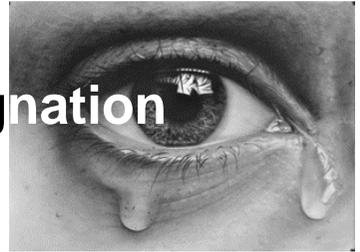


Jesus is the Christ (from John's gospel) # 37 (Matters of Life & Death # 3)

John 11²⁷⁻³⁸

When compassion & indignation become overwhelming

Jesus was deeply moved in His spirit. Jesus wept.



(Mary & Martha – the same but different)

Last week we looked at **Martha's personal encounter** with Jesus;

- this week we look at Mary's personal encounter w Jesus;
- Martha & Mary were sisters;
- ∃ interesting **similarities** / **differences** in their 2 encounters.

Both sisters had sent the message to Jesus: **“Lord, he whom You love is ill.”**

Both sisters met Jesus on His way into Bethany – before He got to their house;

- Martha had taken initiative to go out to meet Him on His way in;
- Mary was called by Jesus to come to Him;

Both sisters went out alone to meet him;

- Martha remained alone – but Mary found many Jews following her;

Both sisters say to Jesus: **“Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”**

- Martha adds: **“But even now I know: whatever you ask from God, God will give you”**
- Mary not say anything like that – but **falls at His feet** before Him, weeping.
- it was to Martha : **Jesus manifested** Himself:

“I AM the resurrection & the life”

- Martha seemed to really get it – understood significance of who Jesus was: **“Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.”**
- focus was on what Jesus was revealing of Himself:
 - He is author of resurrection;
 - He is power behind resurrection;
 - He is the personal embodiment of resurrection;
 - He is the transmitter of resurrection power to anyone / everyone else who is raised from death to life.

Today we focus on what **Jesus reveals** of Himself in His encounter with **Mary**;

- heart of our text = revelation of Jesus' heart:

(33) When Jesus saw [Mary] weeping,
and the Jews who had come with her also weeping,
He was deeply moved in His spirit and greatly troubled.

(35) Jesus wept.

Our big Q is **What moved Him?**
What troubled Him?
Why was He weeping?

1st thing had to be ...

The compassion

Included both sympathy & empathy;
 - often confused – related – but quite distinguishable.

Sympathy is when you send card / letter / email / text / phone to someone who doing it tough;
 - shows you're aware;
 - shows you care.

Empathy is when you're in tears at end of movie;
 - because you so entered into experience of character – feel what he / she felt;
 - sometimes, if you like me – you may feel bit embarrassed that movie made you cry;
 - esp if you're a man – ∃ culture that grown men don't cry;
 - I've come to think that is unhealthy / repressive – anti-empathy;
 - ability to enter into another person's world;
 - feel it as they felt it is good thing – God-thing – what Jesus did.
 (as will see in moment).

Empathy is not necessarily better than sympathy – but different.

What we see here in **Jesus** is both sympathy & empathy & more.

Sympathy

Sympathy is **understanding** the situation somebody is in.

When **Jesus saw Mary weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping.**

- Jesus well & truly understood the grief they experiencing;
 - He understood the depth of relationship they share as brother & 2 sisters;
 - He understood the rift that had occurred in their relationship;
 - He understood how bereft they felt of their brother / bread-winner;
 - He understood how they would feel deeply disappointed:
 - He had not been there to heal Lazarus;
 - He had said Lazarus' sickness would not end in death – now dead;
 - He had seemed to fail them in their hour of need;
 - He understood the fears / concerns they would have for their future.

Jesus was deeply moved in His spirit and greatly troubled.

Jesus wept.

Empathy

Empathy is **feeling** the situation somebody is in – **entering** in – feeling it;
 - Jesus well & truly felt the anguish of soul they were experiencing;
 - He too loved Lazarus – felt the pain of separation;
 - He too had had death intrude into His friendship – wreak havoc in relationship;
 - He had entered Mary & Martha's world – felt their pain / anguish / agony;
 - He wept with them – their tears were His tears too.

So in Jesus we see sympathy & empathy – and we see more - we see **compassion**.

