

John 11:32-44

All Saints

St Mark - November 3, 2024

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### **After sadness comes joy**

**John 11:32-44**

When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus began to weep. So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, "Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me." When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

### **After sadness comes joy**

After sadness comes joy. Jesus wept at the loss of his close and dear friend Lazarus. Joy followed as Lazarus left his now empty tomb.

This reading about Lazarus is most definitely an example of Jesus' power and it certainly was that for the many people who witnessed Lazarus walk out of his tomb.

As a bit of an aside, John tells us that Mary wept along with several others and that Jesus wept as well. There's something notable about the Greek word used for 'wept'. The word "dakruo" is used when speaking of Jesus' tears. That word means a quiet kind of weeping and it seems that this is the only time this Greek word is used in the Bible.

Getting back to the message of ineffable joy following sadness, Jesus reveals his power when he raises Lazarus and he foretells something life-changing for all who saw him do it and for all who hear of it today.

It's a preview of what happens after our earthly death. Our earthly death that will make our birth into eternal life possible.

After sadness comes joy. 'Ineffable joy' is the way our collect for today puts it. 'Ineffable' isn't a word I was familiar with when I came across it in this Collect a few years ago. 'Ineffable' means, too great or too extreme to be expressed or described in words.

Our collect refers to ineffable joys that God has prepared for those who truly love him. Joys that are too great to be described in words. Joys beyond description when we pass from this life to the next. Joys that follow what many times are ineffable sorrows.

Each of the people we remember today was and is loved. Each of the people we remember today was mourned and each of their deaths brought with it great loss and sadness, but for them there was more to come.

The depth of the emotion that accompanied Lazarus' death and of his coming back to life is missing in John's account. The depth of our own emotions will be missing in the reading of the names of our honored dead that will come in a few minutes from now, but those emotions are real and present throughout our lives.

We don't get to experience the ineffable joys to come until we join those we honor today on the other side of this life.

Each of the people we remember today has made the journey we all will make. We pray this day that their journey is a good one. We entrust them to our loving Father who is more patient, more powerful, and more forgiving than we can even imagine.

Our reading this morning from Isaiah tells us that God, "will swallow up death forever." It continues with, "Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces"

The kingdom of God is filled with peace and joy. After sadness comes joy.

God's love for us is ineffable.

Amen.

On page 292 you will find “The Renewal of Baptismal Vows” and together we will rededicate ourselves to God as we say these words.

We start off by acknowledging that both good and evil surround us and that we chose one over the other.

**Do you reaffirm your renunciation of evil and renew your commitment to Jesus Christ? [I do.]**

Next we testify to the truth of what is known as The Apostle’s Creed. Toward the end of this creed we will affirm that we believe in the holy catholic Church. It is easy to confuse “catholic” with “The Roman Catholic Church”, but they are not the same.

Another and at one time the primary meaning of ‘catholic’ is ‘universal’ and that is the meaning of ‘catholic’ as it is used in our Book of Common Prayer.

**Do you believe in God the Father? [I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.]**

**Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God? [I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.]**

**Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit? [I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.]**

The next question asks us to promise to study God’s word and to share our lives with one another to live in Christian community. It also asks us to be faithful to gathering together to worship God as we do today.

**Will you continue in the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers? [I will, with God’s help.]**

**Will you persevere in resisting evil, and whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord? [I will, with God's help.]**

Last Monday, Glenn and I worshiped at Grace Episcopal Church in Alexandria. Bishop Gulick presided and if I understood him correctly, he said that only 50% of our country's population is familiar with Jesus. He reminded us that how we behave every day matters. Our lives may be the only Christian testimony that some people ever encounter.

Brother Curtis Almquist says it this way, "What keeps you a follower of Jesus today? This awareness is the makings of a testimony. It's so important to have a "live" testimony in our heart and on our lips because we don't know when we will be called upon to be "on." All of us are missionaries.

**Will you proclaim by word and example of the Good News of God in Christ? [I will, with God's help.]**

In the next question, notice the word, 'all'. It is a very important word and sometimes makes this question a struggle for some of us.

**Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself? [I will, with God's help.]**

The final question might be the hardest for me and maybe for you. 'All' and 'every' are used here. I try hard to remember my commitment to this next instruction especially when I'm tempted to refer to someone as being stupid when I disagree with their opposing opinion. You might struggle with this too given the state of our politics at present.

**Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being? [I will, with God's help.]**

May Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given us a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and bestowed upon us the forgiveness of sins, keep us in eternal life by his grace, in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen