

Tears of Love

Luke 19:41-44 (Palm Sunday)

Intro

Billy Graham wrote about one of his experiences in "*The Key To Personal Peace*". He said, "One of the powerful, enduring images that my wife, Ruth, and I have of our early years together is of the ticker-tape parades in New York City celebrating the end of WWII. The war was finally over! And those who were spared from death by the enemy were jubilant beyond words.

"Millions of multicolored streamers and mountains of confetti rained down on the returning heroes... Friends, family, and fellow citizens danced in the streets to express their own happiness and excitement. Emotions ran extremely high – unfettered joy, exuberant hope for the future... But the emotion that ran deepest, causing tears to rush down the faces of moms and dads, grandparents, and even stalwart soldiers – from privates to generals – was relief. The war was over! ... There was peace at last."

Some of you remember seeing the joy in those parades. But there was another emotion present in those times. The sorrow of those whose sons, husbands, fathers; daughters, wives, mothers were not coming home. The sorrow of those weeping for the massive loss of life in the war.

Can you remember a time when you wept while everyone else was celebrating? That's what happened with Jesus on Palm Sunday.

Look with me at Luke 19:41-42, "*As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, 'If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes.'*" Jesus wept on Palm Sunday.

Jesus "Wept"

This picture, much less this statement, surprises a lot of people. Some people think a deity ought to behave differently. What kind of god weeps? What kind of god shows such emotion? What kind of god would get so close to his subjects that would cause him to grieve?

Well, the God of the Bible weeps, He grieves and He feels pain.

Genesis 6:5-6, "*The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. 6 The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain.*"

Jesus knows all about lonely grief. He experienced it on Palm Sunday. The crowds were shouting, praising and rejoicing. But the One the parade was meant to honour was weeping!

"*Wept*" here means that Jesus burst into sobbing. It is the strongest word in the New Testament Greek for weeping. It denotes that Jesus agonized sobbing over the superficiality, hypocrisy, shallowness and rejection of Him. He lamented over the lost souls who were going to face judgment.

Isaiah 53:3 we read, "*He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering.*" The Lord was indeed a man of sorrows.

There is no record in Scripture of Jesus ever laughing, but there are many statements about His grief. In John 11 we read that Jesus wept over the grave of Lazarus.

"*When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled.*" (John 11:33).

Prior to that He groaned deep within Himself when He saw the impact of sin and death (verse 33). And as Jesus looked over the city of Jerusalem, He wept over its evil and unbelieving population in that most rejected Him as their Saviour (Luke 19:41).

Jesus was never moved to tears for himself. He hungered, he had no home, and he bore insulting accusations. Instead of receiving honour from the world, he knew he was hated, despised and rejected. People threatened his life and tried to stone him. In all of this, he never wept. In Jesus' humanity, he needed love and affection as much as anyone else, but when his own brothers didn't believe in him and many of his disciples turned away, he looked to the Father instead of resorting to self-pity.

Background to Christ's Triumphant Entry

Jesus stopped in Jericho on his way to Jerusalem, where he knew the crowds were expecting the onset of the Messianic kingdom. So again, he stated his purpose for coming: "The Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost" (Luke 19:10.)

Jesus was sent by the Father to seek and save the lost sheep of Israel, to open their eyes to the fullness of God's love and mercy. He'd come to relieve the hard yoke of the Law and offer instead his own light yoke and easy burden. But they didn't understand.

Matthew 23:37-38

Jesus says, *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate."*

Jesus lamented. He longed to draw Israel to Himself and protect her just as a mother hen gathers her chicks under her wings to protect them from a storm that would batter them or a hawk that would devour them.

There was a beautiful intimacy and tenderness in Jesus' words and no doubt in His voice as He wept over His people. He had come *"to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him"* (John 1:11).

Jesus knew the hearts of the Crowd

As Jesus approached the city of Jerusalem He could hear all the hoop-la and cheering, yet He knew the hearts of those who were singing and spreading branches and clothes in the way.

They praised Him with their words on that day and they crucified Him in the wickedness of their hearts just a few days later within the same week.

Ezekiel 33:31, *"My people come to you, as they usually do, and sit before you to listen to your words, but they do not put them into practice. With their mouths they express devotion, but their hearts are greedy for unjust gain."*

Mark 7:6-8, *"He replied, 'Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: 'these people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.' You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men.'"*

All the shouting of Hosannas and the joy was shallow because their hearts were not really converted to Christ. With their lips they expressed devotion but their hearts were not committed to Christ.

Luke 19:42

“If you... had only known on this day what would bring you peace — but now it is hidden from your eyes.”

