

Tears

Why are we embarrassed to cry?

John 11.35

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • March 27, In the year of our Lord Christ, 2022

Scripture Reader and Reading: Dan Calvert – Psalm 126.5–6

Song Leader and Song Suggestions: Larry Amberg – No suggestions

Prelude:

I. Why do we think tears show weakness?

A. People fear crying,

1. acknowledging that they will cry later,
2. insisting that they have to be strong for the rest of the family,
 - a) which means not crying, because
 - b) in their minds, crying shows weakness.

B. The problem:

1. Crying allegedly shows weakness.
 - a) No one wants to appear as weak.
 - b) Therefore, the tears are withheld.
2. People say men are strong.
 - a) Therefore they do not cry.
 - b) Women are weak, so they cry.

C. People fear losing control and being embarrassed.

1. Sometimes well-intentioned people try to stop someone from crying,
2. telling them that things are going to get better.
 - a) When someone cries they do not necessarily want to know
 - (1) that things will be better later,
 - (2) they just want to cry for now.

II. We certainly should not endorse

A. those who use tears to manipulate.

B. Malachi 2 reveals

1. that the Jews used tears in the worship service
2. to manipulate God,

**13 And this is the second thing you do:
You cover the altar of the Lord with tears,
With weeping and crying;
So He does not regard the offering anymore,
Nor receive it with goodwill from your hands.**

– Malachi 2.13

Persuasion:

I. John 11.35 – “Jesus Wept”

- A. Was something wrong with Jesus?
1. Was He weak?
 2. Was He not a man for weeping?
 - a) I dare anyone to tell the Lord
 - b) that you think he was not a very manly by weeping.
 3. In John 11 Jesus wept because a good friend had died; and because
 - a) he saw people hurting over the death of Lazarus:

33 Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. 34 And He said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to Him, “Lord, come and see.” 35 Jesus wept.

– John 11.33–35

4. Jesus, the truest man who ever lived, wept at other times:

41 Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it.

– Luke 19.41

7 ...who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear.

– Hebrews 5.7

B. True men believe in truth strongly.

1. It may be their

- a) country,
- b) family,
- c) the church.

2. They will put their whole lives into it,

- a) becoming emotional about it.
 - (1) They will give money, time, conversation, their lives and,
 - (2) yes, emotions into that which they believe in strongly.
- b) In other words,
 - (1) they will lose all sense of self,
 - (2) ignoring what others think, and
 - (3) pour themselves into their belief.

3. One of the most moving sights of the First Gulf War with Iraq,

- a) came after the war, in Florida.
- b) A large burly man had finally arrived home and
 - (1) after exiting the plane,
 - (2) a band played the national anthem.
 - (a) He stood at perfect attention and saluted the flag.
 - i) Then his chin started dimpling up and
 - ii) his bottom lip starting quivering almost uncontrollably.
- c) Do you think General H. Norman Schwarzkopf was not a true man!

- (1) Yet he had been taught differently,
- (2) as he writes in his autobiography,

“...I had been taught at West Point that an officer should avoid any public display of feelings. For the entire first part of my career, I prided myself on being unflappable even in the most chaotic of circumstances. That guise lasted until Vietnam, where I realized that I was dealing with human lives and if one were lost, it could never be replaced. I quickly learned that there was nothing wrong with being emotional.”

– H. Norman Schwarzkopf, *It Doesn't Take a Hero*, New York, New York: Linda Grey Bantam Books, 1992, pp. ix,x

- (3) Thank you, Mr. Schwarzkopf , for seeing the wisdom of emotion.

C. We call Jeremiah the weeping prophet.

1. The Bible even contains a Book written by him called *Lamentations*, and
 - a) reading it makes it obvious that he was lamenting,
 - b) pouring out his tears, and
 - (1) he was not ashamed, but
 - (2) wanted the world to know and to join with him.
2. The Book of Jeremiah has numerous references to his tears:

**1 Oh, that my head were waters,
And my eyes a fountain of tears,
That I might weep day and night
For the slain of the daughter of my people!
(Jer 9.1)**

**17 But if you will not hear it,
My soul will weep in secret for your pride;
My eyes will weep bitterly
And run down with tears,
Because the LORD'S flock has been taken captive.
(Jer 13.17)**

17 Therefore you shall say this word to them:

**“Let my eyes flow with tears night and day,
And let them not cease;
For the virgin daughter of my people
Has been broken with a mighty stroke, with a very severe blow”
(Jer 14.17)**

**11 My eyes fail with tears,
My heart is troubled;
My bile is poured on the ground
Because of the destruction of the daughter of my people,
Because the children and the infants
Faint in the streets of the city
(Lam 2.11)**

3. Read the Book of Jeremiah, listen to his bold words and fearless courage.
 - a) You will not read the words of a cry baby, but
 - b) a man who loved God and his people with all his emotion.

