

Still Pursuing the Dream: Pursue God's Heart

Ready:

"Jesus wept." -- John 11:35

Set

When I ask a group of students to memorize a Bible verse, I have noticed that at least one student always picks John 11:35. The shortest verse in the Bible is pretty easy to memorize. Yet, many of us miss the powerful message surrounding this one short verse.

Mary and her sister Martha had sent word to Jesus that their brother Lazarus was sick. By the time Jesus arrived, He "found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days." Jesus assured Martha that her brother would rise again, which should not have been a surprise to Martha since she knew that Jesus had already resurrected two others from the dead.

When Jesus later saw Mary, Martha, and the other Jews weeping, He was "deeply moved in spirit" and wept openly. It is not clear whether Jesus wept because He identified with their pain, because He was troubled by their lack of faith, or both.

I believe it was both. When we genuinely care for others, we feel their pain and sorrow. Even though Jesus knew He would soon bring Lazarus back from the dead, He felt Mary and Martha's pain in that moment. Our Father feels our pain and walks beside us to comfort and guide us through our suffering. But even when things seem hopeless, faith is what He desires from us because it leads to our salvation, peace, and joy that we can only find in Christ Jesus.

I believe that Jesus continues to weep and feel the pain that comes from the social injustices and hate crimes we see in our world today. Jesus wept when a young black man was chased down and killed seemingly because of the color of his skin. Jesus wept when a person of authority choked a black man to death as others watched and did nothing.

Jesus wept when Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was violently shot and killed as he stood on a motel balcony in Memphis, TN on April 4, 1968. Jesus wept. I also believe that Jesus welcomed Dr. King and rejoiced at how he had chosen to spend his life serving others. To commemorate his life of service, I ask you to spend time researching Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s life and reading his words today. Here are a few to get you started:

"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character" ("I Have a Dream," 28 August 1963).

"I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become a

reality... I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word" (King, "Nobel Peace Prize Acceptance Speech," 10 December 1964).

How much better our world would be if we heeded the advice of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., if we walked beside others to comfort and guide them through their suffering, if we truly pursued God's heart. Let's start by taking the first step.

Go

- Why is it important to lament and have compassion for other's pain and hurt, even if you don't experience it yourself?
- What can Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. teach us?
- How can you turn your tears and compassion into real change within your circle of influence?

Workout

Matthew 6:33; Matthew 9:36

Overtime

"Use me, God. Show me how to take who I am, who I want to be, and what I can do, and use it for a purpose greater than myself." -- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Bible Reference:

John 11:35

Matthew 6:33

Matthew 9:36



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