

**God Gets It!**

By: Rev. Mark Breese

*Pastor Mark is the Agency Minister and the Director of Ministry & Community partnerships at Community Missions.*

You have probably heard some version of the story where children are asked to pick a bible verse to memorize. One child chooses John 11:35, “Jesus Wept”—because it was the shortest verse in the bible.<sup>1</sup>

The text for the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in lent this year is John 11:1-46, and yes, it included the short verse, “Jesus Wept.” The reason Jesus was weeping is because he became overwhelmed by the grief at the home of Mary and Martha as they, and the whole community, mourned the death of their brother, Lazarus. Jesus knew Lazarus had died, and knew that it was going to be sad when he went there. But I wonder if he himself expected to cry? After all, he had gone there to actually reverse all that grief. He was there to raise Lazarus from the dead!

I think that this (Jesus weeping) is the most important aspect of this entire passage. Sure, raising someone from the dead is pretty impressive. But we kind of expect that. This is Jesus, after all. He had been going around healing people and doing all this miraculous stuff. You’d expect something big and show to happen here. But the crying, that we don’t expect.

At the beginning of the Gospel of John we are told that the “Word” [Jesus] was “with God”, and “was God”, and that the “Word” became flesh and dwelt among us. Jesus was God incarnate, fully human...just like you and me. God wept. God understands our struggles, fears, and suffering, because God *lived and experienced them in all their physical and emotional fullness*. Jesus wept.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory.” John 1:1, 14

That’s why “Jesus wept” is such a shocking and powerful moment in the story, and why it is so important right now.

**John 11:32-35**

When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled.

“Where have you laid him?” he asked.

“Come and see, Lord,” they replied. Jesus wept.

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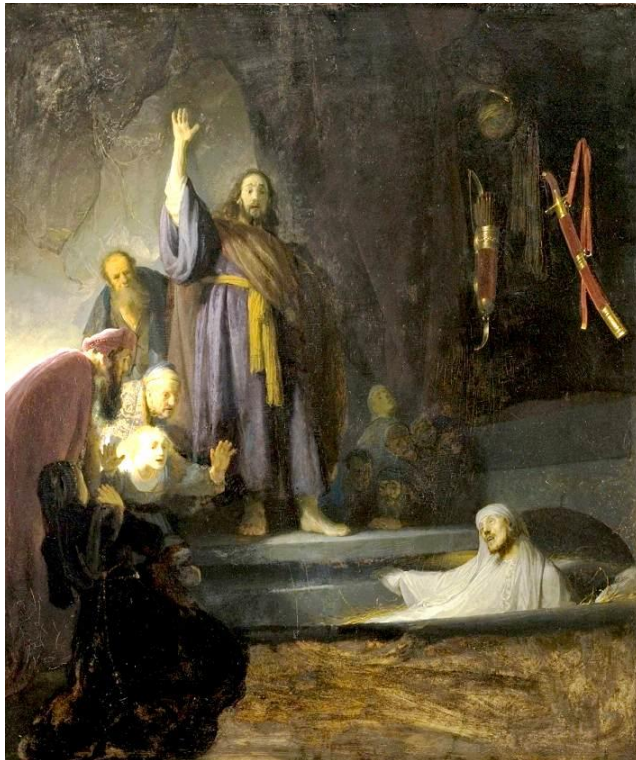
“Come and see, Lord,” they replied. Jesus wept.

I often try to remind people, as often as I can, that God is with us in the middle of difficult times, such as we face right now. I know that helps us cope, it comforts us. But we need to make sure we understand the actual *fullness* of that presence. It is not some detached, or even doting, divine presence. The presence of God is the presence of the eternal author of the universe that actually chose to experience the limited, fraught and finite life of a human being. God Gets It! God Gets Us!!

Jesus Wept, and for all that is sad for me to hear, understanding the implications of those two words, gives me a sense of peace in the midst of trouble. When I turn to God for help and comfort, I know that God, really and actually, gets it. As far as I'm concerned, that is pretty cool.

Pastor Mark

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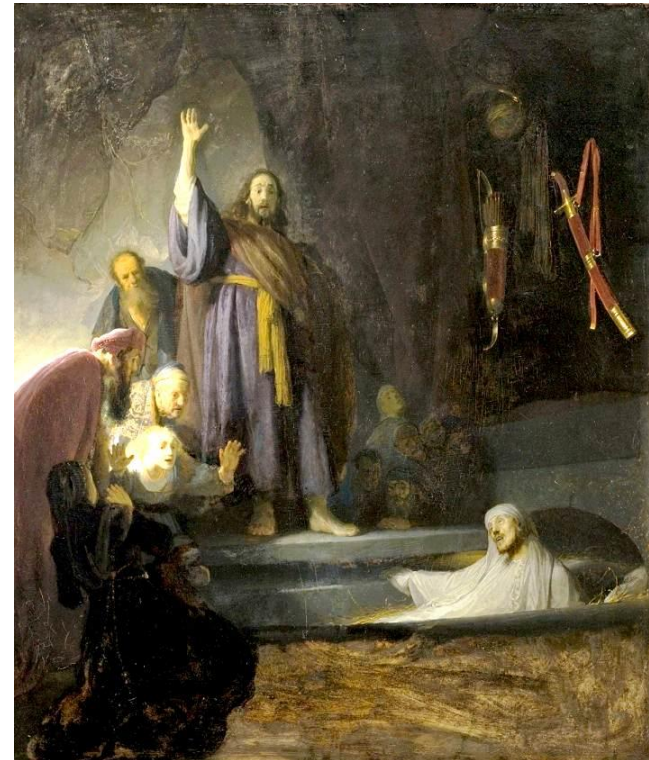
"The Raising of Lazarus" (v. 1630–1632), Rembrandt (1606-1669)

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