

**Luke 19: 41-44; “Jesus weeping over Jerusalem”, A Palm Sunday Sermon
Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on April 5th, 2009,
In the Afternoon Worship Service.**

The importance and significance of Jesus weeping over the sinners who would perish in the destruction of Jerusalem cannot be underestimated for all of Christ’s followers. The multitude which just a few moments before had been rejoicing over Jesus as their King and praised Him for the mighty works which He had done, was still following Him and accompanying Him to Jerusalem. And they no doubt saw Him as He drew near, dismounted off the colt that He was riding, and they were there when He took a long and steady look at the city which was filled with the people of Israel; the Old Covenant people of God. There was the temple which had been rebuilt after the destruction of the first and more glorious one by Nebuchadnezzar. Solomon had built that temple and it was a very glorious building in every way. God had promised that His glory would dwell there and that David would not lack a man to sit upon the throne in Israel as long as they were faithful to worship and serve Him alone instead of the gods of the nations around them. But the people were at many points, over many generations, unfaithful to our great covenant-keeping God. And the greatness of the sins of kings of Israel and the people who followed them into idolatry, brought down the wrath of God upon them; so great was God’s anger against them that He sent Nebuchadnezzar and His armies to fight against them and to destroy their temple and the people were taken captive. After 70 years captivity, God brought them back again.

The temple that Jesus was looking at that day was the second one; of which it was said in Haggai 2: 6, “The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former.” “And in this place I will give peace. And no doubt He also could remember, being the Son of God and eternal in His being, the time when that second temple was first being constructed. In Ezra 3, verse 10 it says, “When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, the priests stood in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the Lord, according to the ordinance of David king of Israel.” “And they sang responsively praising and giving thanks to the Lord: ‘For He is good, for His mercy endures forever toward Israel.’” “Then all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid.” “But many of the priests and Levites and heads of the fathers’ houses, old men who had seen the first temple, wept with a loud voice when the foundation of this temple was laid before their eyes.” “Yet many shouted aloud for joy, so that that the people could not discern the noise of the weeping of the people, for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the sound was heard afar off.”

But that is not where the inward gaze our great Savior stopped. His penetrating eye was able to look forward to see the end of this great city; the end of it as it concerned a good many of the Old Covenant people of God who were only God’s people outwardly. There were many who were participants in the system of worship,

but they were not believers in the One who fulfilled all the prophecies and types. They had seen many years of worship there; there had been times of glad worship and sad worship. There had been times of revival and declension as regards the upholding of the Lord's true worship there in the temple. But our Savior saw infallibly and undeniably that there was a day coming when it would be leveled to the ground. And because of this, He wept our text says. The word in the original is much, much stronger and graphic: He burst in tears. He sobbed out loud. He knew what would happen to it; its end would be full of awful judgment and He knew that that judgment was unavoidable, but He still felt it very deeply. He was not weeping for what the unbelieving inhabitants and their rulers would do to Him in just a few days. He was weeping for those who would lose everything; life, estate, body, and even their souls in hell. This is what Jesus saw, and He wept. We should learn something from this, this afternoon. It is this. Even as Christ wept for those who would perish in the destruction of Jerusalem; people who would ultimately not be saved from their sins and therefore would die eternally; even so all of God's people ought to mourn and weep over those around them who will perish unless they have Christ as their Savior. I would like to make two observations on the weeping of Jesus. First of all – He wept over His enemies rather than just His friends. And Secondly – In His weeping He laments their willful ignorance. Let's see if we can learn to weep over the same things that our Savior and Lord weeps over.

First of all – He wept over His enemies rather than just His friends.

“If you had known, even you....” The “you” that he is referring to were all those people who were still down in the city of Jerusalem. They were not those who had come out to welcome Him. They were not His friends or disciples. It was also all those people in the crowd, and all those who stayed home that day doing other things, that Jesus was weeping for. Now, I do not know about you; but these are not the people that I generally weep for. I do not generally weep for those people who stay home of a Sunday morning and choose not to go the church. I do not tend to weep for those who I know could very easily get up and come to a Sunday service. I tend to be angry in my spirit towards such people; thinking about the dishonor that they are doing to Him in not obeying His commandment to remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy. I think that I would rather be like Nehemiah in Nehemiah 13: 17. Why don't you turn there with me and I will show you what he was like. It says here in verse 15, In those day I saw people in Judah treading winepresses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and loading donkeys with wine, grapes, figs, and all kind of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day.” “And I warned them about the day on which they were selling provisions.” “Men of Tyre dwelt there also, who brought in fish and all kinds of goods, and sold them on the Sabbath to the children of Judah and in Jerusalem.” “Then I contended with the nobles of Judah and said to them, ‘What evil thing is this that you do, by which you profane the Sabbath day?’” “Did not your fathers do thus and did not our God bring all this disaster on us and on this city? “Yet you bring added wrath on Israel by profaning the Sabbath.” There is a place for righteous indignation and confrontation. And

