INTRODUCTION

The theme of Hebrews is "Eyes on Jesus." Our verse-by-verse journey through Hebrews is going to reveal the wonderful richness of the character of Jesus Christ. Last week in Hebrews 4 we introduced Jesus as our High Priest. This description of Jesus continues into Hebrews 5. However, I'm going to focus in on one statement about Jesus that reveals He lifted up prayers to His Father with loud cries and tears.

This is one of three times in the New Testament when we read about the tears of Jesus. We know Jesus sang and although we never read it specifically, I believe Jesus laughed. He had a wry sense of Jewish humor. Sometimes we don't get His sense of humor because we're not first century Jews. But when He talked the how the Pharisees were the blind leading the blind both falling into the ditch, I'm sure he got a few chuckles from His audience.

However we shouldn't be surprised at the tears of Jesus. When the prophet Isaiah described the coming Messiah in Isaiah 53, he predicted he would be "A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." (Isaiah 53:3 KJV)

In fact, my all-time favorite hymn is "Man of Sorrows" written by Philip Bliss in 1875. The first verse says, "Man of Sorrows; What a name; For the Son of God who came; Ruined sinners to reclaim. Hallelujah! What a Savior!"

So let's read more about our High Priest who wept for us in Hebrews. Before we go to the Word, let's go to the throne of grace.

Hebrews 5:1-10. "Every high priest is selected from among men and is appointed to represent them in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he himself is subject to weakness. This is why he has to offer sacrifices for his own sins, as well as for the sins of the people. No one takes this honor upon himself; he must be called by God, just as Aaron was. So Christ also did not take upon himself the glory of becoming a high priest. But God said to him, 'You are my Son; today I have become your Father.' And he says in another place, 'You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.'" *

During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.

We all cry. It's part of the package of being a human being. It is our physical reaction to an emotional state. Women are better at it than men. Studies show women cry an average of fifty times a year and men cry an average of ten times. I think I bring that average up for men.

^{*} Psalm 110

Sometimes it feels good to cry. That's why some of the most loved movies are called tearjerkers. Growing up, I cried at Bambi and Old Yeller. I did a Facebook Survey about top tear jerkers and some of the most common responses were Steel Magnolias, Beaches, Brian's Song, The Notebook, Titanic, Love Story, A Walk to Remember, My Sister's Keeper, Somewhere in Time, the ENTIRE Hallmark channel, ANYTHING by Nicolas Sparks, Marley and Me, and Warhorse, (let's just say any movie involving an animal!). Sleepless in Seattle was even a tearjerker about another tearjerker, "An Affair to Remember." And no, "The Dirty Dozen" was a great movie, but it wasn't a tearjerker.

I found a quote about tears that has been misattributed to Samuel Johnson, or Washington Irving, but the author is unknown. However, the observation is powerful: "There is sacredness in tears. They are not the mark of weakness, but of power. They speak more eloquently than ten thousand tongues. They are the messengers of overwhelming grief, of deep contrition, of unspeakable love."

I want us to put our eyes on Jesus and examine the three times in the New Testament where we see the His tears, then we'll share some take away truths that can learn.

I. JESUS WEEPS IN SYMPATHY AT THE PAIN OF OTHERS

In John 11 Jesus receives word that his friend, Lazarus is sick. Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus send word to Jesus to come right away and heal him. But Jesus didn't go that day or the next day. We don't always understand God's sense of timing. But just remember that sometimes when we're in a hurry, God isn't. He has an impeccable sense of timing. Some of you need to know that God's delays are not God's denials.

Jesus waited until He knew Lazarus had died then He said to the disciples, "Let's go to Bethany." When they arrived Lazarus had been dead for four days. Martha came running out when she heard Jesus had arrived and she said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." Can you hear the inflection of accusation? Have you ever said or thought that? "God if only you had done X then y wouldn't have happened?"

Jesus said, "Your brother will live again." Martha said, "Sure, Lord. I know my Bible. He will be raised on the day of general resurrection." Jesus must have smiled and said, "The Resurrection to life isn't an event, it's a person. I AM the Resurrection and the life. He that believes in me—though he were dead, yet shall he live."

They walked toward the cave where they had laid the body of Lazarus. Mary came running out and fell at the feet of Jesus. She said the same thing. She was weeping tears of bitter grief. Jesus was so moved that tears came to His eyes.

"When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. 'Where have you laid him?' he asked. 'Come and see, Lord,' they replied. Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, 'See how he loved him!'" (John 11:33-36)

Now we know the rest of the miracle. Jesus tells them to move away the stone from the mouth of the cave. Martha said, "Master, I don't think I would do that if I were you. He's been dead four days, and by now, there will be a terrible stench of death." But Jesus didn't change His mind. They removed the stone and He yelled, "Lazarus, come out of there!" It's a good thing Jesus said, "Lazarus" or else every corpse within hearing range would have come out—and some of them might have been dead for more than four days!