The crowd didn't understand! He had come to liberate their souls, not their cities! To deliver them from the eternal punishment of sin, not from a temporary earthly dictator! Jesus had come to conquer death, hell and the grave and to defeat the armies of the Kingdom of Darkness, not to destroy the Roman Empire.

Jesus was saying that the way to peace was standing at their door, but they would not let him in because of the hardness of their hearts.

Like so many in our day, they were living for the here and now and Jesus was trying to give them eternal life.

And so He wept for them saying, “If you only knew! Things could have been so different. You are headed for destruction and I'm trying to save you. The Father sent me to you but you did not recognize the day of my visitation.”

These were God's chosen people. He had loved them and led them across the wilderness into the Promised Land. But they did not understand or accept the Messiah when He was right in their midst.

And Jesus wept. He looked out and saw the towering Temple of God silhouetted against the sky. But he could see beyond that to the years immediately ahead when Emperor Titus would surround the Holy City. When the temple stones would be taken down and the city leveled. He could see bodies in the streets, blood running in the gutters and thousands of people crying.

All of that because they didn't recognize the Messiah when He came! How different their lives could have been! How different the history of Israel could have been if they had only recognized the one who came into town that day, riding on a colt.

Jesus Weeps over our Cities and Towns

Jesus not only wept over the city of Jerusalem but He is still weeping for our cities and towns today. Jesus looks out over our towns today and sees dad at home beating mom. He sees drug addiction and alcoholism, abortion and sexual abuse. He looks out and sees the graves of teenagers who died prematurely because of drunkenness behind the wheel, suicide. He sees lives that are torn apart, kids without families, hearts that are empty, suicide, rape, murder, incest, divorce, hatred, pornography, and the list goes on.

Jesus sees it all and He weeps.

Our cities and towns have been devastated and for the most part it is not a poverty problem, not just a drug problem, not just a government problem, not just an education problem. IT IS A SIN PROBLEM AND ONLY JESUS HAS THE CURE! So let every true believer join Him on this day in weeping for our cities and towns.

Conclusion

Jesus weeps for you. He knows your story, your history, your hurt and your pain. He sees what's in your heart.

What does Jesus see when He looks your way this morning? You may have rejoiced and sang along with the crowd this morning, but in your heart, have you made Jesus King of Kings and Lord of Lords of your life? When He looks at you does He see a devoted follower or a pretender?

Today, with Jesus seated at the right hand of God, He still weeps for our town and among the faces in the crowd he finds you. If you've not accepted His ultimate sacrifice for you on the cross as the only way of forgiveness from sin, then Jesus weeps for you.

Testimony of Joseph Adams about Rev. Charles Finney

Adams writes, "My acquaintance with Mr. Finney began in the winter of 1849 and 1850. He was laboring as a revivalist in the old Tabernacle, Moorsfields, London. Though but a youth, I was associated with an atheistic club. I was full of my new motions, and, like my companions, thought we had found the Christian system to be a stupendous sham. While advocating my opinions, and pointing out the apparent contradictions of the Bible to two simple-minded carpenters, I was invited to go and hear at the Tabernacle a "Professor Finney from America."

With the most self-complacent feelings I consented, and went. He sat in the pulpit with a large cloak about him... When he arose, he threw aside his cloak in a careless manner, and looked around upon the vast audience with an eye which constrained attention. There was something in his manner, arguments, earnestness, and tears (for he wept over sinners) which arrested my attention, and compelled me to think that there must be something in religion after all. I came again, and kept coming till my atheism vanished, and my soul was pierced through with the arrows of conviction. With a strong arm he held me at Sinai, till its thunders reverberated through my soul, and I cried out, "O wretched man that I am!"

Charles Finney (1792-1875) Sermon on: Breaking Up the Fallow Ground (excerpts)

This is what Finney wrote:

Lack of love for souls. Look around at all your friends and relatives, and think of how little compassion you have felt for them. You have stood by and seen them going straight to hell, and it seems as though you didn't even care! How many days have there been when you have failed to make their wretched condition the subject of even one single fervent prayer, or to prove any real desire for their salvation?

Robbing God. Think of all the instances in which you have totally misspent your time, squandering the hours which God gave you to serve Him, and save souls. Precious time wasted in vain amusement or worthless conversation, in reading worldly novels, or even doing nothing; cases where you have misused your talents and ability to think. Think of how you have squandered God's money on your lusts, or spent it for things which you really didn't need, which did not contribute to your health, comfort, or usefulness.

Finally, are you moved to tears for the lost as Jesus was? Do you truly love the lost precious souls as Jesus loved? Do you have a passion for the lost as Jesus did?

Pray for God to stir you to a new passion for the lost.

May we shed tears of love for the lost precious souls. May they see our genuine love for their soul and eternity.