

Jesus Wept - radio

Our scripture for today is in Luke 19. Jesus rode into the Jerusalem on a colt, the foal of an ass. *“41 And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, 42 Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. 43 For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, 44 And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation”* (Luke 19:41-44).

I’ve entitled this message, “Jesus Wept.”

Three times in scripture we read that Jesus wept. Here, before riding into Jerusalem, our Lord paused. He looked upon that city and wept over it. He did not weep for its buildings. He wept for its people. He wept for Jews after the flesh, who after the flesh, were His own people. They were not His people in heart! Yet, He wept for them because their city would soon be destroyed for their willful rejection of their Messiah! Then again, in John 11:35, Jesus wept when He saw Mary and the Jews sorrowing at the death of Lazarus. He felt the sorrow of His friends. Their suffering became a burden to His own soul. He was touched by their feeling of their sorrow and their helplessness before the consequences of sin! And the third place where it is recorded that Jesus wept is in Hebrews 5:7.

Let us consider this last cast first. Jesus wept in agony because the sins of His people were made His sins: *“Who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree”* (1 Pet. 2:24). *“He hath made Him sin for us”* (2 Cor. 5:21). He took and bore the sins of His people in their place before God. He wept then because He suffered under the guilt of those sins. And He wept because He suffered under the punishment of those sins at the hand of God. It was punishment in His soul. He perfectly obeyed God’s law. He honored it from His heart and mind, with His

words and in all that He did. Yet He was punished as the worst transgressor that ever lived! He who did only right in the sight of God bore the sins and punishment of one who had done only wrong.

We cannot truly understand His suffering. But we know “*He made supplications with strong crying and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death*” (Heb. 5:7). Those things that came upon Him, the weight of sin, the forsaking by friends and family, the mocking and torture of His enemies, and especially the loss of the sense of God’s presence in His soul, all together became such a weight that it caused Him unspeakable sorrow in His soul and body, a sorrow we will never, never know! Jeremiah prophetically spoke these words of Christ: “*Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the LORD hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger*” (Lam. 1:12)?! There was never sorrow like His. And there never will be. His grief and woe is heard in His cry to His Father from the cross under the burden of sin and the punishment of God: “*My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me*” (Ps. 22:1)!

As sinners, we are accustomed to shutting out the voice of our conscience and hiding from God. We know very little of the effects of sin that the Lord Jesus felt. Sin in our conscience makes us sick in our body. We feel sadness. We feel depressed. We are confused by it. We forget truths we once held dear. We don’t know what to do. We feel lost, forsaken, without comfort and unable to receive comfort from any because God withholds His comfort. Without God’s word, we are without hope. Now, if we who are sinners know this affliction of conscience in some small part, what of the holy, harmless Son of God, who never knew sin, who hated iniquity, who only loved righteousness (Heb. 1:9)?! What would He who enjoyed unbroken communion in His soul with God at the deepest level feel if the sense of God’s presence were removed from Him?! That is what happened. It was indescribable agony!

God describes the separation that Christ, as our sin-bearer, experienced: “*The LORD’S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it*

cannot hear: 2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear” (Isa. 59:1-2). When Jesus Christ bore the sins of His people, those sins became His. He knew for the first and only time what it meant for God to not hear Him. Why did God not hear Him?! Because the sins of His people became His own! He felt the guilt of them in His conscience. This is why He cried, “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?!” Never was there a cry so mournful as His! In Gethsemane and on the cross He cried out of the depths of sorrow of soul (Matt. 26:37-44; 27:46; Ps. 130:1)! The book of the Psalms is prophetic of the prayers that the Lord Jesus prayed in the days of His humiliation, when He bore the sins of His people!