D. Acts 20 shows that Paul can be added to the list:

19 “...serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews... 31 Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.”

– Acts 20.19, 31

1. Most so-called macho men would not endure the trials that Paul endured.
2. Second Corinthians 2 shows that he did not write without emotion,

4 For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you, with many tears, not that you should be grieved, but that you might know the love which I have so abundantly for you.

– 2 Corinthians 2.4

II. Ecclesiastes 3.4 – A Time for Tears

4 A time to weep,

**And a time to laugh;
A time to mourn,
And a time to dance...**

A. The writer of Psalm 6

1. killed a lion and a bear with his hands, and
2. a giant with a sling:

**6 I am weary with my groaning;
All night I make my bed swim;
I drench my couch with my tears**

– Psalm 6.6

- (1) Here was a genuine man, David,
 - (2) who was highly emotional.
 - (a) It was his emotions, though not emotions alone,
 - i) that led him to kill a lion and a bear with his own hands
 - ii) when they threatened his flocks.
 - (3) He put down Goliath
 - (a) when the giant stirred David's heart
 - (b) for defying the armies of God.
 - (4) From at least a worldly standpoint,
 - (a) David was a man, but
 - (b) in Psalm 6.6 he said that he swam in his tears.
- b) David was a healthy man spiritually, evident from his writings.
- c) Other places in the Psalms record his tears,

**12 Hear my prayer, O LORD,
And give ear to my cry;
Do not be silent at my tears;
For I am a stranger with You,**

**A sojourner, as all my fathers were.
(Psa 39.12)**

**3 My tears have been my food day and night,
While they continually say to me,
“Where is your God?”
(Psa 42.3)**

**8 You number my wanderings;
Put my tears into Your bottle;
Are they not in Your book?
(Psa 56.8)**

**9 For I have eaten ashes like bread,
And mingled my drink with weeping.
(Psa 102.9)**

**8 For You have delivered my soul from death,
My eyes from tears,
And my feet from falling.
(Psa 116.8)**

d) Do you now believe David was

(1) less of a man, or

(2) weak, or

(3) an embarrassment?

e) His tears proved that he was a man, because

(1) he believed strongly in his heart about certain things and

(2) it showed up in his tears.

B. We should not force tears.

1. When we do not shed tears

2. that does not mean something is wrong.

C. Some things in life are emotional,

1. whether sad or happy, and

2. God designed humans to shed tears during those times,
 - a) perhaps that others will notice,
 - b) which is the very thing that we are trying to avoid, and
 - (1) leading them to weep or rejoice with us,

15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

– Romans 12.15

III. Shedding Tears Is Healthy

A. It shows humility.

1. Our tears touch God, because
2. He knows that something very strong is tugging at our hearts:

5 “Return and tell Hezekiah the leader of My people, Thus says the LORD, the God of David your father: I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the LORD.”

– 2 Kings 20.5

B. Ecclesiastes 7 shows that we learn valuable lessons during those times,

- 1 A good name is better than precious ointment,
And the day of death than the day of one’s birth;**
- 2 Better to go to the house of mourning
Than to go to the house of feasting,
For that is the end of all men;
And the living will take it to heart.**
- 3 Sorrow is better than laughter,
For by a sad countenance the heart is made better.**
- 4 The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning,
But the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.**

– Ecclesiastes 7.1–4

C. Tears often precede joy,

- 5 **Those who sow in tears
Shall reap in joy.**
- 6 **He who continually goes forth weeping,
Bearing seed for sowing,
Shall doubtless come again with rejoicing,
Bringing his sheaves with him
(Psa 126.5, 6)**
- 4 **“Blessed are those who mourn,
For they shall be comforted.”
(Matt 5.4)**
- 21 **“Blessed are you who hunger now,
For you shall be filled.
Blessed are you who weep now,
For you shall laugh.”
(Luke 6.21)**

Exhortation:

I. God created human tears for a reason.

A. Therefore,

1. be human,
2. use what God has given you.

B. You will do much better in life.

II. Perhaps the key is believing in something greater than yourself...