

**“The Deeply Moved and Greatly Troubled Jesus”  
(John 11:33)**

**The Fifth Sunday in Lent, April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

**Preached at Mt. Olive Lutheran Church, Pasadena, CA**

**Rev. Al Espinosa, Ph.D.**

**Senior Pastor, Saint Paul’s Lutheran Church of Irvine, CA**

**Introduction: What is your image of Jesus?**

- A. True that our Lord was/is meek (humble & submissive), and He was/is gentle as well.**
  
- B. But how far do we take these?**
  
- C. Do these imply that He is weak? Well perhaps if we are considering that many of His attributes were displayed while He had humbled Himself or as St. Paul says in Phil. 2 when He “emptied Himself,” but His state of humiliation in no way counters the fact that Christ is God. His divinity as the One True God is taught in Jn 1, Col 1, Heb 1 & Rev 1 (this is a great mnemonic device for learning about Christ’s divinity taught in the New Testament: Jn 1, Col. 1, Heb 1 & Rev 1). Romans 9:5: “...Christ who is God over all...”! Thus, as Christians we do not confuse His self-imposed humility with a lack of power.**
  
- D. Well, ok, but maybe Christ’s meekness and gentleness imply that He was never angry. But that doesn’t follow either!**

**Let me pause here about Christ and give you an illustration as to why one attribute does not necessarily cancel out another. Growing up I was very close to a former U.S. Marine...and now I’m speaking of my dad who is in heaven now. My dad epitomized what the 18<sup>th</sup> century American general and statesman Christopher Gadsden did in creating a flag. It was a yellow flag with a**

rattlesnake coiled and poised to strike with the words on the bottom “don’t tread on me” and this flag was also used by the United States Marine Corps as an early motto flag. Well, this motto was my dad. “Don’t tread on me” reminds me that my dad was tough and no one wanted to make him upset. That’s how a lot of people knew him anyway, but as his baby boy I knew him in a different way. He was my loving daddy who would let me jump all over him and climb all over him like a jungle gym. A lot of people didn’t know it at the time, but my dad was also very gentle, very kind, and very generous. That was my dad!

Well, Jesus our Lord was most definitely meek and gentle, but there was this one occasion recorded in John 2 when Jesus went to Jerusalem and saw those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons *in the temple* and the money-changers were there. When our Lord saw this, He made a whip of cords, and drove them all out of the temple with the sheep and oxen. And He wasn’t finished: he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. And He said, “Take these things away; do not make my Father’s house a house of trade.” He was consumed with zeal for His Father’s house. Luther wrote, “Zeal is an angry love or a jealous love...His anger does not arise from hatred; it springs from...love toward God.” (AE 22:233-34). Angry love. Picture a loving mother who realizes that someone is attacking her child and you will see the definition of angry love. It is good and it is holy. Yes, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you (Matt 5:44); yes, remember that God says, “vengeance is mine and I will repay” (Rom 12), and yes, remember Eph 4 “be angry, but do not sin,” but we should recoil when we see injustice; the Christian should be terribly upset when babies are aborted; when the innocent are murdered; when marriages are threatened by divorce; when children are mistreated...and if these things don’t make you angry, then beware because your so-called faith may already be dead.

## **Part 1: Well Let Me Tell You about Another of Christ’s Reactions: Jn 11:33**

- A. Jesus came into Bethany because He had heard that his friend Lazarus was sick. Having proclaimed that He was the resurrection to Martha,**

Mary came and fell at His feet and all of a sudden our Lord became focused on what His people were going through. They were in pain. Death had invaded them and they were broken-hearted. They were sobbing; they were in distress; Jesus witnessed the work of the enemy “for the wages of sin is death” (Rom 6:23a). And how did He react? Did He sweep it under the rug? Did He suppress it? Ignore it? Did He suddenly tell His people to become positive thinkers? Did He rationalize death and try to pretty it up and say something misguided as “death is a part of life”? No!

- B. Instead the Scriptures say that *“he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled.”* Once again, Jesus knew a holy anger and irritation (or simply indignation = when anger is provoked when you realize that those you love have been hurt): death had taken His friend and the people He loved were mourning. Again, He saw the work of the enemy and He was so moved by the suffering of His people, that He Himself wept (v 35). This is what Lent is about. There is no renewal of spirit if we do not realize the great threat of sin and death and that we are saved from these threats through Him whose life, death and resurrection *is* our renewal. So during Lent we follow the passion of Christ like His reaction to those who were mourning so that we would see in the Holy Scriptures that when Jesus saw us threatened by death, He said, “No more!” From now on, my life will be for your life; my tears will be for your tears; my death will be for your death; and my resurrection will be for your resurrection.

## Part 2: And This Is Precisely Why Jesus Came!

- A. He did not simply sympathize or empathize. He did something about death! You know what John 11 is about. The main story is that it is a preview of the great resurrection that is to come. As you hold to Jesus; you will not die, but you will live! He is the resurrection and the life,

and even now through faith in Christ you have crossed over from death to life (Jn 5)!

- B. But the impetus behind that fantastic miracle when Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out," and the dead man rose from his grave...that miracle was driven by our Lord's impulse to know your fear; to carry your burden; to share your tears; to face your death; and to conquer your enemy. Jesus possessed an angry love that would not permit sin, death, and the devil to destroy you. Whatever threatens your hope; thank God that in the greatest love, Jesus' anger moved Him to save you. He said in effect, "Don't tread on my child! Don't you dare...I have come to save him...I have come to save her. They are mine and not even death has the power to take them out of my hands!"
- C. And now as the people of God at Mt. Olive Lutheran Church, Pasadena with a new pastor in Rev. Mark Jasa and as my people at Saint Paul's Lutheran Church of Irvine, with myself and Assistant Pastor, Rev. Dr. Steve Mueller as we enter -- this month -- into our 4<sup>th</sup> year as a re-start congregation...we have work to do! There are so many people who have given up hope and are going through life just waiting for disaster, but the Lord says in Romans 12, *"Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep."* (vv 9-15) Let us be deeply moved and greatly troubled enough so that we share Jesus and the power of His death and resurrection as the forgiven people of God!