Compassion is **acting** on the situation you understand & feel

- being determined to do something about it – doing it;
- clever name for child sponsorship charity:
 - asking you not only to understand / feel – but determine to do – actually do;
 - put money where mind / emotions are at – sponsor a child.

As I've thought a bit more about it – I've come up w a **table** to put it altogether;

- may well not be original - but I not seen it anywhere else;
- so feel free to critique it - feel free to ignore it if unhelpful;
- it's helpful for me in getting my head / heart about it.

All to do w **heart**

- heart is controlling organ of our **mind / emotions / will**;
- **sympathy** is a matter of mind
 - *I understand your suffering*
 - *I care for you in your suffering*;
- **empathy** is a matter of emotions
 - *I feel for you in your suffering*
 - *I enter with you into your suffering*
- **compassion** is a matter of will
 - *I want to relieve your suffering*
 - *I yearn w you in your suffering*.

Distinguishable but connected – compounded in Jesus:

- His whole mind / emotions / will bound up in this whole situation;
- whole humanity / whole person is engaged in fullest possible way. [X]

Determination to do something is what we see next;

- determination to do something for them: they could've no hope of doing for themselves;
- His determination to raise Lazarus from dead.

Might look like a bit of **neat package** - some might want to leave it at that;

- but it is by no means the whole story here;
- yes, ∃ sympathy / empathy / compassion – in deepest form;
- but there is more.

(The indignation)

(33) When Jesus saw [Mary] weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping,
He was deeply moved in His spirit and greatly troubled.

(Deeply moved)

Word translated “**deeply moved**” is also found in:

Matt 9(30) Jesus healed 2 blind men - sternly warned them,
"See that no one knows about it."

Mark 1(43) Jesus healed a leper - sternly charged him - sent him away at once,
and said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone, but go,
show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing
what Moses commanded, for a proof to them."
- idea of stern concern;

Mark's act of Mary pouring flask of costly ointment on Jesus' head – 14(5)

- people were indignant – *What a waste!* - scolded her;
- scold = same word;
- idea of indignation / outrage.

Don Carson says translation “**deeply moved**” is a **bit bland** – too soft;

- particular type of **deeply moved** – deeply moved w indignation.

(Greatly troubled)

Word translated “**greatly troubled**” = same word used when Jesus spoke of His death:

12(27) *Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say?*

'Father, save me from this hour!'

But for this purpose I have come to this hour.”

13(21) After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in His spirit, and testified,

“Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.”

- **greatly troubled** is word Jesus used when thought about betrayal by own disciple;

⇒ **deeply moved & greatly troubled** = indignation / outrage;

- something tearing at His heart – overwhelming Him.

(Unbelief, sin, death & more)

So **what was it** that Jesus was deeply **indignant** / **outraged** about?

What tearing at heart?

Jesus saw [Mary] weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping;

- not indignant against the weeping in itself – He was about to weep too;
- not indignant about the reason for weeping in grief – He entered that grief / empathy;
- not indignant w Mary / Martha;
- maybe indignant w others - He could see difference in sorrow / grief;
- some **grieve in hope**;
- what we saw last week:
 - Martha in that washing machine tub of emotions;
 - sometimes believing / accepting / trusting;
 - sometimes doubting / distrusting / disappointed / angry;
 - in Martha ∃ mixture of grief & hope looking to resurrection;
- but ∃ would be others there **grieving w/o hope**;
- overwhelmed / bereft / lost in unbelief – not hope
- maybe Jesus is indignant at the hopelessness / unbelief.

I'm inclined to think that is **only a part** of it;

- seems to me that the depth of indignation – suggests Jesus is looking deeper;
- ∃ something profoundly disturbing Him.

He would see what is the **root cause** of all this mess;

- root cause of sickness in this world;
- root cause of disease / degradation in this world;
- root cause of death in this world;
- root case is **sin**;
- fallenness / brokenness / corruption / chaos of this whole world;
- sin has intruded into His own good / godly / perfect / pure / pristine creation;

- sinful heart permeated / pervaded whole humanity
⇒ polluted / corrupted all mankind;
- sinful heart spewed forth the sins of all sorts;
 - all affront to righteousness / holiness / purity / perfection of God Himself.
- death has sway because all have sinned;
- indignant at sin! - outraged at sin!

