

The Savior's Solemn Groan

By David Harrell

Bible Text: John 11:17-36
Preached on: Sunday, November 9, 2014

I would like for you to take your Bibles and join me by turning to John's Gospel, chapter 11. We will be examining verses 17 through 36 and I've entitled my discourse to you this morning, "The Savior's Solemn Groan." Having read the passage a few minutes ago, I'll not read it again but let me prepare your minds for what we are going to be examining by thinking about the issue of sin and death. By nature, we give little thought to the devastating power of sin, how it impacts our lives, even the lives of others. Many times at best, we can see the speck in our neighbor's eye and, of course, we can't see the log in our own. The hideous consequences of sin typically remain a mystery. We don't experience it immediately but we always will see it most vividly when we are confronted with death because the wages of sin is death. Death is not natural, you must understand this. It is not rooted in the nature of the universe, simply an expression of the way things are. God did not create us to die, he created us to live. Death is unnatural. It was brought on mankind by a shattering event that shook the material universe and so profoundly impacted creation, so terribly warped human nature as to affect the experience of every person who has ever lived. Death is the result of sin, sin first committed in the Garden of Eden. The Apostle Paul tells us in Romans 5 that sin entered the world through one man and death through sin and in this way, death came to all men. You will recall that because of sin, Adam and Eve lost their innocence and that innocence was replaced with guilt and with shame. Frantically, they tried in vain to soothe their consciences by covering themselves with the fig leaves of their own efforts but God cursed them and all who would come after them. Although Adam and Eve should have died, God set into motion that very day his mercy, his grace, his love. In that text we read that the Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.

Again, man could not cover his own sin. His best efforts could never satisfy divine justice so a substitute needed to die to cover sin, to appease the holy wrath of God. Of course, that first substitute was merely a picture of the ultimate substitute that would come and in that first sacrifice, we see a shadow of a coming Redeemer, one that would one day make atonement for sin. God provided a substitute. An innocent animal was killed that day and as its blood was spilled upon the ground, his great mercy and grace was first pictured. God provided the garment to cover their guilt and shame. What an astonishing thing that must have been for Adam and Eve to witness the first death, an innocent death, to see a crimson stain on the ground that was required for their sin, a picture of a coming Lamb that would one day take away the sin for all who would place their faith in his saving grace.

Thus the glorious story of redemption was set into motion that day, a plan sovereignly ordained by a holy God in eternity past, a plan ultimately to bring glory to himself and all through Scripture, we see the scarlet thread of redemption. It is the theme of every song. It is woven into every story and what a glorious thought to know that though our sins be

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as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow all because we have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. Although it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes the judgment according to Hebrews 9:27, although the wages of sin is death, there is good news in Christ. We have eternal life as the free gift of God through Christ. But God had to provide the perfect substitute, one who was a man to die for man but one who was completely God to be the perfect spotless Lamb, the only one who could satisfy God's holy justice, the Lord Jesus Christ. As we look at death, whenever we come to a graveyard, whenever we see a corpse in a casket, we are reminded of sin and death screams of the urgent need for a personal Savior and God provided that through his Son.

In this scene before us in John 11, we witness the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the eternal Word veiled in human flesh, coming to those who love him and they are in great need of him and he sets the stage here for the most magnificent miracle of his earthly ministry, the raising of Lazarus from the dead. But not only is he coming to those who love him, he's also coming to those who do not love him but also need him. He's coming to give one more irrefutable proof of his Messianic claims which is the purpose of John's Gospel. He's also coming to prepare the nation of Israel for his triumphal entry into Jerusalem and he's also preparing to bring glory to the Father as well as to himself as he prepares to finish the work of him who sent him to the cross of Calvary.

So I'd like for you to join me this morning by looking at this section of Scripture under four headings and I think this will be helpful for you. First of all, we're going to see a sorrowful scene. Secondly, we will witness a splendid promise. Thirdly, we will hear a solemn question. And finally, we will behold a sobering reaction. By way of context, after a deliberate two day delay, Jesus and his disciples have traveled four days to come to Bethany so that Lazarus would have been in the grave for four days. This of course, was the Father's will. This was very important to leave absolutely no doubt in the mind of the Jewish witnesses that Lazarus was raised from the dead by Jesus. You may recall that some of the rabbis believed that the soul hovers over the body for three days until it begins to see the body change. It is hoping to reenter that body but once decomposition sets in, it will depart. According to their superstitious beliefs, at that point there would be no hope of resuscitation. Therefore, Jesus' two day delay would ensure that Lazarus had been irreversibly dead making his resurrection all the more glorious, demonstrating that he is indeed the resurrection and the life.

