

Let us pray,

Lord, give us the strength to see beyond the pain of the world, to see the resurrection reality all around us.

Amen.

Lets talk about death.

Death is one of those things in the human experience that never seems to get easier.

Death, no matter how prepared we may feel, is always a little scary and complicated.

And the other part is that everyone's experience is different.

There is no one size fits all experience on death and dying.

Sometimes, especially for those who are left behind, the emotions that we feel, can seem surprising.

Sometimes we feel more grief, more sadness, than we anticipated.

Sometimes, we feel less grief, less sadness.

Sometimes we feel relieved, or guilty, or angry, or all the other types of emotions.

We even see today, that Jesus when he is experiencing the death of one of his friends, weeps for him.

Even though Jesus is the only one who absolutely knows for sure that this is not the end.

Even though Jesus knows that death is a transition to another life, even though Jesus is the embodiment of the reality of resurrection.

Jesus is still overcome with grief and emotion that he is essentially bawling his eyes out.

There is something in the experience of death that causes us humans, and even God to have this visceral reaction.

Its important to note that God never wanted death to be a reality. God never wanted us to have to go through that.

But we chose the path of death, and it is part of my interpretation of Jesus' weeping, that he is weeping of the reality of sin that we must endure.

Jesus is weeping with us, showing his solidarity in the punishment of our disobedience.

He is experiencing the pain and the suffering of the consequences of our sins, and he weeps.

There is real deep pain when it comes to death, especially towards those whom we love.

And even though we as faithful people, know and believe in the resurrection, even though we trust God, even though we know all will be well.

It still hurts, its still gut wrenchingly painful to say goodbye.

And Jesus weeps with us and for us as we walk through this reality.

We see this in scripture with Martha, Lazarus's sister.

She is ANGRY with Jesus.

“Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

How many of us have felt this way.

Lord, if you would have just healed my loved one, they would not have died!

If you intervened, my family member would still be here.

My friend would still be here!

There is anger.

She even says to Jesus, I know that I will see him again eventually, but that doesn't remove the fact that he is gone from me now!

We then see Mary, Lazarus' other sister, say the same thing as Martha,

“Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

But in this case, she isn't angry, she is gut wrenchingly sad.

She is wounded deep within.

And Jesus witnessing this grief, he also was brought to tears.

The good news in this story is yes, that Jesus has power over death, and is able to raise someone back to life who has been dead for 4 days.

That is pretty remarkable.

But the real good news in my opinion, is that Jesus weeps with us.

That Jesus actually cares for us.

That Jesus cares for you, and weeps with you in your grief.

We do not know why God does not always intervene.

We do not know why God still requires us to go through this horrible experience of death and watching other people die.

But what we do know, is that God cares deeply about us and weeps and experiences this tragic reality with us.

I would like us to read Psalm 130 again together, the whole thing together, not responsively.

Embody the words, hear the lament, and let that become a part of your lament.

May the ancient cries become your cries.

And remember, that our God hears our prayers, and is never far away.

Psalm: Psalm 130

- 1 Out | of the depths
I cry to | you, O Lord;
- 2 O Lord, | hear my voice!
Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my | supplication.
- 3 If you were to keep watch | over sins,
O Lord, | who could stand?
- 4 Yet with you | is forgiveness,
in order that you | may be feared. R
- 5 I wait for you, O Lord; | my soul waits;
in your word | is my hope.
- 6 My soul waits for the Lord more than those who keep watch |
for the morning,
more than those who keep watch | for the morning.
- 7 O Israel, wait for the Lord, for with the Lord there is | steadfast
love;
with the Lord there is plen- | teous redemption.
- 8 For the Lord shall | redeem Israel
from | all their sins. R

Amen.