

## ***THE TEAR, LK19:28-44***

Images of Lent #6

◆Intro: Mel Gibson's blockbuster film *The Passion* is said to be the most seen R-rated film (due to the crucifixion) of all time, largely due to the mass of Christians who made the film successful by their interest in the main character. (It's one of the few R-rated films Christians might make an exception for, though I wouldn't recommend children seeing the film.)

◆There is a creatively artistic scene in the story, where we are looking down on Mt. Calvary observing Jesus on the cross. It is as if we are viewing through God's eyes. Then slowly, the edges of the screen blur and seem to pull into the center and a drop of water appears in the center of the screen and falls down toward the crucifixion scene below. We realize then that it is raining, or so it seems. But from above, from the perspective on high we feel as though we are crying, or God is crying. (show opening clip of *The Passion*, chapter 30)

◆ Our text is about the tears of God. Jesus, God's son, shed them over the people of Jerusalem as he entered the city the final week of his life. He shed them on Palm Sunday as he neared a road he would later stagger down on the way to being crucified, the Via Delarosa, or the Way of Sorrows.

◆700 years earlier the prophet Isaiah called the coming Messiah a "man of sorrows and familiar with suffering (lit. passion)." What was he to be so sad about? Let's look...

◆*Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, .... (Isaiah 53:4, NIV).*

◆What are our sorrows he's carrying? He's talking about all the misery and death that comes as a result of our sinning. He's talking

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about the separation between God's blessing and us that results from our choices to follow the dark side. Sin is where our sorrows come from.

◆ *But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. (Isaiah 53:5, NIV).*

◆ He's talking about the weight you and I feel for the wrong that we do. That is, Jesus' death was about undoing the things that cause our tears of regret.

◆ **1. If I have no tears of regret, I will never appreciate the tears of God.**

◆ A. Let me explain. Regret is a form of sorrow. In French, for example, to say you are sorry, you say, "Je regret", or "I am sorry" (that's one of the few things I remember from 3 years of high school French class.) Most of the time we have tears of regret over things that could have been better...

◆ "If only..."

◆ If only I didn't hurt so&so's feelings.

◆ If only I had been there when I was supposed to, then maybe..."

◆ If only we could turn back the clock and undo what we did.

◆ Now, it is true that some folks appear to have no regrets, but that is often either because 1) they feel very little depth of love or care for other people, and so have very little compassion ("suffering with") –for anyone who truly loves another regrets it when they hurt the other person, or 2) they are simply ignorant of their wrong doing.

◆ Think of a husband who teases his wife in public about being a little chubby because he wants to appear funny among his friends. In reality to him she may appear stunning. He just wants to be funny.

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(It's odd how men do or say incongruent things.) But she may have always hated her hips, so his joking pinches. Still, he is unaware, and so has no regrets, *until he gets home* and is made aware of his folly.

◆ So you see, there is no sorrow of regret without a knowledge of wrong. So then, say, her forgiveness of her husband, means very little to him for he sees nothing needing forgiveness.

◆ B. Everything we have to say in Lent and Easter about Jesus and his death and his passion/suffering will mean next to nothing to anyone who has no tears about their sins, failures, and tragedies.

◆ If you've done everything right as a parent, and all your kids are stellar, well-adjusted, non-marijuana smoking contributors to society...

◆ If every dark exploit behind closed doors appears to you to be a healthy, natural, and private alternative life-style...

◆ If you have lived nothing you wouldn't happily describe in detail to your mother, the world, or say, in front of you church family...

◆ If you've always obeyed the law at every turn...

◆ Always remembered every special occasion appropriately for those you love and care about...

◆ Never brought sadness to the face of any of these...

◆ Never felt the nagging notion that something in your life just shouldn't be the way it is...

◆ ...then...

◆ Then you are not going to get much out of hearing about God's tears today. The only people for which the Good News of Jesus the Messiah is

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good news are those who are disturbed that all is not right in themselves and the world.

◆ However, I think there are a few at least who could find hope in the tears I want to tell you about because the Bible says this...

◆ *Only fools say in their hearts, "There is no God." They are corrupt, and their actions are evil; no one does good! God looks down from heaven on the entire human race; he looks to see if there is even one with real understanding, one who seeks for God. But no, all have turned away from God; all have become corrupt. No one does good, not even one!" Psalms 53:1-3, NLT.*

◆ **2. Jesus' tears tell me something is wrong with who we are.**

◆ A. Did you know that the reason Jesus cries over Jerusalem in our passage is the very fact that they are not disturbed? They were celebrating. They were shouting Hosanna, which means "save us", as though Jesus was going to be another rebel leader like Judas Maccabee who rode into Jerusalem on a white steed and rededicated the temple in around 167 BC having overthrown their Seleucid captors. (The festival Hanukkah celebrates this event.) There were dozens of other rebel leaders in years to follow who similarly rode into Jerusalem to fight the Greeks, or the Romans who occupied their land.

◆ Verse 38 is actually a psalm the Jews used for when the King would approach the temple.

◆ *So you see what's going on? These people are tickled pink and rejoicing. This is their ticker-tape parade. Everyone is happy except the man in the convertible in the parade. God's Son is crying because they don't get the real state of affairs: Jesus did not come*

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*as a rebel military leader, but as a spiritual savior to counter the sin in mankind that leads to all rebellion.*

◆ B. When God displays his power it ought to naturally lead me to consider my need in comparison.

◆ Jesus' miracle working was not supposed to excite their democratic convention! It was supposed to grip them with the fact that God was near which calls for tears of repentance!