Now, the Jews did not practice embalming, therefore, when a person died, they buried that person on the same day. Cremation, by the way, was denounced as a heathen practice contrary to the whole spirit of Old Testament teaching concerning the sanctity of the body. The Jews had many rules to govern their conduct when a person died, rules that not only would properly express grief and honor to the deceased but also help them avoid ritual defilement. For example, no one could prepare a meal or eat or drink as long as a

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corpse was in the house. In fact, they would never eat in the presence of the dead. As soon as a person died, the first duty of the people would be to stand erect and rend one of their inner garments, not their outer garments but their inner garments in the front and they had to be rent about the size of a hand's length. In the case of parents, it was never to be closed up again but for others it could be mended on the 30th day. As quickly as the corpse was removed from the house, they would immediately go in and turn the chairs and all of the couches in the opposite direction, they would all be reversed. All the mourners would come in and be required to sit on the ground or on small stools except on Shabbat. Men would walk separately from the women in a funeral procession as they would go to the grave site and according to their customs, deep mourning was to last for seven days, the first three of those days were for the purpose of "weeping." And during this period of time, they were forbidden to do many things: they weren't allowed to wash; they weren't allowed to anoint oneself; to put on shoes; to study; to do any kind of business whatsoever. After that, a lighter mourning would occur for 30 days.

So this helps you understand the context here. Jesus comes, he's been in the grave four days. So number one: this is a sorrowful scene. Let's go to the text. Notice verse 17 it says, "So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off." May I remind you that such close proximity to Jerusalem posed a great risk for Jesus and his disciples because just two months earlier in late December at the Feast of Dedication you will recall that they surrounded him, wanting to kill him and so Jesus had to escape from that murderous hostility beyond the Jordan.

Verse 19, "and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary, to console them concerning their brother." That there were "many of the Jews" coming to console Mary and Martha indicates that this was a prominent family. We also believe that it was probably a wealthy family because later in chapter 12 we see how Mary anoints the feet of Jesus with very costly perfume of pure nard. It's also important to know that there would have been hired professional mourners on the scene. This was consistent with Jewish customs. In fact, the Jewish Mishna which is the oral law, required that even poor families honor the dead by hiring at least two flute players and at least one professional wailing woman. Can you imagine having that job? Since this was probably a wealthy family, they would have had more than two flutists, they would've had probably a number of musicians and a number of wailing women. The friends of the deceased would typically spend much time around the tomb for three days after the death and burial assuming they would be nearer to the departed soul hovering over it but when the fourth day came and the soul departed because of the corruption of putrefaction, their grief would then intensify greatly. They would beat their breasts; they would wail with loud lamentation. So to be sure, this is a sorrowful scene.

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So Jesus comes to them. What a beautiful picture of tender compassion, of love, of mercy for, indeed, no man can ever come to Jesus unless Jesus first comes to him. No man would ever be raised from spiritual or physical death apart from the intentional pursuit of the one who is the resurrection and the life. Now notice what happens here in verse 20, "Martha therefore, when she heard that Jesus was coming, went to meet Him, but Mary stayed at the house." Now, this is in keeping with the very different personalities that we read about in the Gospel record concerning Martha and Mary. Martha being the active one, the one hustling about while Mary is the quieter one that seemed to remain, for example, seated in the house here as the object of consolation for the mourners which was the custom of the Jews. Apparently someone had informed Martha that Jesus was coming so she goes out to meet him and then in her grief as well as in her expression of faith, verse 21, "Martha then said to Jesus, 'Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.'" Now given her unbelief reported later on in verse 39, we cannot assume that by this statement Martha has confidence that Jesus could ask the Father and immediately raise her brother from the dead. Though she does have complete faith in the intimate oneness that Jesus enjoys with the Father and, therefore, the Father's willingness to answer his prayers. Moreover, it is fair to assume that she believed that her brother would not have died had Jesus been in his presence to heal him.