I suspect : Jesus indignation **not terminate** there – on the intrusion of sin & death;

- goes beyond that to the **intruder**;
 - personal indignation against personal enemy of souls;
 - **the father of lies** / father of deception / father of destruction / father of death;
 - the one whom He calls in **John 8(44)** **the murderer from the beginning**;
 - the diabolical devil himself;
 - Satan who masquerades as an angel of light;
 - Satan the smooth-talking seductress who beguiled His beloved people.
- ⇒ Jesus has every reasons to be indignant / outraged!

So when we read in our text:

Jesus was deeply moved in His spirit and greatly troubled. Jesus wept.

⇒ it is **both compassion & indignation.**

- now what we want to do – is look at ...

The correlation

Compassion and indignation - together

What we see in Jesus is that these 2 **integrate beautifully** / **powerfully**.

Jesus not only knows in His mind – all about the depravity of this broken world;

- not only feels in His emotions – all the indignation against intrusion into His world;
- also in His will – He **determined to do** something about it – doing it.

Everything He does is **designed** to point to / lead into His atoning death;

- His reconciling sacrifice of Himself;
- His overcoming power of death in His resurrection;
- He doing something about it alright – destroying enemy of souls
 - who usurped a place as **Prince of power of the air**;
 - casting him down into infinite / everlasting / bottomless pit of hell.

The **doing aspect** of compassion is **done** in Jesus.

I must admit that something here might be a little bit confusing:

- in that I'm using word "Compassion" in **2 senses** – **broad** / **narrow**;
- bit like Belconnen is a big region in Canberra – NW region of Canberra;
- but Belconnen is also a suburb w/i region of Belconnen – at its centre.
- so compassion is **3rd line in chart**
- but I also used it as heading for whole chart – point 1.

When I speak now about correlation between **2 major points** of sermon:

- **The compassion / The indignation**

- I'm using word "compassion" in broader sense of including mind / emotions / will;
- inc understanding / feeling / doing
- inc sympathy / empathy / compassion in narrower sense.

What we see in Jesus is **perfect fulfillment** of everything compassion/ indignation meant to be;

- compassion in fullest / richest sense of word;
- sympathy in understanding;
- empathy in emotions;
- compassion in active relief;
- addressing root cause of all the suffering / selfishness / sin in with world;
- not action of applying a bandaid / best bandage to cover over wound;
- not action of giving anaesthetic which relieves all the pain;
- not even action of surgeon cutting out cancerous tumour;
- but the action of a Saviour who conquers v power of sin / death / devil himself!
- this is Jesus deeply moved in both compassion / indignation for us!

Now this has some pretty deep **personal practical application** for us:

- we called to be followers of Jesus;
- we called to practice compassion as He had compassion;
- we called to be indignant over those things against which He was indignant;
- obviously we cannot accomplish what He accomplished;
- only He is God the Lord / Saviour;
- but we called to follow Him – live our lives in way which points others to Him.

When see little child (like **Zac Bidwell** – Mark/Danielle's grandson) struck down w cancer;

⇒ you feel compassion for him / family;

- also feel indignation at intrusion of cancer into little boy's life – rob of future;

When a child is taken out by a driver running a red light;

⇒ you feel compassion for family;

- also feel indignation against impatient driver;

- maybe: impatient driver might've been rushing to hospital where daughter unconscious at hands of abusive husband;

⇒ feel compassion for impatient man;

- also feel indignation for man who abused his wife;

- maybe : abusive husband was himself sexually abused all thru his childhood;

⇒ feel compassion for him;

⇒ feel indignation against abuse he suffered / abuser;

- and so it goes back & further back – until we get to Adam who rebelled against God in garden.

Compassion & indignation are **meant to go hand-in-hand** – as they do in Jesus;

- ∃ situations perhaps like this where we see it – do it – show both;

- maybe ∃ situations where we don't;

- principle applies in all sorts of situations in this broken / fallen world.

