the gospel regardless of how self-evident the proof of that is. You know, Jesus once told a story about another man named Lazarus, he was a poor man, a desperate man, he begged to eat the crumbs that fell from a rich man's table. And eventually they both died, and the rich man went to hell and Lazarus went to great peace and joy at Abraham's bosom, and at one point in the story the rich man is in hell and he's begging Abraham to send Lazarus to his remaining brothers who are here on earth to warn them about the hell that awaits them, and Abraham refuses, and this is what he says to them in *Luke 16:31*. He says: *"If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead."* What Abraham is saying is if the scripture itself isn't powerful enough to save, then virtually nothing is. Abraham's words turned out to be prophetic because this is exactly what happened with the other Lazarus, the Lazarus that Jesus loved, he rose from the dead. Just as Abraham said, neither were they convinced. What God was demonstrating was that even the sight of a dead man, a rotting man raised from death and decay was not enough to sway those who were determined ahead of time not to believe. I think it's Ben Franklin who said: *"A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still."* Well, the point is there is virtually nobody on this planet who cannot believe the gospel for lack of evidence. Folks



don't believe the gospel for one reason; they don't want to believe the gospel. That's why God will eventually say *every mouth will be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God in Romans 3:19.*

But understand this, we have the principle of giving the gospel knowing that we were no different than Caiaphas and his ilk. See, by the grace of God alone, our eyes were opened and the gospel made sense only because God was willing to make us willing, willing to make us hear and see. And by that same grace we present the same gospel in the hope that some other blind eyes will see and that some other deaf ears will be given the grace to hear. I know for me, myself, when I encounter hostile unbelief, I just flash back to my own hostile unbelief. I think of the grace that got me out of that. Here's the problem. The minute I lose sight of that, the minute I don't remember that, I become contemptuous of unbelief as if I were somehow above it. I wasn't. *Ephesians 2:8* says: *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not of your own doing; it is the gift of God.*

Well, the fifth and the last reason for why Jesus wept at Lazarus' tomb is one that I am not convinced of at all. It's been suggested by numerous commentators that Jesus wept for the horror of what he knew was coming. The cross was a mere matter of days away, and the

overwhelming terror of it brought Jesus to tears, so it is thought by some. You know, the dread that Jesus faced was not the physical torment that he knew was coming, it was not the psychological torment of knowing that he was being abandoned by those whom he loved, we know it was the existential horror of having to face his father clad only in the filth of our sins. Jesus, the beloved son, was about to face the wrath and the fury of his father, not for his sins because he lived a life of absolute perfection, but for ours. And we know that Jesus sweat great drops of blood over the horror that would soon take place in the garden of Gethsemane, so we know there was blood, we know there was sweat but we don't know if there were actual tears. And I say I doubt that because the only emotion I see expressed in scripture about Jesus anticipating the cross was the emotion of joy. *Hebrews 12:2* says: *Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that he was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.* You see, Jesus could look right through the terror and the horror of the cross to the joy of glorifying his father by ransoming and rescuing his sheep. And so in spite of how thoroughly he despised the humiliation of the cross, he willingly undertook it on our behalf. So Jesus weeping for himself just strikes me as just too self-serving, it just lessens to me the heroics of the cross. It speaks far more of self than Jesus ever gave evidence of.

Now to be sure, shortly before the cross Jesus did evidence the deep turmoil that he was in but he showed none of the self pity that tears might have spoken to. In *John 12:27* Jesus said this, he said: *"Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name."* See, it just seems incongruous to me that Jesus would be weeping about the very task that he came to earth for, because as awful as this was, this was Jesus' moment, and he prayed that God would be glorified through the cross because there was nothing more precious to Jesus than the glory of God. Again, this was the opportunity to take the curse of Adam and turn it into the triumph of the glory of Christ over sin.

John Piper says it well when he says this, he says, "The deepest reasons why Christians live for the glory of God is because God lives for the glory of God. We are passionate about God's glory because God is passionate about God's glory." So I guess I just have a hard time picturing Jesus weeping over the greatest triumph there ever was of the glory of God. And furthermore, Jesus actively rejected the tears of others on his behalf. Luke describes this incident that took place as Jesus was on his way to the cross. This is *Luke 23:27*, it says this: *And there followed him a great multitude of the people and of women who were mourning and lamenting for him, but turning to them Jesus said, "Daughters*

*of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!'* So Jesus is saying flat out, if there's any weeping to be done, weep for those who know not the gospel. And here's where the shortest verse in scripture comes down to us. Jesus wept. I mean, that's about the only part of this that we know is an absolute fact and the rest is all speculation, much of it based on scripture but still speculation nonetheless.

