

November 5, 2017  
 Sermon for All Saints' Day (Observed)  
 St Peter Lutheran Church  
 Bowie, TX  
 Larry Knobloch, Pastor  
 Revelation 7:9–17

*J.J.- Jesu Juva—Help me, Jesus*

Revelation 7:2–17 (ESV)

<sup>2</sup> Then I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, with the seal of the living God, and he called with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm earth and sea, <sup>3</sup> saying, “Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.”

<sup>4</sup> And I heard the number of the sealed, 144,000, sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel: <sup>5</sup> 12,000 from the tribe of Judah were sealed, 12,000 from the tribe of Reuben, 12,000 from the tribe of Gad, <sup>6</sup> 12,000 from the tribe of Asher, 12,000 from the tribe of Naphtali, 12,000 from the tribe of Manasseh, <sup>7</sup> 12,000 from the tribe of Simeon, 12,000 from the tribe of Levi, 12,000 from the tribe of Issachar, <sup>8</sup> 12,000 from the tribe of Zebulun, 12,000 from the tribe of Joseph, 12,000 from the tribe of Benjamin were sealed.)

<sup>9</sup> After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, <sup>10</sup> and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” <sup>11</sup> And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, <sup>12</sup> saying, “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.” <sup>13</sup> Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, “Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?” <sup>14</sup> I said to him, “Sir, you know.” And he said to me, “These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. <sup>15</sup> “Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence. <sup>16</sup> They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. <sup>17</sup> For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior,  
Jesus Christ!

Amen.

Life in this world has often been described as a “vale of tears,” an old English way of saying, “valley of tears.” That expression comes from a single Bible passage: Ps 84:6. Our English Bibles today don’t translate that psalm verse with “valley of *tears*.” They use the Hebrew word, *Baca*: “Blessed are those whose strength is in you [O Lord] . . . As they go through the Valley of *Baca* they make it a place of springs . . .”

The Valley of *Baca*. That Hebrew word *Baca* is related to “weeping.”

The valley of weeping. The valley of sorrows. The vale of tears.

It’s a way of describing the pilgrimage of God’s people through this life, through this “valley of tears,” on our way to the eternal joys of God’s kingdom. And even though our English Bibles no longer use that phrase in Ps 84:6, the expression “valley of tears” is still well known to us—and the *experience* of life as a “valley of tears” is well known to us as well.

That experience is not precluded for God’s saints. We who believe in Jesus *are* God’s saints, but we are not immune to sorrows. Quite the contrary.

Yet, on this All Saints’ Day, we rejoice, because, yes,

Life in this world is often a “Vale of Tears,” but the day is coming when God will wipe away our tears ... forever!

This world truly is a vale of tears. Even though pop psychology tells us such a view is unhealthy, and advertisers and marketers tell us it’s unnecessary, it remains true. Think of all of the commercials, and even talk shows that try to take weeping out of our lives, treating it like a plague. Dr. Phil, The Ellen Show, The View, all of these try to replace tears with counseling, laughter or sometimes even anger and hate. However, some studies have shown that the production of tears actually have healing qualities.

I have firsthand knowledge that a good cry can make us feel better.

There are so many sources of tears.

1. Physical pain. We fall and hurt ourselves, or we suffer from a painful illness.
2. Grief over death. We grieve over the loss of a loved one.
3. Injustice, mistreatment, persecution. Sometimes we are moved to tears when we are faced with injustice that we can't do anything about.
4. Loneliness or rejection. When we are lonely we face sadness or grief.
5. Sympathy for others. We care about others and when they hurt, sometimes we truly feel their pain.
6. Our own sin and guilt. The devil works overtime and reminds us of our sins.

Biblical examples: Ezra 9:15–10:1: <sup>15</sup> *O Lord, the God of Israel, you are just, for we are left a remnant that has escaped, as it is today. Behold, we are before you in our guilt, for none can stand before you because of this.* <sup>1</sup> *While Ezra prayed and made confession, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, a very great assembly of men, women, and children, gathered to him out of Israel, for the people wept bitterly.*”

Lk 7:37–38: <sup>37</sup> *And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, <sup>38</sup> and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment.*”

Mt 26:75: <sup>75</sup> *And Peter remembered the saying of Jesus, “Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.” And he went out and wept bitterly.*”

If we saw our own sin rightly and fully, we, too, would weep greatly and bitterly.