Verse 23, "Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.'" Now, here Jesus graciously acknowledges the general truth that she has just stated regarding the resurrection on the last day, something that the Jews believed but he was also speaking of Lazarus' resurrection. Then, "Martha said to Him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.'" You see, obviously Martha doesn't realize Jesus is referring to an immediate resurrection. She merely assumes that Jesus, like the rest of the mourners, was trying to console her but that Jesus was about to raise her brother from the dead right now didn't go through her mind. As I thought about this, it occurred to me that it is far less a strain on our faith to believe in future promises than in present blessings. Isn't it true that somehow we can look off into the future, into the distance, and somehow God is so much more powerful in coming days and so much more glorious and merciful than he is now? With vibrant faith, we can come together and we can sing about the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and yet in the present, we cower in defeat as if his promise to never leave us nor forsake us has never been put into effect. With exuberant faith, we anticipate a glorified body and yet we can struggle like worms in the present as if we have never been made partakers of the divine nature, as if somehow all of these wonderful truths are somewhere in the distant future and it doesn't really relate to where we're at now. With animated faith, we await future glory and yet in the present, we can mope around like Eeyores failing to believe this very day that we are more than conquerors, that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us, that those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength and on and on it goes.

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So Jesus response to Martha by referring to his person and work in the present continuous tense. "Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die.'" So John moves us from the sorrowful scene to number 2: a splendid promise. A splendid promise available right now in the present, "I am the resurrection and the life." This is the fifth of seven "I am" statements, "I am" being the name of God that he revealed to Moses in Exodus 3 indicating self-existence. You will recall that Moses asked, "What shall I tell the people when they ask what is your name?" And God said to Moses, "I am who I am," and he said, "thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, I am has sent me to you." In other words, "I am the self-existent, eternal One who has always and will always exist." Now, previously Jesus has used this title of himself in John's Gospel. He has said, "I am the bread of life. I am the light of the world. I am the door of the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I am," here, "the resurrection and the life." He will go on to say, "I am the true and living way and I am the true vine."

So here the great "I am" declares this magnificent promise which gloriously introduces and illumines the miracle that is about to take place. "I am the resurrection and the life, he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die." He is in essence saying, "I am personally God, very God, the very source of life including the believer's resurrection and eternal life. I am not only this in the future, I am this in the present." This is something Martha failed to grasp as she should as do we. He's basically saying, "Martha, don't merely focus your thoughts on an abstract belief in a future resurrection, look to me right now, the one who is the resurrection and the life." And so he is gently leading her away with her preoccupation over her departed brother and diverting her attention to the Lord of life that's standing right in front her. I fear that too often we are more preoccupied with future blessings than we are with the one who gives them. We must learn to focus on the giver more than the gifts that he gives as wonderful as they are.

"I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die." What a marvelous promise to those of us who trust in Christ and what a dreadful fate for those who don't. You see, for the believer, death is merely a summons from the Father into the presence of his glory but death for the unbeliever is the King of terrors. It is a sentence of execution. A sentence to eternal death. I've had the unfortunate experience on a number of occasions to be with unbelievers right as they die. It's a terrible thing to witness. It doesn't always happen this way because many times they are maybe in a coma or they are sedated but you will begin to hear the most awful wailing and screaming. Sometimes you will see them literally get off their deathbed and begin to thrash about and to grasp to try to hang on to things as

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they hang on to life. How different for those of us who trust in Christ, who have been saved by his grace.

As we look at verse 25 and 26, we see how really the second clause confirms and even strengthens the first. Think about this: first he's saying that because of Christ, when a believer experiences physical death, you know, he is transformed to live in a state of sinless perfection and Christ will raise him up on the last day. I mean, we know from Scripture that when Christ returns, he will resurrect the body of every dead believer and unite that glorified body with their spirit that has already gone to be with the Lord. But the second clause then underscores this truth by assuring every believer still here on earth who believes in him that he will never, ever, ever die. That's what the grammar in the original language is basically saying. And will you notice, dear friends, there is not the word "unless" anywhere to be found. Unless the person decides he no longer wants to follow Christ. Unless the person sins in some egregious manner. Unless the person doesn't do all that their church authorities want them to do. Unless the person apostatizes. No, you don't see that anywhere. Scripture knows nothing of one losing their salvation.

