

The title for today's message is: **If Not tears, Then What?**

Jesus said: *Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.*

Grace and peace to you from God the Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Expecting us to weep for Jesus, a hymn asks: *Have we no tears to shed for him, While soldiers scoff and foes deride? Ah, look how patiently He hangs: Jesus, our Lord, is crucified.*

But, we should have no tears for Jesus, because Jesus said, ***"Do not weep for Me."***

Sure, He had tears for Lazarus and Jerusalem, but He wanted no tears for Himself, then or now.

This may be hard for us to understand, because when we suffer, we appreciate sympathy.

When we're hurt, we're helped by a kind word. When we're victims of injustice, we're comforted by tears of friends.

If there were no sympathy expressed, we would think that nobody cared for us. Right?

So, its easy for us to understand why on Good Friday, the women wept for Jesus. They loved Him, and they hated what the evil men did to Him.

They heard the unjust trial, and they saw the lashes on His back. They even felt the pain of the crown of thorns, placed deep into His head.

They felt His pain when, time after time He fell under the weight of the cross, which they made Him carry, until He reached the point of exhaustion.

So, as Jesus approached them on the way to Calvary, they couldn't help but weep for Him, for they themselves, were filled with pain and pity.

Nevertheless, Jesus wanted no sympathy. So, if not tears, then what? Well, Jesus actually wants three things, and still wants them today. The first is "**Obedience.**"

Here, Jesus wanted everyone to know that for Him, the cross wasn't a matter of tears, but that of obedience. That is obedience to His Father.

He understood God was working in and through the cross. We know this by what He said when He prayed in Gethsemane: "***Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.***"

It was God's will for Him to suffer, and die. As Isaiah said in chapter 53: ***Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.***

And again Isaiah said in the same chapter: ***We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.***

Meaning, humanity didn't produce the cross. No! Behind the human effort, God was working out our salvation.

Sure, the cross was a necessary thing, because there was no other way for God to redeem the world from sin.

Not even all of the world's gold, and silver, could reconcile humanity to God. And no person on earth, can buy love, goodwill, nor friendship.

Nor can we buy God's favor, sure its true, that over the ages, people have tried to buy God's favor by and through offering sacrifices.

Such as, food, and animal sacrifices. Yet, all of those sacrifices were in vain, because they too weren't enough to pay the price.

But there was one sacrifice sufficient enough, God's only Son, Jesus Christ. St. Paul said, ***Christ God was reconciling the world to himself.***

Look only God could reconcile humanity, and He did it all, in and through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Yes, the cross called for perfect obedience, a sacrifice good enough to die for all the sins of the world.

The Bible teaches that a sacrifice, to be pleasing to God, had to be without blemish, perfect in every way. But who could measure up to that?

Paul said in Romans: ***For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.***” Look, even the greatest, and best of people, have flaws, faults, and sin.

So if not tears, then what else? Jesus also wants; **“Concern.”** Why not? Jesus was certainly more concerned about the welfare of His people, than of Himself.

Thank about it, even in the face of death Jesus was concerned about His people. all the while He was suffering and hanging on the cross.

He was also concerned about His enemies, yes, even those who crucified Him. We know this because He prayed for their forgiveness.

He prayed for the repentant thief, who hung on a cross next to Him, and assured him of paradise.

He had concern for His mother, remember, while He hung on the cross just about to take His last breath, He asked the apostle John to care for her.

And as we can see, right here in our text, Jesus is more concerned about the women, and their children, then about His own fate.

Look, Jesus foresaw worse things to come for them. That's why He said: ***For if they do these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?"***

He was saying, in light of what they did to Him, being the only perfect man to live on earth, what more, will they do to sinners, like you and me?

Jesus was saying that we too, will experience suffering and death, just as He did. Today the world continues to put up crosses for you and for me.

And the world hasn't changed in its hatred of all that's innocent, true, good, and beautiful. But sadly there is still the cross of persecution.

Therefore, we still need to weep for ourselves, and our children. Because we do live in a world of crime, and corruption on every level of society.

Most people would say: "so what?" That's the way it is, and there's nothing we can do to change it. Yes, we are a world of crosses.

And Jesus knew what the consequences would be, when the wood would become dry.

That's why Jesus said to the women that they shouldn't weep for Him, but rather for themselves and their children.

Sadly today, many have forgotten that the soul sins, and it shall die. Just as Paul said in Romans chapter 6: ***"For the wages of sin is death."***

Another words unless we repent, and turn to God, we shall experience a fate such as Jesus experienced, in terms of sorrow, suffering, and death.

So, if not tears, then what? On top of Obedience and Concern, Jesus wants “**Deeds.**” That’s right, he wants you and me to love Him.

There’s no doubt, that Jesus appreciated the women's tears as far as they went to express their love, and sympathy for Him.

But Jesus knew that tears can be a substitute for something more important.

Look, if the world is as bad as it is, and it surly is, then it needs something more than tears.

For example, when things are bad, we moan and complain. And when we see violence, we feel sorry for the victims, at least for the moment.

Its like watching a movie, when we see a sad, or pathetic scene, were suddenly moved to tears.

Yet, as soon as the movie is over, we dry our tears, and continue on our merry way, as if nothing ever happened.

Once, while watching a movie on the life of Jesus, I was saddened, when towards the end of the movie.

Jesus is being nailed to the cross, a young woman stood up and said to her friend; “Lets go—this is where we came in.”

I ask, can we dismiss the cross so flippantly? "Is it really nothing more than a movie to us? For some, the crucifixion really doesn't cause tears.

And yes, Jesus doesn't want tears from us; He wants us. That's right, He wants our discipleship, and for us to follow Him in cross-bearing.

Remember, Jesus said in Matthew chapter 16: ***"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me"?***

When Jesus calls us to follow Him, He bids us to come, and die with Him. And like Him were to carry our own cross.

So, there's a cross waiting for you and me. But remember, Jesus would rather see a cross on your shoulder, than tears in your eyes.

Jesus wants us to witness to others, something that is extremely important to Him, because He died to save all people.

That's right, Jesus had a vision that His death on the cross, would draw all men to Him, not some, but "all." And this is still His vision today.

And make no mistake about it, its a sin, if we don't witness to His death, and resurrection.

So, let each one of us ask ourselves, "When was the last time I mentioned Jesus to another person?" Or brought someone to church?

Martin Luther said: How can you and I be silent, when we stand at the foot of the cross?

Jesus died not only for me, but for you too. Who then needs tears? Not Jesus, for He said in our text, "Do not weep for me".

Amen.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all. Amen.