when you think about the Lord of Glory, our Lord Jesus Christ being slighted and shunned and ignored on this particular Sunday; He who had done such mighty miracles, who had shown such great compassion, and who had taught them and shown them the way that they could have eternal life; you can see why He would be justified in simply laying condemnations on them for their becoming His enemies by their disobedience and their lack of faith and love. But it says that Jesus wept when he saw the city.

But getting back to Nehemiah, you and I need to see what else characterized Nehemiah before he ever did any of this kind of contending that I just read to you. Turn with me to Nehemiah Chapter 1, verse 1. He was in captivity and he was in the palace as a cup-bearer to the king, and it says in verse 2, “that Hanani one of my brethren came with men from Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews who had escaped, who survived the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem.” “And they said to me, “The survivors who are left from the captivity in the province are there in great distress and reproach.” “The wall of Jerusalem is also broken down, and its gates are burned with fire.” And what was Nehemiah’s reaction? Does it say that he got angry; that he was indignant? No, verse 4 says, “So it was, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned for many days; I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven.” Nehemiah was a man, who like our Lord Jesus Christ, knew how to weep and when to weep. He wept over the city of Jerusalem and its desolate and ruined condition. Jesus was able to see what these people were bringing to themselves. It was the destruction of their entire world; their entire society, and the loss of their very souls.

Now let me ask you if you have ever looked at people in this way that the Lord Jesus looked upon the city that day. Have you looked and wept? Or have you only looked to judge. Jesus looked and He wept. I like what Thomas Manton says about this: “Our Lord Jesus was made up of compassion; he weeps not only for his friends but his enemies.” “As a righteous God he inflicted the judgment, but as man he wept for the offences.” “First he shed his tears, and then his blood.” “Foolish, careless city, that will not regard terms and offers of peace in this her day!” “He bewailed them that knew not why they should be bewailed; they rejoiced, and he mourned: Christ’s eyes are the wetter because theirs were so dry.” “And now he is in heaven, how doth his free grace go a’ mourning after sinners in the entreaties of the gospel.” And so too, brethren, ought we to be able to weep over sinners. I must say, in testimony of my own conversion to Jesus Christ, that it was not my Dad’s strong presentations and arguments for my believing in the gospel that won me over to consider it; so much as my father’s tears; his weeping over me; I who knew that I was someone who knew that I was not worth being wept over. This won me to Christ more than anything.

But Secondly – Jesus also wept over their willful ignorance.

I cannot think of anything more damning to a person, or people, than willful ignorance. It is when you know that there are people around you who can tell you the way to eternal life, and you don’t want to know about it. You consider it a

bothersome thing when someone comes lovingly to you, as the Lord Jesus did to these people, with the gospel. Your house is on fire but you would rather sleep. You are bleeding badly and you would rather not think about it or let others minister to your need. Truly this is one of the worst aspects of man's total depravity but people in this condition care little to think about it. Jesus shows us that this is something which is very much worth weeping over. There are four things which Jesus says here that these unbelieving people in Jerusalem were willfully ignorant of. They were unaware of their day; they were unaware of the things that made for their peace. They were unaware of God's judicially hiding these things from them. And they were unaware of the time of their visitation. I will not attempt to develop these things individually, but rather I will take them as all linked together.

Jesus first speaks about their day. "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day...." We need to see that Jesus was weeping about the time which had been given to them there in Jerusalem, to rightly consider the meaning of their lives; to repent of their sins, their foolishness, their wicked ways, their unbelief, their wanting to make up their own religion or way to live their life unto themselves; and their doing nothing to try to figure it out. Jesus' crying implies that they did not use this time wisely, and they would pay eternally for it. Our Lord knew that this was something worthy crying over because Jerusalem's time was coming to an end. It was true for them then, in that generation. It is true for us here today. Your life is given to as a day in the sight of God and Christ. To Him a thousand years are as a day and a day as a thousand years. But God gives each person their day, their time under the sun, to improve that time by seeking to know Him. How many people think that this is unimportant. They say to themselves, "I will spend my days as I please." "One day is just like another." "My goals in this life are my own." "My pleasure is to do my own will." This, my friends, is worth weeping over. It is worth weeping over by parents who know that their children are living for this world, rather than for Christ. It is worth weeping over by all Christians who have woken up to the fact that life is passing by and so little has been done for Christ and His kingdom. "Only one life; how soon 'tis past." "Only what's done for Christ will last." Ecclesiastes 12: 6 says, "Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, before the difficult days come, and years draw near when you say, 'I have no pleasure in them...'" And Psalm 90, verse 12 says, "So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom." Let us weep over ourselves if we have misspent our time and wasted it away. Let us weep over others if they are willfully ignorant of time going by.

