

Week of April 29-May 5

VENI, VIDI, VICI

Scripture Reading: Read John chapter 11

John 11:35. Eyewitness account. Jesus wept. Two words. Shortest verse. Profound statement. Why did Jesus weep? It is assumed by many that the tears were simply the result of sorrow over the loss of one whom John declares Jesus loved very much. In this view, the weeping bears witness to Jesus who, in the fullness of his humanity, mourned the death of a close friend. Jesus, however, knew that moments later he was going to raise Lazarus from the dead and see him again. It seems odd, in light of this, that he would weep like those who had no hope. Others have suggested the weeping instead was genuine sympathy for Mary and Martha over the death of their brother; that he wept because he saw their pain. There is more merit to this position since John specifically states, "When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit..."

Yet, there seems to be more to it than this for a couple of reasons. First of all, John uses a phrase to describe Jesus' emotional state that is quite instructive. He is said to be "deeply moved in spirit" (v. 33). The phrase, "deeply moved" (KJV "groaned"), indicates a loud inarticulate noise and literally means to "snort," as in the snorting of horses. In human beings, it is usually associated with anger. Secondly, chapter 11 is the third time in John's gospel where an "I am" saying is connected to a sign miracle. In John 6, Jesus multiplied the fish and loaves to feed the multitudes and, then, the next day informs the crowds, "I am the bread of life." In John 9, Jesus announces to his disciples, "I am the light of the world," immediately before he heals the man born blind. Here in chapter 11, Jesus affirms, "I am the resurrection and the life," and, then, promptly raises Lazarus from the dead. When the sign miracles and the "I am sayings" are combined, they drive home the truth that Jesus is, indeed, the Son of God.

What is John's point, then, in recording that Jesus wept? Jesus likely weeps at the destruction unleashed on a world through the "father of lies." Our world often looks down on men who cry. They're seen as weak. Jesus, though, was anything but weak. He sees the pain, the loss, the sorrow and the death that has invaded our world and it troubles his soul and stirs godly wrath within. He, then, strides forth, as the Resurrection and the Life, to do battle with the prince of death and to triumph over him. His raising Lazarus from the dead indicates who truly has power over death. It also anticipates Christ's ultimate defeat of the one who holds the power of death that would soon follow at the cross and the empty tomb.

It is said Julius Caesar wrote "*Veni, vidi, vici*" ("I came, I saw, I conquered.") after engaging in a brief but victorious war. Jesus did it better and scored a greater triumph. He came and he conquered death, despair and the devil! It is Jesus, the Son of God, who triumphs! It is Jesus, the Resurrection and the Life!

Action Step & Prayer Focus: Read Hebrews 2:14-15 in light of today's devotional. Afterwards, take some time to give thanks to God for the demonstration of his power as the Resurrection and the Life.

Take-away: *Jesus came, he wept, and he conquered.*