**“Where were you?” John 11:1-7, 17-35 (CEB)**

Today’s scripture shows us Jesus who grieves, who weeps, and who suffers. We see Him standing with those He loves, in their pain. We see Jesus, experiencing deep sorrow on the cross, feeling what we feel in times of loss and hardship. Through these stories, we are reminded that the God who became human, is with us, even in our suffering.

The Death of Lazarus – John 11:17-37 In the town of Bethany, there lived three siblings—Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. Jesus often visited their home and loved them like family. So when Lazarus became sick, his sisters sent word to Jesus, hoping He would come quickly and heal him. But Jesus did not come right away. Instead, He said, “This sickness will not end in death. It is for God’s glory.” Yet by the time Jesus arrived, Lazarus had already been dead for four days. At that time. The Jews believed a person's spirit lingers the body for three days after death. And three days later, the body began to decay, and the spirit left. When Jesus came there, it was the fourth days of Lazarus death. It was completely hopeless situation.

When Martha heard that Jesus had arrived, she ran to Him and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” In other words, Why didn’t you come sooner?” if you had come when I asked, he would still be alive.” Later, When Mary heard about Jesus’ arrival, she quickly went to Jesus and fell at His feet, and repeated the same words: “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” You can hear the pain in her voice. She might have been thinking, “Why didn’t you stop this? Why did you come late?”

What was Jesus first response to her? Did He explain what he was going to do? Did He correct them? Did He scold them for their lack of faith? No. Instead, John 11:33 tells us that when Jesus saw their sorrow, He was deeply moved and troubled. And then, the shortest but one of the most powerful verses in the Bible: **“Jesus wept.**” (John 11:35) Jesus does not rush to fix the situation. Instead, He enters into her grief. He feels the sorrow of His friends and carries it with them

However, even though Jesus understands our pain, we may still ask: Where Were You, God? When we go through hard times, we call on God to help us. But when things don’t go our way, we ask: “Where were you, God?” These are real questions. Honest questions. When we’re in pain, we want to cry out to God: “If You love us, why did You let this happen? Don’t You care?” Maybe you have asked God this before—during a crisis, in moments of deep loss, when you saw suffering that didn’t make sense. Maybe you have felt like God was silent. And in that silence, what do we feel? Abandonment. Hopelessness. Despair. Jesus understands this feeling.

As Jesus hung on the cross—beaten, humiliated, abandoned—He cried out: “**My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?” (Mark 15:34)** This is called the cry of abandonment. At that moment, Jesus was experiencing the same feeling of being forsaken that every one of us has felt at some point in our lives. He knew what it was to feel abandoned. He knew what it was like to feel hopeless and alone. In that situation, Jesus did not turn away from God. Instead, **Jesus chose to pray through the Psalms**. It shows us that even in our despair, we can bring our pain before God in prayer. His words, “My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?” are the first line of Psalm 22, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning? O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but find no rest (v.1-2).

Psalm 22 was written by David during a very difficult time in his life. We don’t know exactly what was happening, but it was likely when he was feeling alone, attacked, or in danger—perhaps while running from King Saul or during his son Absalom’s rebellion. The psalm starts with deep pain and sadness, but by the end, David expresses trust in God’s goodness and victory. This psalm begins with deep suffering but ends with trust in God’s victory.

The people standing at the cross knew Psalm 22, They would sing them in the Temple, recite them in the synagogues, and pray them at home with their families. When they hear the first line of Psalm 22, they knew Jesus is not just expressing his pain and sorrow but also declaring hope and victory, that God has not abandoned the suffering one: As Jesus faced death, they likely remembered the final words of the psalm: **“Future generations will be told about the Lord, and proclaim His deliverance to a people yet unborn.”** (Psalm 22:30-31) These words pointed to a confident hope that death was not the final chapter. It was not the end for the psalmist, not the end for Jesus, and certainly not the end for the gospel. Even in death, Jesus had hope.

Depression, sickness, loss, and abuse—these struggles can feel like death, leaving us feeling isolated and alone. Pain has a way of making us question everything, even God’s presence. In moments like these, we may wonder, “Where are You, God? Have You abandoned me?” But Jesus shows us how to respond when we feel this way. On the cross, in His own suffering, He cried out to God. He did not hide His pain or keep silent—He brought it before the Father. His example teaches us that we, too, can bring our pain, doubts, and fears before God. This is where lament comes in. Lament is our way of crying out to God, an honest prayer in the midst of suffering. Expressing despair, sorrow, or even frustration before God is not a sign of weak faith—it is an act of deep faith. When we lament, we are not turning away from God; instead, we are acknowledging that He is still present, still listening, and he is entering into our suffering.

The Book of Psalms teaches us this truth. The Psalms are filled with every human emotion—fear, joy, anger, gratitude, and despair. These ancient prayers remind us that faith is not just about celebration and thanksgiving; it also makes space for struggle, doubt, and sorrow. Doubt is not the opposite of faith; rather, it is part of the journey of trusting God. A strong faith does not ignore pain but embraces all seasons of life, including the difficult ones. And in every season, we can hold onto this truth: God hears every cry.

In our world, people often focus on success and positivity, while pain, grief, and failure get pushed aside. But the psalms of lament show us something different. They remind us that suffering is real and shared by all of us, both as individuals and as a community. These psalms don’t try to explain suffering away. Instead, they invite us to be honest about our pain and bring it before God. However**, Lament is more than just crying out—it is a prayer asking God to bring change.** Even when God feels far away, the psalmists cry out, believing that God sees, God hears, and God cares.

We all face seasons of deep grief—moments when we cry out, “God, where are You?” Like Mary and Martha grieving Lazarus, like Jesus Himself on the cross, we may feel abandoned. We may not always understand why suffering happens, but One thing I can say for certain is this: There is no clear theological or biblical answer to the question, 'Why do the righteous suffer?' But this I know for sure—our faith and trust in God give us strength and resilience. **Resilience** means having the strength to keep going, even when life is painful and difficult. It doesn’t mean we don’t feel hurt or broken, but it means we don’t stay there. Our faith in God helps us stand back up when we fall. The hope of resurrection gives us the power to endure suffering, face hardships, and rise again, no matter what we go through.

Today’s story teaches us that wounds do not have to be the end of our story. They can be transformed into something greater—a way to bring healing to others. we can hold onto the truth that God’s presence is with us, even in the silence. Jesus did not turn away from suffering—He stepped into it. **In your moment of pain, God was there. In the moment your life was shattered, God cared. In the moment you cried out in anguish, God wept.** Suffering is real, but so is God's love.Hard times may be part of our story, but they don’t define the ending.The final word belongs to resurrection.We are people of hope."

**Psalm 13:1-2, 5-6 (CEB)**

 Lord, will you forget me forever? How long will you hide from me? I feel so alone, filled with sadness every day. How long will my troubles keep winning? But I trust your love, and I find joy because you save me. I will sing to you, Lord, because you have always cared for me.