As a footnote, I believe Jesus' words to Martha also speak of the reality of our spiritual state. I mean, think about it: before we had life in Christ, we were spiritually dead, right? We all know that. Scripture is clear about that. Therefore, the order of Jesus' statement is so important. He is the resurrection and the life. Christ must first raise us from the dead before he can give us life. This is regeneration, being born-again, that supernatural, instantaneous, impartation of spiritual life to the spiritually dead. This is why Jesus called the new birth in John 5:24 as that which causes us to pass out of death into life. What a great comfort this should be for all of us as believers that our precious Lord Jesus is our resurrection and our life. Without him we would have no hope. We would still be spiritual cadavers alienated from God, dead in our sin, at war with God, destined for eternal separation and eternal punishment but because of Christ, we can say with the Apostle Paul in Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ and it is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and delivered himself up for me."

So in an effort to help Martha focus her attention on him, he asked this question at the end of verse 26, "Do you believe this?" And here we come to number 3: a solemn question. And I would ask you, do you believe this? Do you believe that the Lord Jesus Christ was and is the great "I am"? God, very God? The resurrection and the life? If the answer is yes, he will give you eternal life. If the answer is no, he will sentence you to eternal death. "Martha, do you believe this?" And she said to him in verse 27, "Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ," in other words, the Messiah, "the Son of God, even He who comes into the world." My friends, here her confession demonstrates that she does indeed believe that he is the great "I am," the resurrection and the life, the

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Messiah of Israel, the Son of God. He, as she says, who comes into the world. This is Immanuel, God with us. We see this referenced in the Old Testament as the Deliverer sent from God. In fact, John the Baptist described him as "the expected one."

Verse 28, "When she had said this, she went away and called Mary her sister, saying secretly, 'The Teacher is here and is calling for you.'" By the way, I find great solace in this as I think about it because he has come to all of us, he also calls us to come to him, doesn't he? We see the same thing in our own lives, he delights in fellowshiping with us. In times of joy and in times of sorrow, we need to remember that the Master is here. He is here. He has come and he is always calling us.

"And when she heard it, she got up quickly and was coming to Him." By the way, this needs to be our response as well. Mary was in the midst of the mourners back at the house. She was the object of their consolations and probably what happened even though we can't say for sure but given their customs, Mary would have been seated in the midst of all of the mourners with all this music and all of this wailing and all of this lamenting and so Martha would have probably come in and whispered to her hoping that Mary would have an opportunity to go out and be with the Lord in private, to slip away and meet him and also avoid exposing Jesus to some of his violent adversaries from Jerusalem that were, no doubt, there in the house.

So Mary shakes off her sorrow, so to speak, and abandons her earthly comforters and she sets her mind on Christ and she goes out quickly to meet him. Verse 30, "Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha met Him. Then the Jews who were with her in the house, and consoling her, when they saw that Mary got up quickly and went out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there." Now of course, this is precisely what God wanted to happen. This didn't surprise him. He does all things according to the counsel of his will. He wanted the Jews to witness the miracle that was about to take place so naturally they come with her.

"Therefore, when Mary came where Jesus was, she saw Him, and fell at His feet, saying to Him, 'Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.'" Again, what a picture of reverence, of adoring worship, of faith. But I believe that the Spirit of God has also painted another picture within a picture. You've probably seen that before, you see a beautiful canvas, a beautiful painting but upon closer inspection, you look and you begin to see a painting within the painting that has some profound significance. I think that's what we have here, one that speaks to the issue of Jesus' solemn question pertaining to Martha's belief in his person and work as well as ours. If we look closely at the canvas of the Gospel record, we see Mary at the feet of Jesus on three separate occasions, each in a context unique to his three roles as prophet, priest and king. For example, in Luke 10 she is seen seated at his feet, worshiping him as a prophet as he proclaims the word of God.