Easy to **get it wrong**;

- we might not actually do anything wrong
 - it's more what we don't do that's the problem;
- sins of commission are easier to spot for most of us who been a believer a while
 - it's the sins of omission we so easily miss;
- so here's 2 clear-cut ways we sometimes make a mess of this ...

(1) Indignation without compassion

Indignation against wholesale **slaughter of children** before even see light of day

- because parents don't want them – find them inconvenient;

Indignation against positive portrayal of sin in media / social media;

Indignation against grooming / social engineering of our children thru queer gender theory in educational system.

But is it indignation w/o compassion for those whose **minds are messed up**?

- whose hearts are playing havoc w heads?
- whose wills have been twisted against themselves & others?
- who are ultimately playthings of enemy of their souls?

Indignation w/o compassion is **self-righteousness**.

But then when we focus on compassion – so often we **fall off perch on other side**:

(2) Compassion without indignation

Compassion for the parents who feel they could **not possibly cope w disabled child**;

Compassion for the person confused about gender identity;

Compassion for the woman who prostitutes herself to make ends meet;

Compassion for the person in pain who becomes addicted to drugs / drinking / gambling;

Compassion for the couple living together in this day/age without the sanctity of marriage.

But is it compassion w/o indignation against:

- murder / mutilation of human beings made in image of God?

Compassion w/o indignation against:

- immorality / adultery which is affront to God who made us male & female?

Compassion w/o indignation against:

- self-seeking / self-serving / self-indulging which puts self in place of God?

Compassion w/o indignation is **sentimentality**;

- but indignation w/o compassion was self-righteousness.

Which is worse? Self-righteousness or sentimentality?

- each as bad as the other;
- challenge for us is to be followers of Jesus in this broken world;
 - hearts torn / deeply moved to tears of both compassion / indignation;
 - we can't get those 2 together v well on our own;
- Jesus shows us here what it looks like;
- Jesus empowers us by His Spirit to be more & more like Him.

(The confusion)

However even when you get it right – **don't expect everyone else to understand**;

- ∃ temptation to give up when others don't get it;
- but even when Jesus did it perfectly - people didn't completely get it;
 - what we see at end of text = **confusion**;
 - 2 ways in which people didn't quite get it;
- but Jesus was not deterred
 - kept on balance bar of His mission - w compassion / indignation.

(36) So the Jews said, "See how He loved him!"

(Seeing love)

Yes, they were right – Jesus loved Lazarus;

- but it seems : they see His love to be **as limited / powerless** as their love;
 - they loved Lazarus – but limited / powerless to do anything about it now;
- Jesus love has power of indignation behind it – about to do something dramatic about it.

(37) But some of them said,

"Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?"

(Wanting to see power)

But they want to see **power of a miracle cure**;

- Jesus is not into miracles merely for compassion's sake;
- His miracles manifest His divine nature
 - power over creation / cosmos / sin / death / devil;
- compassion is allied w indignation against sin;
- He comes as Saviour of sinners – not a mighty miracle worker.

(Conclusion)

(Joining Jesus)

When our hearts are torn by what we see of suffering in world;

- torn w both compassion & indignation;
- ⇒ this is **joining Jesus**;
- ⇒ this is our calling / commission / collaboration w Him.

Pray

Sing Love divine, all loves excelling, joy of heaven to earth come down ...
 Jesus thou art all compassion ...take away the love of sinning ...

[TH 529]

Benediction – Rev 1(5,6)

Feedback I'm getting from **Life Groups**:

- system is working well so far;
 - people are immersing themselves in text:
 - not simply answering Qs put before them;
 - but coming up w own Qs from the text;
 - then searching text together for answers;
 - then on Sunday coming
 - wanting to see whether answers are confirmed / clarified / extended;
 - whether I can see what they have seen;
 - pulling threads together – see cohesive patterns / principles;
- ⇒ makes for maturity in your discipleship – learning / growing;
- you see for yourself that God speaks to you directly thru His word;
 - have that confirmed / clarified / encouraged on Sunday;

If you wanting to grow as much as you can in relationship w Lord

⇒ you'd be doing yourself a favour plugging into one of Life groups this week.