Psalm 31 is one such a prayer. In verse 5, the words Jesus spoke from the cross are recorded: *“Into thine hand I commit my spirit” (Ps. 31:5). Yet, shockingly, another the woeful cry is uttered by our Lord in that same Psalm, “9 Have mercy upon me, O LORD, for I am in trouble: mine eye is consumed with grief, yea, my soul and my belly. 10 For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing: my strength faileth because of mine iniquity...14 But I trusted in thee, O LORD: I said, Thou art my God” (Ps. 31:9-14).*

Psalm 40 is another prophetic prayer of our Lord Jesus. In that Psalm, we again see the full impact of what it meant for Jesus to personally do His Father’s will. As our great High Priest, He offered Himself as the Lamb of God to make propitiation for the sins of the people! He felt the weight of the sins of His people as He spoke these words: *“Innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me” (Ps. 40:12-13).*

When we hear someone cry out of great agony and sorrow, perhaps at the loss of a loved one, we are greatly moved to sympathy. Such a cry arrests us. It stops us in our tracks. We stand still and silently feel their pain! Now, since the dawn of creation, there was never heard a cry more mournful than when our Lord Jesus Christ cried out of the darkness of His sufferings on the cross! That cry should have stopped all of creation in its tracks! The great Creator in human flesh, a

perfect sinless man, cried in agony because He who never knew sin and was now separated from God by the sins that were made His! He felt the loss of God's presence as those sins bore down on His conscience! But though creation should have stopped, no man cared for His soul (Ps. 142:4)! No one shared His sorrow. "***By Himself He purged our sins***" (Heb. 1:3)! We ought to ask and must ask, "Why did God treat His Son this way?!" The Gospel answers that question (Rom. 8:32-34). It was to reconcile sinners in accord with the infinite justice of God! He delivered His Son to death that He might be just and justify the ungodly! It was to bring His people to Himself who alienated themselves by their sins! It was to make known God's righteousness to the praise of the glory of His grace in the salvation of chosen sinners! It was to bring His people to Himself without a trace of sin, in perfect righteousness! 2 Cor. 5 sums it: "*He hath made him sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*" (2 Cor. 5:21)! Thus, we see something of why Jesus wept before God in His own sufferings.

In the three different accounts where, "*Jesus wept,*" **we come to know the heart of our great Savior.** And, **we learn what He accomplished!** This is eternal life: to know God in Christ, to be saved by His redeeming work! Let us therefore carefully consider why Jesus wept.

But in John 11, Jesus also wept when He saw Mary and the Jews weeping. The Jews saw Him weeping. They said, "*Behold, how He loved him*" (John 11:36)! He could have prevented Lazarus from dying. But He waited until Lazarus died to come. Why? Why did Jesus wait? Didn't He know those He loved were suffering?! Didn't He know Lazarus would die? Of course He did! But it was God's will to glorify His Son when sin and death were at the height of their strength against His people, beyond all human hope. In this we find that all of our hope and salvation is in Christ alone! He came when all hope was lost! That is how God works in the lives of His people. Doesn't He tell us throughout scripture? "*Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD*" (Ex. 14:13; 2 Chr. 20:17). Moses told Pharaoh to let Israel go. Pharaoh refused and mocked his words. "*Then the LORD said unto Moses, Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh*" (Ex. 6:1). Faith is seeing what God has done in Christ when our sin and God's judgment against us left us

without hope! Faith is seeing God's salvation only in Jesus Christ and Him crucified! Though Jesus would raise Lazarus from the dead and comfort Martha and Mary by doing so, yet as they wept when Lazarus died, He wept! See in Him our great sympathetic High Priest! He did not live and suffer and die in stoic detachment! Faith in Christ does not make us insensitive to others! It heightens our compassion towards them! Christ felt the pain His people felt. He bore their burdens! "*He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses*" (Matt. 8:17). **It cost Jesus personally to comfort and save His people!** It cost Him to heal the sick. It cost Him to raise the dead. He suffered the consequences of the sins of His people and entered into the sorrow of their sins to save us from our sins and give us the comfort and joy of His victory over sin! We must ever remember that the One who walked this earth, who had compassion on the hungry, on the sick, on the fainting, on the leper, on the blind, on the widow mother mourning the death of her only son, that our Lord Jesus Christ bore the burden of needy sinners!

