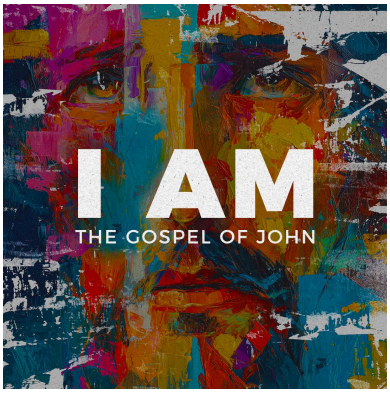
Title: The Tears of Resurrection
Series: I Am
Speaker: Kevin Sneed
Date: November 8, 2026



Key Texts: John 11:28-57, John 5:25-29

Introduction: It is common for us, when we encounter pain or struggle, to dismiss or rush past pain with quick answers and easy platitudes or even to quietly lose heart. In John 11, Jesus shows us another way. Knowing full well he is about to raise Lazarus, Jesus still stops to weep, angry at death and moved by the grief of those he loves. This week Kevin reminded us that our grief matters to God, that because of Jesus' resurrection it is not final, and that our tears bear witness to a new reality. Learning to grieve well means making room for our own sorrow and the sorrow of others, holding our pain honestly without letting go of hope. In Jesus, we can say both, "This is not how things should be," and "this is not how things will always be."

Icebreaker: Think of a time someone showed up for you in a hard season. What did they do (or not do or say) that made a difference?

Discussion Questions

1. Take some time to read **John 11:28-57** aloud as a group. As you do, make some initial observations about the text and write them in the space below. What words, images, or details capture your attention? Is there anything you find surprising, confusing, or challenging?

2. What does this passage reveal about God and His character? What does it reveal about humanity?

3. Re-read **John 11:28-35.** When Mary says, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died" (v. 32), Jesus doesn't offer an explanation. He is "deeply moved in spirit and troubled" (*embrimáomai*, to snort with indignation), angry not at those weeping but at death itself. The text also says that "Jesus wept" (v. 35), even though he knew what he was about to do. What stands out to you about the way that Jesus enters into Mary's grief? What do you learn about grief in this passage, and what do you think it might look like to let him sit with you in your grief rather than rushing past it?

4. Read **John 11:38-44** and **John 5:25-29**. Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead is the seventh sign of the Gospel of John, the culmination of a series of miracles that began with water turned into wine. Like the other miracles, it was temporary – Lazarus would one day die again. All of the signs point ahead to Jesus' resurrection, the first day of a new creation, when the future breaks into the present. We currently live in the liminal space, or the “in-between” - holding on to what God has praised, while still waiting to see it fully come to pass. For many of us, that looks like a season of waiting, transition, unresolved tension, or a prayer that still feels unanswered. Where might you find yourself in that in-between right now? Even before things are resolved, where have you seen and experienced glimpses of new life breaking in – small signs that God is at work and still present even in the midst of struggle?

5. Jesus, in His response to Mary, teaches us that we do not need to rush past grief. Kevin reminded us this week that our grief and our tears bear witness to the reality that this is not how things should be, and also not how things will always be. In pairs or triads, take a few moments to share a loss, disappointment, or burden you are carrying right now, whether in your own life or around you. Then take some time to pray for each other. Honestly name what is hard, and ask Jesus to bring His resurrection life into it. Consider who you might check in with or follow up with this week.

Key Takeaways

- **Your grief matters.** Jesus saw the weeping and was angry at death and saddened by grief. He could have bypassed it all, but he chose to step in and weep. Compassion means "to suffer with," and the resurrection doesn't negate the pain that is there.
- **Jesus doesn't bypass the tears, and neither do we.** Platitudes like “God is in control” may be true, but they are often cold. We get to bring our unresolved pain to Jesus and allow him to do the deep work of healing in our souls. The way to resurrection runs through the cross, through death.
- **Your grief is not final.** Every sign in the Gospel of John was temporary, but they all point to Jesus' resurrection, the first day of a new creation. Death holds no power over resurrection. In Jesus, the future breaks into the present.
- **Your grief bears witness to a new reality.** Grief is the appropriate response to the brokenness of this world. Our tears are a reminder that this is not how things should be, and not how things will always be. Lewis Smedes wrote that “without Jesus we are stuck with two options: utopian illusion or deadly despair.” With Jesus, we have a living hope.

Practice: Lament

This week, practice honest lament by praying the Psalms. Choose a Psalm (Psalm 13, Psalm 42, Psalm 88 are good places to start), and pray it slowly. Instead of rushing to a tidy resolution, name your grief to God as it actually is, whether it’s a personal loss, a disappointment you’re carrying, or brokenness you see in the world. Picture Jesus standing or sitting with you, the same way He did with Mary, moved and weeping. Invite God to reveal to you where He might be moving in your current circumstances, bringing the hope of the resurrection into your present reality.