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Here in John 11, she falls at his feet, worshiping him as the great High Priest, the one who the writer of Hebrews says has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, our High Priest who sympathizes with our weaknesses, the one who has asked us to draw near with confidence to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy, that we may find help in time of need. Then in the next chapter in John 12, she kneels at his feet and anoints them with very costly perfume and wipes his feet with her hair. There she is acknowledging him as King, the Messiah of Israel as he prepares to make his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. To be sure, Jesus was the predicted prophet, Scripture tells us, the one that God promised to raise up like Moses but the Jews rejected his word. Jesus was the great High Priest who sacrificed himself, the final and finished sacrifice that allows all who believe in him to enter into the presence behind the veil into the presence of the living God but the Jews would reject his atoning work. Jesus came also as the Messiah of Israel, that King of kings, offering the kingdom but they would not have that man rule over them. But not so Mary. What a picture of genuine saving faith. We would all do well to emulate our dear sister in Christ, wouldn't we? We need to sit at his feet to learn from him as the prophet, the living word of God. We need to fall at his feet and worship him as our faithful High Priest who is the final sacrifice for sin on our behalf. And we need to kneel at his feet and submit to him as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Verse 33, "When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit and was troubled." The term "weeping" here in verse 33 means "wailing." It's not just tears running down your cheeks, it's loud lamenting, loud wailing. This is what Mary was doing; this is what the Jews were doing. Then we have this fascinating statement, "He was deeply moved in spirit and was troubled." We've seen a sorrowful scene, a splendid promise and heard a solemn question and now we move to number 4: a sobering reaction. What does this mean, "He was deeply moved in spirit and was troubled"? I fear that the phrase "deeply moved" in the English language doesn't do justice to really what the Greek text says. We tend to interpret this as him being really emotionally upset as a result of the grief, he's feeling great empathy but, friends, it's much more than that. The Greek term here in extra biblical Greek referred to the snorting of a horse which is always a warning signal that the horse is angry. When applied to human beings, it refers to the same. It's speaking here of a sense of outrage, of anger, of emotional indignation. The term is used again in verse 38, Jesus therefore "again being deeply moved within," *embrimaomai*, "deeply moved within, came to the tomb." This is found as well in Matthew 9:30, "Jesus sternly warned them." It could be translated "to snort with anger; to be moved with anger; to admonish sternly." It's found as well in Mark 1:43 and Mark 14:5, always with the same idea. So what we see here is that Jesus was moved with anger, with indignation in spirit and John said he was troubled. That means to stir up: to agitate. In fact, the grammar says that he troubled himself, he shook himself, suggesting that he experienced a deep, visceral, inward disturbance at what he sees, what he hears, what he experiences.

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So when we piece this all together, dear friends, what we see is that Jesus was both filled with indignation and also stirred with great sympathy and this is what I would call the Savior's solemn groan. Imagine the scene: all of this weeping and wailing and all of these instruments, the hired professionals, the wailing women, emotional chaos, largely animated by ignorance and unbelief in the one who stood in their midst, the great "I am," God very God, the resurrection and the life. Now to be sure, he sympathized with their anguish, he was moved by their grief but this had descended into the hopeless despair of paganism. Who among us who ever hope in Christ would not respond in the same manner? I've been at funerals like this before. In other parts of the world and even here in the United States, I've been at funerals where people are utterly consumed with hopeless desperation and misery, where grief degenerates into some irredeemable darkness that blasphemously denies the one who is the resurrection and the life. It's not only sad to witness this but it produces within you a sense of outrage, a sense of emotional indignation. How wicked for them to reject the Lord Jesus Christ who could remedy all of this if you were to merely humble yourself and put your faith and trust in him. For this reason, Paul tells believers in 1 Thessalonians 4:13, "We do not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus."

D. A. Carson says this, "The one who always does what pleases his Father is indignant when faced with attitudes that are not governed by the truths the Father has revealed. If sin, illness and death, all devastating features of this fallen world, excite his wrath, it is hard to see how unbelief can be excluded. But the world that is at enmity with God is also the object of God's love so it is not surprising that when he was shown the tomb where the body lay, Jesus wept." This is what we see in the next scene. "He was deeply moved in spirit and was troubled, and said, 'Where have you laid him?' They said to Him, 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus wept." So the Jews were saying, "See how he loved him." While this is true, he did love Lazarus, loved his family, they didn't understand all that was going on with Jesus and his tears. By the way, the verb "wept" is different here than the one used to describe the weeping of Mary and the Jews. The one used here of Jesus merely means to just shed tears, there was no loud wailing and lamenting. But friends, you must understand, Jesus is not weeping for Lazarus because he knew that he was about to raise him from the dead. Jesus is weeping over the ravages of sin in this fallen world that brings disease and death. He is weeping over the calloused unbelief of Adam's fallen race. This is what animates his indignation. He's weeping over the hideous effects of Satan's deceptions that blind men and women to the truth of the Gospel. These are the things that ignited his wrath but also moved him with compassion for, indeed, this fallen world that hates him is also the object of his great love. This is a tension that we all must maintain. Our hearts must be outraged over sin because of its devastating effects, especially when we experience it in death while at the same time we must be filled with

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compassion for those who are experiencing loss, for those who remain committed to their unbelief.

