

Where Is God When It Hurts?

“Jesus wept”
John 11:35

One of the most valuable lessons any of us learn in the school of hard knocks is how to advise and comfort others who are travelling the same road that we have. Those who have suffered in life have an authenticity and authority in speaking to the problem of pain that no mere academic can hope to achieve through simple “logic”.

When words of advice on how to address suffering come from a person who has never felt our sorrow, their comments may seem less than “authentic”. They speak theoretically because of a lack of experience in the matter we endure. But the fellow sufferer usually knows how and when to speak. They know how long to speak, and blessedly they know when to be silent.

A person who has suffered has authority in that they too have paid a price for what they have learned through pain and thus have the “right” to speak to the issue. It is a wise person who will listen through their pain to another who

has travelled that same road of adversity. A person who has suffered has earned the right to speak about pain.

Something that has been vividly impressed on my mind in my darkest times is the fact that Jesus knows our hurts because He too has suffered and suffered more than any other person in history. Thus, Jesus speaks in an authentic voice and with authority (Hebrews 2:17-18; Mark 14:32-34; Isaiah 52:13-53:12). He also speaks with full authority simply because He is God.

In various places in Scripture we are told that because of His suffering, Jesus is able to comfort those who suffer. Our text for today refers to one occasion when Jesus wept. It was at the grave of a beloved friend named Lazarus. When Jesus entered the crowd of people weeping, saw the sorrow of the dead man’s sisters, He was overtaken by emotion and let the tears fall.

Never, never encourage people to stop weeping in the presence of the reason for their pain. God, in His

mercy, has given us tears as an escape valve for suffering. When we read that Jesus wept we are to understand that He feels our sorrow and weeps with us. He wept for Himself at the death of His beloved friend and He wept in the presence of the sisters’ grief.

Where is God when it hurts? He is right by the side of the one who suffers. He consoles the bereaved, the ones in pain, those who are alone in this world, He comes and brings with Him all the power of His resurrection to strengthen and make able the one who is exhausted by life’s sad alternatives.

Jesus comes where He is invited. Sadly, He leaves alone those who prefer He depart. But wondrously He calls on each one who suffers to come and find rest in Him. Do you know this One Who wept with those who wept? Is He by your side right now? He awaits your invitation to enter your place of sorrow. Call on Him and do it today.

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