

Do You Weep Over Sin?

Psalm 119:129-136

Introduction: Many things can bring us to tears in this broken world we live in. It may be something serious like divorce, a miscarriage, a wayward child or death. It may be something like a romantic breakup, a moving song or poem, or even a movie that grips our heart. You may be thinking right now of something or someone who brought you to tears. But let me ask all of us this question: when was the last time you wept over sin? When was the last time tears streamed down your face because our God was being dishonored and disrespected? Who are the people who shed such tears? Three questions can help us answer this question.

I. Do you have a passion for the Word of God?

119:129-131

Psalm 119 is the “Word of God” psalm. Its 22 stanzas and 176 verses exalt the beauty, truth, value and wonder of this incredible gift from our God. Our God is not silent! He is a talking God and He talks to us in and through His Word that we might know Him and love Him. Our God is passionate to have a relationship with us. Are we passionate to have a relationship with Him? If we are, three things will be our declaration, our confession, concerning his Word.

1) God’s Word is wonderful

119:129

The psalmist begins stanza Pe with a declaration to God, “Your testimonies are wonderful.” They are extraordinary and incredible. There

is nothing like your word. It is a wonder to behold and cherish and possess. This supernatural “out of this world” (Motyer, *Psalms by the Day*, 356) Word demands a clear response: “therefore my soul (Heb. “nephesh”) keeps them.” Something this wonderful is to be loved and obeyed, valued and honored. Jesus is the “Wonderful Counselor” (Isa. 9:6). We find His wonderful counsel in His Word!

2) God’s Word gives light 119:130

One of the reasons God’s Word is wonderful is that it “gives light.” Its unfolding or opening illuminates our souls, “imparting understanding to the simple.” Willem Van Gemeren says that when the door is opened to God’s Word, “even those inexperienced in the realities of life (“the simple”; cf. 116:6; Pr 1:4; 14:15) may gain wisdom (“understanding”: cf 19:7). [Psalms. EBC, vol 5, 883]. Open the door of God’s Word and light shines into our lives to guide us to think and live wisely.

3) God’s Word is insatiable 119:131

“Insatiable” is not a word we use very often. However, it is exactly the right word to capture the thrust of verse 131. It means a desire too great to be satisfied. This is exactly what the songwriter had for the Word of God. He “opens his mouth and pants.” He wants more and more. He cannot get enough! His appetite for the Holy Scriptures cannot be

satisfied. Psalm 42:1-2 provides a perfect complement to this longing of the psalmist, “As a deer longs for flowing streams, so I long for you, God. I thirst for God, the living God. When can I come and appear before God?” Because he pants to have the living God, he pants and longs for his word, his commandments. Martin Luther says, “I have opened my mouth, that I might not want to offer what is mine, but to desire to receive what is Yours” (*Luther’s Works*, vol 11, 500). I do not long to hear my voice. I long, O Lord, to hear yours.

II. Do you seek God’s favor that you may honor Him? 119:132-135

Motives are important in life. Why we do what we do is especially important for those who serve King Jesus. When it comes to seeking His favor, His blessings, are you motivated by a desire for your recognition or His? It is your glory or His glory that drives you? The psalmist is the Lord’s servant (vs. 135). His Master’s reputation is what matters most. It is from this reality that 5 prayer requests or petitions emerge in verses 132-135.

1) Ask God to be gracious to you 119:132

Having received the wonderful, illuminating Word that he can never get enough of in verses 129-131, the psalmist asks the Lord to 1) “turn to me” and 2) “be gracious to me.” He knows he can make this request for grace from God because this “is your way with those who love your name.”

Lord, I love who you are and what you do. I value your name, your honor, your reputation. So I am confident in asking for your attention and your grace. Spurgeon says, “If God looks and sees us panting [for Him], he will not fail to be merciful to us” (*TOC*, vol 3, 379).

2) Ask God to protect you from sin 119:133

Verse 133 is specific in one of the ways God is gracious to His children. It is expressed in a two-fold request. First, “make my steps steady through your promise” (CSB). The idea is that “God should make his life safe and secure...fixed and firm” (Ross, vol 3, 568-69). Second, and closely related, he asks the Lord “don’t let any sin dominate me” (CSB). Sin will try to gain control of me and get me walking down the wrong path. I long to honor you. Protect me from any and all sin that I may succeed.