But for this message, I want to take a side road down from the main miracle and stop at the part where Jesus wept. I have always been amazed at that tiny verse. I expected Jesus to say, "Stop your crying! He's going to walk out of there in just a minute. Dry your tears!" But Jesus isn't focused on the miracle that's about to happen, He is focused on the emotional misery the mourners are experiencing. And Jesus was so moved by their pain that it drove Him to tears.

Whoever you are today, I want to remind you that Jesus understands your pain, and He even grieves alongside you. He is a man of sorrows acquainted with grief.

Jesus wept just like you did when you husband died. He wept just the way you did when you heard your friend was killed in a car wreck. He wept the way you did when cancer finally finished its course in that loved one who had lingered so long. Man of Sorrows, what a name for the Son of God who came. Ruined sinners to reclaim; Hallelujah! What a Savior!

II. JESUS WEEPS IN DISMAY OVER PEOPLE WHO REJECT HIM

The setting for the second occasion of the tears of Jesus was on what is often called the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. It was the Sunday before the cross. I've often said it was a day of cheers and tears. Jesus was riding a donkey. The crowd was laying down palm branches and shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" But in the midst of their praise the air was suddenly punctuated by the eerie sound of Jesus' loud sobbing as He gazed over at Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives.

At the tomb of Lazarus, Jesus wept. The Greek word used in John 11 was *dakruo*, which means a silent weeping. A tear slid silently down His cheek. But there is a different word here. It is a much louder kind of crying. It's the word *klaio*, which means a "loud weeping or wailing." You can almost hear it when you shout the word, "*Klaio*!"

"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. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you." (Luke 19:41-44)

Jesus had come unto His own, the Jews, and the Jewish nation as a whole rejected Him. This broke His heart. He lamented that He arrived as God that Day, but the inhabitants of

Jerusalem didn't see Him. They saw Him with their eyes, but they didn't recognize Him as God with their hearts. Then Jesus made an amazing prophecy that came true 40 years later. As He looked at Jerusalem He was able to visualize a terrible scene of the Holy City being surrounded and burning, all because they missed God's time of coming to them.

We know the precise details of this terrible battle because of the eyewitness account given by the Jewish historian, Josephus. My new book, *The Jerusalem Protocol*, is a novel, but it begins with the factual historical account of Josephus watching the destruction of the Temple. It was a horrific episode in the history of Israel. All because Jesus came to them offering them peace, and they said, "No way. Instead, we're going to crucify you."

In the same way, I think our Lord weeps over the condition of every person who has rejected His gift of eternal life. God wants everyone to accept His offer. The Bible says, "God is not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9). God wants you to be saved, but He won't force you to be saved. If you spend your entire life, and you never recognize Jesus is God and He is your only hope for salvation, you'll experience the same kind of terrible judgment Jesus predicted for Jerusalem. You will be eternally separated from God in a place the Bible calls hell. But God loves you and He has given you many opportunities to see and receive Jesus. Today is another chance. Will you trust Him today?

Man of Sorrows; what a name! For the Son of God who came, ruined sinners to reclaim. Hallelujah! What a Savior!

III. JESUS WEPT IN ANGUISH AS HE CONSIDERED THE COST OF SALVATION

The Bible says in Hebrews 5:7, "During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death."

This refers to the anguish Jesus endured in the Garden of Gethsemane the night before the crucifixion. At the tomb, Jesus wept with His friends. On the Mount of Olives, He wept over a whole city. In the Garden, He wept for the whole world, including Himself.

We read in the Gospels that on that night Jesus was exceedingly sorrowful. Luke relates the agonized cries and torture Jesus experienced. "He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, 'Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.' An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground." (Luke 22:41-44)

In His prayer, Jesus spoke of a cup before Him. He prayed, "Father, take this cup away from me, but not my will, but yours be done." There was something about this cup that caused Jesus to dread it. What was in that symbolic cup that caused Him to cry out and weep before His Father? Inside that cup was the cost of redeeming a lost world. That cup was full of the emotional agony of being left all alone that night. When Jesus was arrested His disciples all fled. The cup also contained the physical agony of the torture and crucifixion. Jesus had nerve

endings that carried pain messages to the brain just like we have. He didn't have some kind of heavenly anesthesia to numb the pain. His humanity revolted at the thought of His blood being spilled from His body. But the crucifixion was so much more than nails through His hands and feet. That bitter cup also contained the spiritual agony of carrying the weight of sin in His body. On the cross, the Father transferred all the guilt and shame of the repulsive wickedness of every sinner who would ever walk on this planet. Jesus was the pure, spotless Lamb of God. His soul was as white as fallen snow. He knew His soul would be polluted so that we could be cleansed. Isaiah says, "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." (Isaiah 1:18)

Jesus wept tears of anguish that night, but the writer of Hebrews confirmed Jesus surrendered to the will of His Father and was made perfect through His suffering. Man of Sorrows; what a name! For the Son of God who came. Ruined sinners to reclaim—Hallelujah! What a Savior!

