

## **Jesus Wept: “He Gets Us”**

### **Remembrance Sunday 2023**

There are a lot of beautiful verses in the Bible,  
a lot of scriptures worth putting on a wall hanging,  
cross-stitching onto a pillow,  
engraving on a coffee mug.

I have many of those.

But there’s one verse in particular that I think is the most beautiful.

It’s rarely engraved on a mug,

but it’s worthy of engraving on your heart.

The most beautiful, and the most simple.

It’s this verse – from the Gospel of John chapter 11 –

“Jesus wept.”

That’s it. Jesus wept.

Jesus cried.

Let me explain why I think this is the most beautiful verse.

It’s from the story of Lazarus.

Lazarus was Jesus’ dear friend – yes, Jesus had dear friends too.

And Lazarus had fallen ill, gravely ill.

But by the time the word reached Jesus that his friend was sick,

by the time he was able to get himself to Lazarus’ house,

it was too late.

Lazarus had died. It’s awful.

Lazarus’ sister Mary comes rushing out to Jesus, sobbing with grief,

and in her pain she cries out “oh, Jesus why couldn’t you have been here sooner?”

And then this verse, this simplest of verses:

Jesus wept.

He wept because Mary has lost her brother,

he wept because he has lost his friend.  
Jesus wept.

So why do I think this is the most beautiful of all verses?

Because if ever you wanted proof that God understands what it is to be human, this is it.

If ever you needed the reassurance that there is no place in your life that Jesus hasn't traveled to, this is it.

In the words of the ad campaign that's been all over TV,  
"He gets us." He gets us.

If you haven't seen those *He Gets Us videos*, well,  
their premise is so simple.

Just a constant, gentle reminder that what we go through,  
Jesus went through:

that being human is something he fully understands.

He was lonely sometimes, they remind us.

Sometimes he was misunderstood.

He loved being with people, and enjoyed a good party as much as the next one.

He had parents who worried about him.

And one of the ads is as simple as the verse it's based on.

It shows image after image of people in sorrow;

people holding each other after a tragedy,

people grieving together –

and then on a black screen those two words:

Jesus Wept.

He Gets Us.

That's it, really.

Whatever sorrow we have lived with, lived through,

whatever loss, whatever grief, Jesus gets it.  
God gets us.

Many years ago, the pastor of Riverside Church in New York  
lost his son in a tragic accident when his car went into Boston Harbor.  
The next Sunday, that pastor,  
William Sloane Coffin, stood up in the pulpit to preach.  
And what he spoke about what he knew to be true:  
that the God he loved was walking *with* him through the fire.  
And something he said that day is something that I've carried with me ever  
since.

In the midst of his overwhelming grief, William Coffin said this:  
*My own consolation lies in knowing that it was not the will of God that  
Alex die;  
that when the waves closed over the sinking car,  
God's heart was the first of all our hearts to break."*  
God's heart was the first of all our hearts to break.  
Jesus wept.

That's why, to me, this is the most beautiful of verses.  
Our griefs are shared, fully, with the One who lived them himself,  
just as our joys are fully shared,  
our worries, our hopes, our very lives.  
All that we have, all that we are,  
is held in the heart of the God who created us,  
in the love of the Savior who walked beside us.

This, this truth, is what we remember on this special Sunday.  
Everything today proclaims that we are held and loved  
by Love. Always, always, held in love.  
In tears and in rejoicing, in our loss *and* in our healing,  
always held.

The words that our choir sings to us, the words of this beautiful Mass,  
are the words of Christ's presence among us:

blessed is the one who comes to us in the name of the Lord,  
they sang to us.

The bread and the cup that we will share together,  
are the powerful reminders of his life and love given for us, given to us,  
so that we will never be alone.

Everything today proclaims that we are held and loved, by Love.  
By the one who gets us.

The one who rejoices with us ... *and* weeps with us.

Just as Jesus wept with Mary for the brother she loved, for Lazarus.

Remember, though, that the story of Lazarus doesn't end in grief.  
It ends in hope. It ends in life.

By the power of the life within him,  
Jesus restores Lazarus to life, calls him out of his tomb.  
The story ends in life.

This, too, is what we remember today.

That all of *our* stories end in life.

This is the great hope of our faith, the great assurance of our faith:  
that beyond this place, and beyond our sight,  
there is a place of love where those we cherished live on,  
where *we* will live on.

It is that place that has already welcomed in each person  
whose name I am about to read.

This we believe.

As surely as we believe in a God who weeps when we weep,  
we believe in a God who rejoices when we rejoice,  
because — we believe in life that never ends.

So, too, we believe that those whom I will name now

are safe, and loved, and cherished,  
in a place where one day, one day  
we will see our saints again –  
and there will be no more tears,  
no more weeping, and no more goodbyes. Amen.