Then secondly we see that Jesus was weeping because they were unaware of the things which made for their peace. It is a terrible thing in any person when they do not see the connection between their sinfulness and their having peace. "There is no peace says my God for the wicked." The things that make for your peace are found in the gospel of Jesus Christ. He has made peace between God and man through His blood being shed at the cross. When a person believes in Jesus Christ, they are justified by His blood. And having been justified, they have peace with God through

their Lord Jesus Christ. God looks at the shed blood of Jesus and cannot be at enmity with the sinner who is trusting in Jesus. Jesus paid it all there at the cross. In this passage that we are studying we find that the people were rejoicing and praising God for Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem, whereas He was weeping. He was weeping because there were so many who were unaware of things which made for their peace. Many of the people in Jerusalem thought that Jesus was a troublemaker. At His mock trial a few days after Jesus' weeping here, we find it said in Luke 23, verse 1, "Then the whole multitude of them arose and led Him to Pilate." "And they began to accuse Him, saying, 'We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ a King.'" There was a whole multitude of people like this. The many who were against Jesus did not know the things which made for their peace. If they did not repent of this sinful attitude of accusing Jesus when He was really innocent, they would perish. I believe that some of them did repent later after His death. But you and I need to see today that it was only because Jesus wept and went on to pay the price by His death to ransom them from sin; this allowed them to later find peace. On the cross He said, "Father forgive them for they do not know what they do." They thought that they knew what they were doing, but they did not. We need to weep for those who are willfully ignorant and tell them of the good news that Jesus wept for sinners. We can then weep for them.

Then thirdly, we see that Jesus was weeping because they were unaware of God's judicially hiding these things from them. "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace!" "But now they are hidden from your eyes." Unfortunately for many of the people in Jerusalem that day, their day was past and their time was gone and they had seen and heard many good things from the Lord Jesus and yet they still blasphemously slandered him and eventually were in full agreement with putting Him to death. Some of them had even committed the sin unto death; the sin against the Holy Spirit. And they would never find forgiveness. Others, as I have said, had not gone that far and some would be saved later by the grace given to them. But for Jerusalem, it was too late to save the city from the judgment which would come upon them in 70 A.D. The things which made for their peace were now hidden from their eyes. It was a judicial hardening and hiding which came to them from God because of their stubborn refusal to believe in Jesus. Jesus wept for Jerusalem and all of its unrepentant inhabitants. And you and I should continue to pray and to learn to weep for those who are not now repenting of their sins and trusting in Christ. They didn't know, in that day, the time of their visitation. That is the 4th reason why Jesus wept for their willful ignorance. He had visited them and demonstrated His glorious power by His doing the miracles of healing; and they would not be healed. He taught them the way to eternal life, but they did not want to come. Many in our day do not know the time of their visitation either; when so many Sundays go by and no one comes to church, when so many times we weep in secret for our relatives and friends, and sometimes even openly; and they still do not believe. Jeremiah 13: 16 says, "Give glory to the Lord your God

before He causes darkness, and before your feet stumble on the dark mountains, and while you are looking for light, He turns it into the shadow of death and makes it dense darkness.” “But if you will not hear it, my soul will weep in secret for your pride; my eyes will weep bitterly and run down with tears, because the Lord’s flock has been taken captive. This was what the Lord Jesus was doing that day. He was weeping like Jeremiah because the Lord’s flock had been taken captive. But here, he did not weep secretly, but openly. And then He went to Gethsemane where He would weep as were tears of blood so that all of God’s Elect would be saved. Thank God for His weeping; thank God for His dying love; and thank God for His resurrection from the dead. Because of it we can weep also for those whom we love and even for our enemies, and pray that they will come to Christ. And because we believe in Jesus we can believe that we will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. But if we do not see our loved ones come in our lifetime, we will leave it with Him knowing that He can save if He wills to do so; and is still righteous, true, and good if He does not. Someday in the New Heavens and New earth we will know this reality: “And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying.” “There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.” We look forward to that day.