Now, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever (Heb. 13:8). He is God over all. He who had compassion on Mary and Martha is the same who now sits on the throne of glory! Of His people He says, "*In all their affliction he was afflicted*" (Isaiah 63:9). Know this: "*There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*" (1 Tim. 2:5). **The Lord Jesus Christ is both God and man!** He alone knows what God thinks of sin. He alone truly knows how sin affects man. And as Mediator, He alone both satisfied God and saved His people from their sins. By Himself, He satisfied God and saved His people (Heb. 10; Isa. 53)! Yet in all of His majestic sovereign power, He still feels the weaknesses of His people as the man who bore their burdens! He feels every burden they bear! We must admire and adore Him for His compassion! We must go to Him and unburden our hearts at all times! We must look to Him as all in our salvation to know the peace and joy of His promise that we have a High Priest who can be "*touched with the feeling of our infirmities (weaknesses), because He was tried and tested in all points as we are, yet without sin*" (Heb. 4:15)! What greater comfort can there be in all of heaven and earth than to know the Lord Jesus Christ sees and bears our every burden! To know that He carried them in Himself and bore them, and now, by His Spirit, points us to His triumphant victory over every consequence

our sin brought upon us to make His grace abound towards us (2 Cor. 9:8)! Let us take these promises to our bosom and fly to our great God and Savior, “*Casting all your cares upon Him, for He careth for you*” (1 Pet. 5:7). “*Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need*” (Heb. 4:16). Mary and Martha mourned for Lazarus. Jesus wept for His dearly beloved people. He tasted death for every adopted son of God (Heb. 2:9)!

Now, not only did the Lord Jesus Christ weep in soul agony as He bore the sins of His people. Not only did He weep in true sympathy for Mary and Martha. But in Luke 19, He wept over Jerusalem. Here we see something in our Lord that silences every excuse of unbelieving sinners, while exalting His great goodness! He sees the suffering and death that would come on the people who would soon reject Him and put Him to death. Yet **He mourns for them** because of the consequences of their sins!

Jerusalem is the city that God blessed like no other on earth. He delivered these people from hundreds of years of Egyptian bondage. He brought them through the Red Sea on dry land. He destroyed Pharaoh and the Egyptian army in the height of their power and hatred against Israel. God gave Israel His laws. He gave them the priesthood with sacrifices and a tabernacle where God would meet with men. He destroyed the nations in Canaan who were mightier than they. He gave them kings and repeatedly delivered them from their enemies. He worked miracles among them. Times without number, He was longsuffering towards them and turned them from their rebellion and idolatry. Though they hardened their hearts against Him, He sent prophet after prophet to them. Yet they would not hear! Finally, He sent His own Son (Matt. 21:37). The Son of God in human flesh, taught in their synagogues. He healed their sick. He raised their dead. He worked miracles. He turned water into wine. He fed thousands. He exposed the hypocrisy of their religious leaders. He walked and ate and lived among them and did them only good for three and a half years in public ministry. These same people for whom He had done so much would soon take Him, falsely accuse Him, and crucify Him at the hands of their enemies, the Romans. The people of Jerusalem would kill the Prince

of Life because they hated the Lord of Glory! Out of all the people in the world, the Lord Jesus Christ, according to ancient prophecy, came to these Jews, to their city. And in spite of over 2,000 years of His goodness to them, these people now rejected their Messiah and the God who chose them and blessed them as an earthly nation! Jesus now comes to Jerusalem. He showed Himself openly to be the Messiah. And what was their response? They did not know the time of their visitation! They willfully rejected Him! It was willful unbelief. They stubbornly held to their own self-righteous! That is the occasion on which Jesus wept over Jerusalem!