One other thing that we know that is not speculation is that Jesus wept over Jerusalem and its hard heart, and that he warned the daughters of Jerusalem to weep for those hard hearts that they would encounter. Jesus was the only one who ever had the absolute right to respond to those hard hearts with judgment, and yet he responded with tears. So that raises the question for us, for me, and that question is: Do we weep for the lost? I don't mean necessarily in the literal sense that you have to have tears streaming down your cheeks, but the question is do you grieve in your spirit for those who are lost? I mean, we know Jesus grieved over a world that rejects what you and I once rejected but now embrace, and we know that most will receive justice for that, but you and I have received mercy. That means mercy's not optional for

us. *James 2:13* gives this warning, it says: *For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.* So we pray for a heart that weeps for the lost. Pray that you and I would be afflicted with the very same grief that Jesus was afflicted with when he wept at the tomb of Lazarus, grieve for the curse of death that surrounds every single one of us, grieve over the fallenness of mankind that has no idea of the high calling that we were meant to be, grieve as well over the hardness of heart that will not then cannot see the glory of Christ. But don't stop at grieving. Pray that God would give you and me the means and the ability to share the gospel with someone who is headed over a cliff. And when you start to think that that's an impossible task, it's just too hard to do, I just don't have the means, I don't have the ability, I don't have the skill, I don't have the knowledge, when you start to think like that, just do this one simple exercise, just look in a mirror and realize that person who is staring back at you is a miracle of God's grace, a miracle who by God's grace was brought to the point where he could believe, where his eyes were opened and his ears began to hear. Look in the mirror, and chances are you will see fairly quickly that with God, nothing is impossible.

As the elders come forward to distribute the cup -- they have distributed the cup as you have it in your hand, again I guess the

question that I want to ask each of us to do or what I would like each of us to do is before we take the cup is to ask God to give us hearts that are willing to weep. I know how easy it is to look around at a world that is going down the drain and to just tsk-tsk and to shake our heads, as if somehow we are above all of that. We are the recipients of grace, we are the recipients of mercy. Give us a heart, Lord, that grieves for those who have not yet received that mercy. Give us a heart that wants nothing more than to see that mercy spread throughout the entire world. Take, and drink.

I want to share with you a story. I've shared this with you once before, twice before, but I think it's worth repeating. It's the head, heart, and feet part and it has to do with weeping and Jesus's weeping at the tomb. I was -- I had a relationship, this probably goes back about four or five years. I'm sorry if I'm repeating this but again, I think it's worth it. My dentist and I had a great relationship. I used to come and I was captive in his chair, so I used to use that opportunity and pray that I would have the opportunity to share the gospel with him. And he was a wonderful guy and he was very interested, and I got to bring him some books and he got to bring me some really weird books 'cause he was into some other stuff, and so we would talk about the gospel. And he got sick, he got -- actually something happened to his back and he was hurt, and he was in so much pain that out of the clear

blue sky, one day I got a phone call from his wife. He lived in Matamoros, and his wife said, Michael is in incredible pain, and he's just desperate, he's looking -- he was wondering if you would come and pray for him. Now Michael's not a Christian. He thought Christianity was interesting, but -- so I said sure, I'd be happy to. So I drove down to his place, and I went into his room, and he was lying in a bed and he was gasping and panting because he was in so much pain. And so his wife asked, you know, he's -- Michael's here, I came and sat down and I start to pray. And I'm not usually given to tears. I've mentioned this before, but God just went boom! And I just burst into tears. And so -- I still remember praying for him through tears. And I was just so struck with, you know, I was like where did this come from, you know, and I'm not suggesting that that instantly makes somebody a Christian, and I don't know where Michael -- I still pray for him and I've heard, you know, he's moved out down south, but I remember seeing him a couple of years later at a function, and he was talking to some other people and I walk up and he walked up and he turned around and he said, "This guy cried for me." So that means something. I think what God was just trying to say is, you know, the scripture says weep for those who weep, and what he's saying is we are so concerned that we have all the right answers and have all the right stuff lined up and our ducks all lined up, and what God is saying is enter into the grief that I was willing to enter into with

Lazarus, enter into that grief for all of those people around you who are dying and rotting, who have no hope whatsoever, and yeah, every one of us can weep with those who weep. You do that and you will instantly get a hearing, somebody wants to know where you're coming from because he knows you care. And so my prayer for us this morning is just to repeat the same prayer.

*Lord, I pray that you would give us a heart that grieves, give us a heart that is willing to weep, give us a heart that is willing to show others that we are willing to weep. And I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*