◆ *"Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. (Luke 10:13, NIV).*

◆ When Isaiah met God his response was, "Woe is me, I am a man of unclean lips!" (Isa.6)

◆ When Peter met God his response was, "Back away Jesus, for I am a sinful man." (Luke 5)

◆ Why is it that we don't think in these terms any longer? We, like Jerusalem, have become preoccupied and therefore morally unconscious.

◆ v38b is what the angels sang at Jesus birth when they announced that a savior had been born who would "save his people from their sins", not from the Greeks, or the Romans.

◆ v42 Jerusalem, the "city of peace" did not know real peace. They were so busy with commerce, and economy, and jobs, and government forced healthcare.

◆ C. Do you see yourself in the people of Palm Sunday? Does the goodness of God spur you to pridefully want more? Or does it move you to repentance?

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- ◆ It is clear that God has blessed our nation. But America is rejoicing in sexual freedom. Lets redefine marriage so that two girls can be dad and mom. Lets make and watch TV shows where two men can be a supposedly healthy dad and mom without repercussions on society. Give us Viagra and Cialis so we can have 4 hour excitement. Give us a government that will make our employers pay us more, insure our health for us, and give us money to abort our children. Give us new leaders who will stop kindergarteners from praying, and teach Islam but not Christianity.
- ◆ Or, give us new leaders who will create more jobs, and who will reduce inflation, and who will balance the budget. Hosanna, save us from the failure of our companies to make as many billions as we did last year, so we don't have to post a fall in sales and therefore lose stock value!
- ◆ We clap for the wrong things! When was the last time we spread out our coats for a candidate who pledged to restore morality, to make the courts prosecute pornographers or child-trafficking virtually none of which happens in our nation? Or to push the FCC to raise standards of decency on the air? Or to get rid of attorney generals who openly declare they will not enforce the law?
  - ◆ We have school shooting so we live in a lockdown society and ban guns. But we don't let kids pray, or tell them there are commandments they should follow. I know people who as elementary children took their guns to school so they could hunt on the way home! Nobody got shot in school back then. But they did

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pray to God. And they did teach that nobody should have sex except a husband and his wife! We clap for the wrong things!

◆ Curiously, huge numbers of us are diagnosed with ADD or depression. Im not getting down on these. I've had depression. But could it be that our lifestyle, our absence, or workaholism, or our materialism make us more prone to these? Might we have chosen poorly in some ways?

◆ Jesus' tears are a call to evaluate the state of my soul, not the economy. And then to come to God in repentance. They are a call to repentance.

◆ **3. Jesus tears also tell me I have hope.**

◆ A. God cries over my messed up life! That means God cares about my messed up life! Understand that Jesus cried over our lostness that in turn causes our own tears. Jesus cried over our sin! I think it is significant that Jesus did not shout and lecture from the Via Delarosa. It was not the wrath of God he came to give us. It was the wrath of God he came to take!

(John 3:17)

◆ Tell me, then, what does that say about his view of you, of me, of Jerusalem?

◆ He did not come as a professor to lecture us.

◆ He did not come as a judge to condemn us.

◆ He did not come as a warrior to destroy us.

◆ He came as a savior

◆ He did not come to recommend we all get along.

◆ He did not come to run the nation of Israel better and defeat the Romans.

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- ◆ He came as a savior, to defeat the problem inside both Jews and Romans.
- ◆ Jesus' passion (suffering) reveals the depth of his passion (love; interesting that the same term means both).
- ◆ This is what God wants for you. God wants your good future.
  - ◆ The only other record we have of Jesus crying is in John 11 at the tomb of his friend Lazarus. We have there another proof of the tenderness of Jesus' character in the hurt he feels at the death of his friend. The same man wept over Jerusalem in the same way.
  - ◆ v42: Do you hear the mourning in his prediction that Jerusalem would come to an end because they clapped for the wrong things? And what he said came true too, in the year 70 AD when the Romans flattened Jerusalem. But don't think for a minute that Jesus is delighting in this prediction. He is mourning this prediction.
- ◆ B. And in this lies hope. The opposite is also true. Had The City of Peace recognized when God came to her, called to her their destruction could have been prevented. And so it is with us too.
  - ◆ God wants to give us mercy, but repentance and returning is the requirement.
- ◆ **Conclusion:**
  - ◆ Something has gone terribly wrong with the world. And God has come to put it right again. Our Heavenly Father, the father that he is, is not satisfied until our lives are as they ought to be.
    - ◆ *He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."* He who



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*was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" (Revelation 21:4,5, NIV).*

◆ That's where its all pointing, people. That is our hope! But as I think CS Lewis put it, "illusions of our cleanliness must not be permitted." We are not a nation without fault and sinfulness. You and I are not people without stain or immorality. Jesus' tears mean there is a better way and he longs for us to have it. Be ever choosing the better way.

◆ "So I advise you to live according to your new life in the Holy Spirit. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. The old sinful nature loves to do evil, which is just opposite from what the Holy Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are opposite from what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, and your choices are never free from this conflict. But when you are directed by the Holy Spirit, you are no longer subject to the law. When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, your lives will produce these evil results: sexual immorality, impure thoughts, eagerness for lustful pleasure, idolatry, participation in demonic activities, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, divisions, the feeling that everyone is wrong except those in your own little group, envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other kinds of sin. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God. But when the Holy Spirit controls our lives, he will produce this kind of fruit in us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Here there is no conflict with the law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. If we are living now by the Holy Spirit, let us follow the Holy Spirit's leading in every part of our lives." Galatians 5:16-25, NLT.