

## LUKE 23:27-28

## WEEP NOT FOR ME, BUT FOR YOURSELVES

***And a great multitude of the people followed Him, and women who also mourned and lamented Him. But Jesus, turning to them, said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children."***

Words of Jesus are always important. At the lectern I read for you the Seven "Words"—the seven statements--that Jesus spoke dying on the cross. These are the seven recorded in Holy Scripture. There may have been more.

What about the last words that He spoke before being fastened to the cross? That is our text for today. It was Friday morning. Things had changed drastically in the past twelve hours. Thursday evening He had celebrated Passover with His disciples. Later at night that He was betrayed by one of His own, Judas, in the Garden of Gethsemane and given into the hands of those who hated Him. They put Him on false trial before the Jewish court. He was accused by liars, but unsuccessfully so. He was ultimately judged guilty of blasphemy and, according to the Old Testament, worthy of death. He was mistreated and humiliated. Early Friday morning, at 6:00 or before, the Jewish officials took Him to the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, demanding Pilate's Guilty verdict—guilty of death. --- Surely many of the people of Jerusalem awaking Friday morning had no clue what had gone on during the darkness of night and what was going on at that very time. --- The Roman governor, not really caring about Jewish internal affairs, considered Jesus innocent but didn't want rile the large crowd that had already gathered. Therefore, Jesus was beaten, and Pilate feebly attempted to get the enemies to back off. They would not, nor the crowd. Pilate finally consented. Jesus was further flogged and mistreated--a criminal--and led to the place called Golgotha, or Calvary, for crucifixion—9 a.m. On the way to Golgotha, these last words of Jesus prior to the cross were spoken. ***Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.***

By this time in the morning, word must have gotten around. The same crowd or a different crowd followed Jesus from Pilate's judgment hall to the site of crucifixion. Luke tells us that a number of women were there, standing somewhere along the way. We are not told that they were friends of Jesus. We are not told of their connection to Jesus at all. They ***mourned and lamented Him***. "Mourned"---actually "struck / beat"---themselves. It's the same word that was used to describe "striking" coins. Some translations say, "beat their breasts." I suppose it could be "beat their heads." At any rate, in their culture being demonstrative of emotions (unlike our culture) was common. They were displaying the sadness of the affair. They were striking themselves, as in "Woe is me!" They were "lamenting"—crying out, wailing, singing a funeral dirge, a sorrowful song. A sad scene. We don't know their motives. Were they particularly mourning the brutality of the Romans, as the mothers at Bethlehem cried out for their baby boys who were murdered by Herod's soldiers? But this crucifixion was not perpetrated by the Romans, rather by their own leaders. Were they, then, bewailing and demonstrating against the injustice of their own leaders? One would think the leaders would not have tolerated such an open display of support for Jesus. Were they simply wailing and beating their breasts because that was the thing to do in such circumstances, whether the individual was well-known by them or not, giving them a proper departure to their death? Like attending a funeral visitation and extending sympathy to the family, because it's the thing to say? Perhaps.

Jesus knew all things. He definitely knew that, to their own harm, their focus was off. In His weakened and pained state He, nevertheless, "turned" to address them directly, looking them in the eye it would seem. He did not scold. He was concerned about them, not Himself. That's why He was going to the cross in the first place—in concern. In concern for them, for you, for others, for the world full of sinners. He addressed them as ***Daughters of Jerusalem***. They were ladies who were visibly part of God's chosen Old Testament people from whom the Savior would come. They were part of the visible Old Testament church centered at the Temple in Jerusalem. They had had every opportunity to know the Truth that God, who would punish sinners, would punish the One He sent instead. "He was wounded for our transgressions" Isaiah had prophesied about Jesus. Jesus was telling them to forget about this outward business of beating themselves and wailing, the outward show of sorrow for Him, and understand what was really going on. The Son of God was being punished for their sins, but they and their people were rejecting Him as Savior!

In words of warning, Jesus said, ***Do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.*** Jesus did not use the words “cry aloud, wail, lament”—but “weep,” to weep tears of heartfelt sadness and internal sorrow. It’s the same word Luke used in 22:61 to describe Peter’s reaction after denying Christ for the third time, and the Lord turned and looked at Peter, then he went out and “wept” bitterly—heartfelt tears of repentance. It’s the same word used in John 20:11-15 to describe Mary Magdalene at the tomb on Sunday thinking that someone had carried away the body of Jesus, adding insult to injury. She was “weeping”—deeply troubled in heart. Now Jesus says to these women, “Do not be sorrowful for Me, but weep tears of regret and repentance before God in heaven, for yourselves, for your children, and for those who reject God’s Son and His work of Redemption. Something to cry about is coming.” The wrath of God would be displayed against the physical city of Jerusalem and the misguided Old Testament church. Old Testament worship had degenerated from trust in the Lord’s mercy and peace in the Savior to come, into trust and glory in self, and the temple, and Jerusalem. Jerusalem and its structures would be leveled, by the Romans in another forty years, and the citizens scattered. Which is to say nothing of the wrath of God that would befall all rejectors on Judgment Day--the fires of hell! ***Do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.***

The same words of concern are addressed to you today. What do you weep for in life? Physical loss, personal loss, injustice in the world and our own nation, the never ending march of sickness and death? Are you sad today on Good Friday because you know that innocent Jesus was treated badly? Many a Jesus-movie does the same, makes one feel sorrow for what He endured, but totally misses the issue of sin, the real issue about which each needs to weep. Your sins--that you have despised your Father in heaven, that you have not been a loving faithful child of His, that you are a lost cause, that you deservedly face His wrath now and in the fires of hell, separated from Him and all of His blessings forever. Weep for this! Like Peter, weep bitterly, if not with your eyes, with your heart. Such are appropriate Good Friday tears.

But, dear brothers and sisters, in this same Jesus dry your tears and calm your hearts. The crucified Jesus who went through all this, did it for you. He has won forgiveness for you. You are spared! You are saved. All your guilty sins and stains are “washed” away. In three days you will celebrate His resurrection from the grave. Like Mary Magdalene at the tomb, you will hear the unbelievable account that Jesus lives! Now, Heaven will be your home, where God shall wipe away all tears from your eyes, where there will be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor pain, for the former things have passed away (Revelation 21:4). Good Friday tears? Jesus is the answer for every tear.

So be it! Amen!

Pastor Kanzenbach---