Question, why did the Lord of glory, the almighty sovereign, who can turn the king's heart whithersoever He will weep over Jerusalem (Prov. 21:1)? Why would He who knows the end from the beginning weep?! Why would He who humbles proud hearts and grants repentance to God-opposing sinners weep for these people (Acts 5:31; 2 Tim. 2:25)? Couldn't He save them if He wanted to? Was there something deficient in His power to save? Did He require their cooperation in some way? Did He need their permission? Did He need to wait for them to exercise their will or do their part? Was His weeping opposed to God's will? No! No! No! You see, God gave His law to men and warns men of judgment. But no man keeps His law! God sends His Gospel to many. But few to whom it is sent are chosen to eternal life: "*Many are called, but few are chosen*" (Matt. 20:16; 22:14). Every man is accountable to God for his own sin. "*The soul that sinneth, it shall die*" (Ezek. 18:4,20)! If a man keeps God's law, he will live. But none keep it! God's law curses all who fail to keep it. The problem is not with God. The problem is with sinful man. Sin is all our fault. Every man in hell will confess that God's judgments are right and that his damnation is his own fault! That is the torment of hell: to know we did not do what we knew was right! And here in this place, Jesus Christ weeps over those people who were Israelites after the flesh. He was born to that nation. But here is the sad thing. Unbelieving Israel refused Christ's words and works (Rom. 10:19)! They knew He was God's Christ! But they rejected Him! He told them their righteousness was not righteousness before God, that it was filthy rags in God's sight (Isa. 64:6). He left no room for man to boast! And they hated Him because He told them the truth. His words stung their

conscience. Yet **they did not seek refuge in Him** (Isa. 9:13; Jer. 3:22). **They did not turn to Him and bow to Him whose word smote their conscience.** Instead, they stubbornly clung to their own righteousness as men who worship the idols their own hands have made! This is not unique to unbelieving Jews! Every man, you and I included, by nature cling to our own righteousness. Every man, you and I included, fail to keep God's law. "*There is none righteous, no, not one. There is none that understandeth. There is none that seek after God. They are all gone out of the way. They are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no not one*" (Rom. 3:10-12). But the Jews would not receive correction! They chose death rather than life. Man can choose death. But his sinful nature will not choose life! Can man, by His will, believe? Can anyone come to Jesus Christ by his own will, by faith that is resident in his heart? A thousand times NO! "*It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy*" (Rom. 9:15-16). Can a sinner turn Himself to God? If that were possible, why did Christ earn the gift of repentance and now give that repentance to His people from His throne in glory (Acts 5:31)?! No! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, or for a leopard to change his spots than for a sinner to turn and believe the Gospel (Matt. 19:24; Jer. 13:23)! Though God in His word commands us to cast away our transgressions and make a new heart and a new spirit for ourselves (Ezek. 18:31), we cannot do it! We are spiritually dead in sins (Eph. 2:1-9)! We cannot do one spiritual thing! No, Jesus did not weep because He is unable to save! He did not weep because He was limited by man's cooperation. If that were the case, none could be saved, especially not this sinner! The fact is, Christ wept over this city because they would soon suffer for their own sins.

Remember David? He wept for king Saul! Though Saul was David's enemy causelessly and repaid David's loyalty with evil, yet when Saul died, David lamented him (2 Sam. 1:11-13; 17-27). David also wept bitterly for his rebellious son Absalom. Absalom made himself king in his father's place! The LORD determined to bring evil upon Absalom for it (2 Sam. 17:14)! Absalom was therefore killed in the battle he started against his own father David, **just as sinners die in the war they started against God** (Rom. 8:7)! Now, when David heard that Absalom had been killed, he greatly lamented for his lost son! Scripture