3) Ask God to deliver you from your enemies 119:134

Once more the “oppressors” appear (cf vs 121-22). Being the Lord’s servant does not come without opposition and persecution. The psalmist asks for the Lord’s deliverance. He asks God to set him free from those who would take him down and in the process cause him to dishonor the name of his Lord. Set me free to obey you, “that I may keep your precepts” (ESV). Sin and sinners want to defeat me. I need a Redeemer to rescue me from them, and even from myself.

4) Ask God to bless you with His presence 119:135

James Boice notes that the first part of verse 135, “is a conscious echo of the Old Testament benediction, known as the Aaronic blessing” (*Living by the Book*, 132). There we read in Numbers 6:24-26, “May the LORD bless you and protect you; may the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; may the LORD look with favor on you and give you peace.” Like Moses, the psalmist asks to see the face of God in his life, to experience his presence and enjoy his favor. He is the Lord’s servant. The Lord is his Master. He longs only for the presence and blessing of this One and no other.

5) Ask God to be your teacher 119:135

The Lord is our Master. And, because he is our Master, he is also our Teacher. Though God blesses His people with spiritually gifted teachers (Rom. 12:7), He is the Master Teacher who instructs us concerning his testimonies, his words, his commandments, his promises, his precepts, his statutes, his law. Alec Motyer beautifully ties the two truths of verse 135 together, “The shining face is the teaching of truth. Yahweh’s face shines (with delight and favor) as he teaches his truth” (*Psalms by the Day*, 357).

III. Do you grieve when people disobey our Lord's Word? 119:136

The Psalmist knows quite well the world he lives in. Its brokenness, its pain, its sorrow, and especially its sin, they are everywhere. One would have to be blind not to see it. And, it breaks his heart. The final verse of stanza Pe reveals the song writer's reaction to this world beaten down and battered by sin. It also reveals, in particular, why our world groans and hurts so much. In a word: it is sin.

1) There is a reaction: tears of grief.

The psalmist uses a beautiful word picture to describe his grief, "My eyes shed stream of tears." Rivers of water run down my eyes when I see people, human beings, those who bear the divine image, disregard your Word and pay you no mind. Alec Motyer notes, "The context is that Yahweh's revealed truth is so 'wonderful' [v. 129] that it is heart-breaking that anyone should fail to keep it" (*Psalms by the Day*, 357). And yet people do not keep God's Word. They prefer the false way rather than the true way (v. 128). They choose to let sin have dominion in their lives rather than God's Word (v. 133). The situation is tragic. The child of God is driven to break down and weep.

2) There is a reason: disregard of the Word of God

The precise cause for the tears are given as this stanza comes to an end.

“People do not keep your law.” The teachings of our Lord found in his

Word are disobeyed and rejected. They are not seen as important or

valuable, and so they are disregarded as worthless. God gives us His

divinely inspired Word and the human response is, “we could care less.”

This is not how those who love God respond. Spurgeon said it well,

“spiritual men feel a holy fear of the Lord himself, and most of all lament

when they see dishonor cast upon his holy name” (*TOD*, vol. 3, 380).

Conclusion

It is not surprising to discover that sin and the sorrows it brings to this world brought tears to the eyes of the Lord Jesus. The shortest verse in the English Bible is John 11:35 where it says, “Jesus wept.” He wept that day over the death of his dear friend Lazarus. He wept over the sin, sickness and sorrow of this fallen world.

So much grief, so much chaos, so much pain and hurt, so much unbelief.

And in Luke 19:41, we see our Lord weeping over the city of Jerusalem because her sin and unbelief would call down the judgment of God and her destruction in

A. D. 70. Sin breaks the heart of God. Sin brings tears to the eyes of God. Is the same true for you? Is it true for me? Tears over sin demand that we do something.

It moved Jesus to go to the cross that tears of sorrow might be turned to tears of

joy! How will we respond? How will we act? Remember, there first must be the tears.