

The Language of Tears

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Without uttering a sound, tears can sometimes communicate more than spoken words. Their silent wet trails upon our cheeks possess a language all their own. Tears are a universal language that all can understand. No interpreter is needed when tears begin to express themselves. Depending on the circumstances, they speak of hurt, joy, concern, love, loneliness, fear, memories (good and bad), accomplishment, and a host of other experiences and emotions.

Sadly, society often views tears (especially those of a man), as a sign of weakness. However, many strong men and women have shed tears. Their tears were no sign of weakness! Tears are a natural heartfelt response to life's victories and defeats.

As Christians, it is comforting to know that God is aware of all our tears. David wrote:

Depart from me, all you who do iniquity, For the Lord has heard the voice of my weeping (Ps. 6:8).

You have taken account of my wanderings; Put my tears in Your bottle. Are they not in Your book? (Ps. 56:8).

David is not saying there is a literal bottle in heaven where God keeps our tears. He is simply reminding us that God is aware of our victories and defeats. The Almighty knows our happy moments, and our times of sadness.

Since God is aware of our tears, it should not surprise us to learn that the Bible, has more than its fair share of Divinely recorded tears. God's word reveals tears for a variety of different reasons.

Joseph shed tears of joy in being reunited with his brothers (Gen. 45:1-2, 14-15). Hannah, the mother of Samuel, shed tears of distress in her desire for a son (1 Sam. 1:10). Job's friends shed tears of compassion when they saw the condition of Job (Job 2:11-12). The prophet Jeremiah shed many tears. He is sometimes called, "the weeping prophet" (Jer. 9:1). The impetuous Peter wept at the realization he had denied the Lord three times. Luke tells us that Peter "went out and wept bitterly" (Luke 22:62). Even our Savior shed tears. On the occasion where He raised Lazarus from the dead, John records, "Jesus wept" (John 11:35). As Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem, ushering in the events of His final week, Luke says, "When He approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it" (Luke 19:41). The strong and courageous apostle Paul shed tears. Reminding the elders of Ephesus of his work for the Lord in their city, Paul said he had been, "Serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews" (Acts 20:19). When Paul departed for Jerusalem, where he would be arrested, "...they began to weep aloud and embraced Paul, and repeatedly kissed him (Acts 20:37).

There are so many tears recorded in Scripture, more than this short writing can list. It would seem in all of this, that the Holy Spirit is trying to communicate something to us. Perhaps it is another reminder that God is indeed aware of all our circumstances in life: good and bad, happy and sad. God is teaching us that tears are no sign of weakness. Jeremiah, Paul, Joseph, and Peter shed tears. These were strong men! And of course, remember, that Jesus wept.

What would your tears communicate today? Joy? Grief? Loneliness? Defeat? Love? Victory? Whatever the cause of your weeping, please know, that God knows all about it. He knows the pain or joy of every moist trail upon your face. He knows and He cares. God loves you! That thought alone, can often bring the strongest to tears.

*He will swallow up death for all time,
And the Lord God will wipe tears away from all faces,
And He will remove the reproach of His people from all the earth;
For the Lord has spoken.*

Isaiah 25:8

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