The Psalms describe the grief of life in vivid terms: Ps 31:9; 42:3; 6:6.

<sup>6</sup> *I am weary with my moaning; every night I flood my bed with tears; I drench my couch with my weeping.*” Psalm 6:6 (ESV)

Even in our happiest moments, there is often some sorrow.

Yet in compassion for us, Jesus entered into our vale of tears.

God is not blind or deaf to our weeping. He heard the Israelites enslaved in Egypt (Ex 3:1–8), Hagar in the wilderness (Gen 21:8–21), childless Hannah (1 Sam 1:9–20).

What tears have you shed? God has seen *your* tears and heard *your* weeping.

The Psalms speak of God storing up our tears in a bottle and keeping record of them in a book (Ps 56:8).

But God has done more than notice our tears. In Christ, He has entered into our valley of sorrows. All the way back in the little town of Bethlehem.

There was no room for Jesus' parents in the inn. Soon after Jesus' birth, Herod would come seeking his life, and many mothers of slaughtered boys would be wailing (Mt 2:16–18).

Jesus Himself experiences all the sorrows of this world; He weeps.

Weeping with Mary and Martha after Lazarus had died. (Jn 11:33, 35).

Weeping over Jerusalem and its coming divine judgment (Lk 19:41).

Crying out in sorrow in the Garden of Gethsemane over the bitter path of betrayal, abandonment, and death before Him (Mk 14:33–34; Heb 5:7).

But Christ also came to do more than simply weep with the sorrowful; He came to take away their tears!

To the widow at Nain, Jesus comes to raise her dead son, saying, "*Do not weep*" (Lk 7:13).

To those wailing at the death of a man's little daughter, he says, "*Do not weep, for she is not dead but sleeping.*"

At first they mock him, but soon the girl is alive, and their tears are gone (Lk 8:52)!

To Mary Magdalene, weeping in the garden outside his tomb, Jesus comes to speak her name and to bring her resurrection joy (Jn 20:11–16)!

One day, our God will wipe away your every tear—forever.

This world is a vale of tears, but its tears are *temporary!*

This is God's *promise* to us: Ps 30:5b; 126:6; and especially Jn 16:20–22 as He says: <sup>20</sup>  
*Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy.*"

A day is coming when John's vision will be our own vision.

A huge multitude from every nation, all in white, with palm branches and song worshipping Christ the Lamb and there will be No hunger! No thirst! And no tears!

The blood of the Lamb (v 14) will have made all the difference.

In that day, God will wipe away every tear from our eyes, forever.

Wiping away someone else's tears is one of the most intimate of all personal interactions. It is the very picture of empathy and compassion—the caring one is acknowledging and sharing the hurt and the grief behind those tears.

But the act of wiping away someone's tears is not simply joining with them in grief; it's not just "weeping with those who weep."

Taking a handkerchief or tissue and using your own fingers to dry someone's tears says something; it personally promises hope: "Don't cry. Let me dry your tears. You're not alone. I'm here to help, to shoulder the burden, to mend things. I am with you...Jesus is with you!"

For now, we wait. And often, we weep. In this life, we sow in tears. "*Blessed are those who mourn,*" Jesus says, "*for they shall be comforted*" (Mt 5:4).

And as we wait for the day God will dry our tears, we look for opportunities to dry the tears of others, to extend to them God's own compassion, to bring them the good news of Jesus—who saw *their* tears, carried *their* sorrows, cleansed *them* by his blood, who will one day wipe every tear from *their* eyes.

Today, we celebrate God's faithfulness to those who have died in the faith, whose struggles and sorrows are over, whose tears have ended. God's saints shed many tears in this world.

But for his saints in heaven, there is no more crying—just joy. They will behold the face of God (Mt 5:8), and God will behold them. He will reach out his nail-marked hands to them—to us—and wipe away every tear.

Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and mind through Christ Jesus!

Amen.

### **Sermon Outline**

***Life Is Often a "Vale of Tears," but God Will Wipe Away Our Tears Forever***

***Revelation 7:9–17***

- I. This world truly is a vale of tears.
- II. In compassion for us, Jesus entered into our vale of tears.
- III. One day, our God will wipe away every tear, forever.