So what? What do the tears of Jesus teach us? Let's gather up four take away truths.

A. Jesus is a caring High Priest

How many Jewish high priests do you think ever wept over the sinfulness of the people? We don't know about the others, but our GREAT High Priest cried out with loud tears before the Father.

Some people believe God has no emotions. The Westminster Confession, the cornerstone of the Scottish Presbyterian Church, says among other things that God is "without passions." One theologian said some crusty believers take that to the extreme until they don't worship the God of the Bible, they worship Allah. As we learned last week, our High Priest is one who is moved by our weaknesses and struggles. Jesus sees your pain and He shares your pain.

B. We should weep over the things that make Jesus weep

Earlier in Hebrews, we were warned about the danger of a hardened heart. A hard heart seldom weeps. But when you ask God to tenderize your heart, you will weep over the things that make Jesus weep. It's okay to cry when someone you love is grieving. Jesus wept. But I wonder if you've ever wept over the sinfulness of your city, or any city? The Mount of Olives was the perfect place for Jesus to have an overlook of Jerusalem. What He saw drove Him to tears. He wasn't crying for the buildings He saw, He was weeping for the people who refused to recognize Him.

On some of our first trips to Qujing in China, we would often walk up a mountain behind the Stone Forest Hotel. My nickname for the mountain was "Yeller Mountain" because every morning at dawn several hundred Chinese would walk up the mountain for exercise, and they would yell and scream as part of their exercise. It's a Chinese traditional medicine custom to relieve tension. Since everyone else was shouting, some of us would look over the city and shout, "Jesus is Lord over Qujing!" We would stand and pray over the city, and more than once, there were tears as we wept for the people to trust Jesus. Many hundreds have turned to

Christ. Have you ever wept over the lostness of your neighborhood or city? We should weep over the things that produced the tears of Jesus.

C. Our tears are precious to God

There was an ancient custom of collecting one's tears in a tiny bottle. Once when King David was captured by the Philistines, he cried out to God, "You've kept track of my every toss and turn through the sleepless nights, each tear entered in your ledger (my tears into your bottle), each ache written in your book." (Psalm 56:8 MSG) Everyone cries in the same language, and tears are a language that God understands. Our tears often express what our lips cannot communicate.

There is an old Jewish prayer from the Rabbi's manual that said: "Oh God, You are great; we are small. You are infinite; we are finite. You are eternal; we tarry for just a little while; You are everything; we are nothing. But with all Your power, and all of your greatness, You bend down to listen to the sound of our tears as they hit the ground."

Our sorrow connects us to the tears of Jesus. I often remember the little poem: "I walked a mile with laughter. She chatted all the way. But I was none the wiser for all she had to say. I walked a mile with sorrow, and not a word said she. But Oh, the things I learned when sorrow walked with me."

D. One day God will wipe away all our tears!

After over forty years in the ministry I've shared thousands of tears. I stood in hundreds of cemeteries and witnessed the tears of family members as they say goodbye to the body of their loved one. I've been in the ER and seen the sudden tears when someone learns their loved one has just died. I've sat in front of individuals and couples who poured out their sad stories with tears of anguish. And I've shared tears of joy with brides and grooms as they stood at the altar to allow God to join their lives together. The people in this world have shed an ocean of tears. But tears are temporary. They are for this world only. Here's the great promise from the last pages of the Bible: "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 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." (Revelation 21:3-4)

CONCLUSION

The main truth you should take away from here is that Jesus is there for you and He cares for you. Jesus is there for you and He cares for you. In 1988, Twila Paris wrote a song entitled, "Every Heart that is Breaking." It's such a powerful song about the compassion of Jesus that the first few dozen times I heard it, tears came to my eyes.

I even created a YouTube video show to go with the song. That was eight years ago, and since then, it's gone viral. It has over 16,000 views—yes, I did say 16,000. That's not viral; that small number qualifies more as bacterial instead of viral!

But just listen to the powerful lyrics: "For the young abandoned husband; Left alone without a reason; For the pilgrim in the city where there is no home. For the son without a father; For his solitary mother; I have a message: He sees you. He knows you. He loves you.

Every heart that is breaking tonight; Is the heart of a child that He holds in His sight; And Oh how He longs to hold in His arms; Every heart that is breaking tonight.

For the precious, fallen daughter; For her devastated father; For the prodigal who's dying in a strange new way; For the child who's always hungry; For the patriot with no country; I have a message: He sees you. He knows you. He loves you. Jesus loves you."

Man of Sorrows; what a name! For the Son of God who came, ruined sinners to reclaim. Hallelujah! What a Savior!

OUTLINE

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- A. Jesus is a caring High Priest
- B. We should weep over the things that make Jesus weep
- C. Our <u>tears</u> are <u>precious</u> to God
- D. One day God will wipe away all our tears!

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David O. Dykes, Pastor Green Acres Baptist Church Tyler, Texas

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For the Joy...
Pastor David Dykes