In closing, I want to try to help you capture the scene, help you better understand Jesus' reaction. I want to do this by reading to you a very poignant and true story of Jewish unbelief. This is recounted by Alfred Edersheim, a 19th century Jewish convert to Christianity, also a biblical scholar known especially for his work, "The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah." Perhaps this story of at least one prominent Jew that lived in the day of Jesus, perhaps both of them, but certainly one that would have known him well who could have even possibly been here with Lazarus and yet rejected Jesus, perhaps this story can help you better understand the Savior's solemn groan. Here's what our brother says,

"A sadder picture could scarcely be drawn than that of the dying Rabbi Jochanan ben Saccai, that 'light of Israel' immediately before and after the destruction of the Temple, and for two years the president of the Sanhedrin. We read in the Talmud that, when his disciples came to see him on his death-bed, he burst into tears. To their astonished inquiry why he, 'the light of Israel, the right pillar of the Temple, and its mighty hammer,' betrayed such signs of fear, he replied: 'If I were now to be brought before an earthly king, who lives to-day and dies to-morrow, whose wrath and whose bonds are not everlasting, and whose sentence of death, even, is not that to everlasting death, who can be assuaged by arguments, or perhaps bought off by money – I should tremble and weep; but how much more reason have I for this, when about to be led before the King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, Who liveth and abideth for ever, Whose chains are chains for evermore, and Whose sentence of death killeth for ever, Whom I cannot assuage with words, nor bribe by money! And not only so, but there are before me two ways, one to paradise and the other to hell, and I know not which of the two ways I shall have to go - whether to paradise or to hell: how, then, shall I not shed tears?' Side by side,"

Edersheim goes on to say,

"with this story we may place the opposite saying of R. Jehudah, called the Holy, who, when he died, lifted up both his hands to heaven, protesting that none of those ten fingers had broken the law of God!"

Edersheim closes by saying,

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"It were difficult to say which of these two is more contrary to the light and liberty of the Gospel – the utter hopelessness of the one, or the apparent presumption of the other."

Beloved, this is why Jesus was a deeply moved and his spirit was troubled. This is why he wept. Finally Edersheim says this as a testimony, his own testimony, he says,

"Not thus are we taught by the Messiah, the King of the Jews. If we learn our loss, we also learn that 'The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.' Our righteousness is that freely bestowed on us by Him 'Who was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities.' 'With His stripes we are healed.' The law which we obey is that which He has put within our hearts, by which we become temples of the Holy Ghost. 'The Dayspring from on high hath visited us' through the tender mercy of our God. The Gospel hath brought life and immortality to light, for we know Whom we have believed; and 'perfect love casteth out fear.' Not even the problems of sickness, sorrow, suffering, and death are unnoticed. 'Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.' The tears of earth's night hang as dewdrops on flower and tree, presently to sparkle like diamonds in the morning sun. For, in that night of nights has Christ mingled the sweat of human toil and sorrow with the precious blood of His agony, and made it drop on earth as sweet balsam to heal its wounds, to soothe its sorrows, and to take away its death."

Dear friends, there is the testimony of a man who believed in the great "I am," the resurrection and the life. I pray that you believe in him as well. If you don't, I plead with you to place your trust in him today before it's too late and for those of us who have been saved by his grace, won't you make it a greater priority to live for his glory and tell others about Jesus, the resurrection and the life. Amen.

Let's pray together.

Father, thank you for these eternal truths that speak so profoundly to our hearts. May we truly have a zeal to spread the good news of the Gospel, moreover, that we might live it so that others can see your glory and grace in us. And for those who know nothing of which we speak, I pray that you will come to them as you came to Lazarus and you will give them life. We ask all of this in the precious name of Jesus the lover of our souls and for his sake. Amen.

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