says, *“The king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee. O Absalom, my son, my son”* (2 Sam. 18:33)! Not only did David weep for those he loved after the flesh, but Jeremiah wept for Jerusalem and the people of Judah, though they were idolaters and persecuted him! Jeremiah said, *“For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt”* (Jer. 8:21). Jeremiah wept for his people after the flesh, because they suffered for their own wickedness. Not only did David and Jeremiah weep for lost sinners, but the apostle Paul wept for unbelieving Jews who would never be saved! Paul said, *“I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh”* (Rom. 9:1-3). Now, God speaks of these men to show His own disposition towards unbelieving Jews and Gentiles! David, Jeremiah, Paul and others expressed genuine sorrow over their kinsman because those people perished for their willful unbelief. In Luke 19, the Lord Jesus Christ, a perfect man and God over all, wept for unbelieving Jews! How can we reconcile these things!? Jesus wept with Mary and Martha in sympathy because He truly knew and bore their griefs. In the same way, when a believing loved one suffers, we sorrow for them. And when they die, we sorrow for ourselves (1 Thess. 4:13). We feel the loss of their sweet fellowship and love, the loss of a fellow sinner saved from his sins by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (Gal. 2:20)! But when we lose an unbelieving loved one, we sorrow for them! I can think of no greater sorrow! We speak the glorious Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to our unbelieving loved ones. We tell them Jesus Christ saves all by Himself in spite of our sin! Yet when these same loved ones die, stubbornly clinging to their righteousness in rejection of Christ, we join David and Jeremiah and Paul and the Lord Jesus sorrowing for them! This is the principle we see when Christ wept over Jerusalem. **God does not take delight in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his wickedness!** *“I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live”* (Ezek. 18:32). Man is so proud that He opposes His own salvation! Therefore, for God to save a man, He must raise him from spiritual death! He must overcome his unbelief! He must grant him repentance to

acknowledge Christ crucified, risen and reigning is all of his salvation! Paul told Timothy, “*The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men...in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth*” (2 Tim. 2:25). You see, **salvation is a rescue**. God calls dead sinners to life! He brings rebellious sinners to repentance! He gives unbelieving sinners faith! He rescues hell-deserving sinners! The Jews died for their sin and unbelief. It was not for lack of sincerity on Christ’s part. He only did them good. He worked miracles before them. He spoke the Gospel to them. Yet something more is needed to save sinners than seeing miracles with physical eyes and hearing the Gospel with physical ears! The Spirit of God Himself must give life and repentance and faith in Christ! He must apply the Gospel to us!

In the end, it will be shown that every man in hell refused to obey the light God gave him and despised God’s goodness. And, it will be shown that everyone in heaven was given eternal life out of pure grace in spite of their wickedness! Those God saves are saved for only one reason: God’s free grace! Because He loved them before the foundation of the world! Because He determined to save them! Because He delivered His Son up to death for them! Because the Spirit of God raised them from death when they were dead in sins by the preaching of the Gospel of Christ crucified!

Sin is **all** man’s doing and hell is all man’s deserving. Every man in hell will bow his knee to Christ as Lord and Judge of all. All who come to God on the basis of their decision, or their free will, or their works, or who trust their experience, will receive strict justice from God! This is the saddest thing in all the world. Yet God will not compromise His justice! We must answer God’s justice in Christ, or we will answer it in our own person! All who trust their works will receive justice from God for their works. Though sin is man’s doing, righteousness is Christ’s doing! He alone has done all that God required “*Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth*” (Rom. 10:4). He alone can remove our sins. He alone can make us holy before God. He alone can command dead sinners to live. He alone can give faith to an unbeliever. He alone can save hell-deserving

sinner! Sin is man's doing! But salvation is God's doing! We are not saved because we believe. We believe because God, according to His eternal purpose in Christ, granted us faith. "*As many as were ordained to eternal life believed*" (Acts 13:48). Jesus wept over Jerusalem because they would soon receive the just reward of their impenitent hard hearts. He was not frustrated. He wept for their suffering. But He did not object to or oppose God's justice! He did not oppose God's everlasting will to reject them. **He sorrowed for them as one sorrows for his unbelieving family or friend.** Unbelieving sinners can therefore find nothing in Christ to excuse their sin. He is only good. Let us therefore cast aside our stubborn pride and self-righteousness. Abandon all trust in our experience and our decision, and especially our own will! If you or I are saved, it will be only by God's will, His work, His faithfulness and His preserving grace! He bought and sought and calls His own sheep by name. He will not let one of them perish (John 10:11,15,27-28)!