

“Tears in Jesus”

March 13, 2022
King City United Church
York United Ministries
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Prayer for Illumination

O God, open your Word by your Holy Spirit, so that we, like Abraham, may believe your promises to us. **Amen.**

Scripture Readings

Luke 13:31-35

³¹ At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, “Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.” ³² He said to them, “Go and tell that fox for me, ‘Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. ³³ Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.’ ³⁴ Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! ³⁵ See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, ‘Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

This is word of Jesus Christ.

Thanks be to God.

<Children's Time>

Good morning my friends! Are you doing the Lent homework, "Writing Green Living Lent" so far? Good! Let me read the verses we did:

Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning (when) God created the heavens and the earth"

John 1:3, "All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being."

Genesis 1:10, "God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good."

Colossians 1:16-17, "for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in^[b] him all things hold together."

Psalms 102:25-26, "Long ago you laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you endure; they will all wear out like a garment. You change them like clothing, and they pass away"

Nehemiah 9:6, "Ezra said: "You are the LORD, you alone; you have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. To all of them you give life, and the host of heaven worships you."

Jeremiah 2:7, "I brought you into a plentiful land to eat its fruits and its good things. But when you entered you defiled my land, and made my heritage an abomination."

"Knock, knock, knock!!" A group of people crammed into a house where Jesus stayed. They seemed to be somewhat nervous and urgent. "Jesus, Jesus, my teacher!" They shouted. "Hurry, Jesus. You need to leave now!" Jesus turned his face slowly and looked at them silently. "Jesus, we got the news. King Herod will send soldiers to capture you soon! You need to escape! Hurry!" What did they say? The king will send

soldiers to kill you. A king's word has the supreme power in Jesus' time, so what Jesus heard was a real threat and not a joke at all.

But Jesus didn't move. Instead, he made a message, knowing that they had some connection to the king. "Go and tell the king that I'm going to do my ministry as it is already planned. I won't stop what I have to do because God, my Father, is already prepared to do so." Jesus' response was so strong and adamant. No one asked him again to escape from the king's threat.

And then, Jesus turned his eyes towards the City of Jerusalem and lamented, meaning sighed, and said in tears. "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it!" So many prophets have been killed in Jerusalem for a long time. Jesus instantly sensed what was going to happen to him in the City of Jerusalem. He would be crucified. And at the same time, he knew that it was not escapable to be crucified in order to save the humans and the sinners in the world.

My friends, Jesus could've escaped from the cross, but he chose not to. And he knew that is the way to defeat the evil power. The life, the redemption, and the privileges that we have, as children of God, stand on Jesus' courage and sacrifice: That we shouldn't forget. I hope you have time to give thanks to God at any moment in the Lent season! God bless you, my friends!

<Reflection>

Presiding and going to weddings and funerals are some of the most important aspects of ministry. This year is my 24th year of paid ministry as a church minister, five years in South Korea and 19 years in Ontario, so the experience is not minor. And I found at least one interesting point in funerals between Canadians and Koreans. In Korean funerals, the bereaved family members weep out loud. In most of the funerals, I experience in Canada, however, people don't cry and even try not to weep. Years ago, I went to a funeral for my minister friend's father. Although my friend was Caucasian, he had many Korean friends. We gathered all together in the reception and shared words

of condolences with him. But you know what? He smiled. He smiled and said, "I want to cry." He didn't cry until the funeral ended. It was my observation. I guess he just wanted to present himself as a brave man.

I remember a ridiculous experience when I met people who tried to laugh out loud in funeral receptions. They insisted that the person who passed away now entered the Heavenly Kingdom, so we, family and friends of the dead, should be happy, believing that Prophet Abraham embraces the person now. They forced themselves to laugh with so-called joy. I understand their logic, but, for me, the laughter succumbed to the sadness of the person who passed away.

Another funeral story- A few years ago, I presided a funeral. The woman who passed away was a woman of prayer in the church. She and I had some time relationship building. While preaching at the service, I failed to keep my sorrow in, so I wept. After the service, the family approached and thanked me, but I promised myself not to weep in future funeral preaching. What do you think? Would you accept a weeping preacher in worship or in funeral?

How about Jesus? Did he weep? Did he cry? We easily imagine Jesus' face as white, bland and motionless, but actually, he wept and cried in his public life and ministry. According to Bible, He did at least three times in the Gospel; when he came in front of the grave of his friend, Lazarus; when he prayed at Gethsemane just before the crucifixion; and, in between the two cases, when he saw the City of Jerusalem in today's passage. What are the common parts of Jesus' tears in the three occasions? Jesus' tears and cries are of compassion for others' pain and suffering and of his own to come. Particularly the tears towards Jerusalem are the tears when he sees the pain of the prophets who have been persecuted in history by the world, by the powerful, and by the unfaithful.

Tears from sensing the pain in history are not of cowardice but of compassion; shedding tears is the first step of healing and recovery. The more we weep together, the

more genuine healing and recovery happen. And I believe we, Christians, are called to “rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.”¹

This year and the last, I can’t recall worse years than these in Canada and the world; the suffering of the marginalized, the agony of the survivors of the Residential Schools, the pain of creatures from the ecological crisis, and the war in Ukraine. We saw the tragedy in Ukraine through the news and media. We are witnessing their fear and horror.

I participated in The Ottawa Conference On Security and Defence for three days last week. The list of speakers includes the General Secretary of NATO and the Minister of National Defense, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, and from official position holders of the USA and EU. Trust me, the war is not a story of neverland but ours. EU and NATO, including Canada, have done lots of tasks to protect Ukraine long before the Russian invasion, and now all options are on the table. And the risk and danger are affecting our life directly and indirectly. And we know this has impacts on us because modern societies are so much closer and related than ever.

The risk is at hand, and the pain is already with us in many ways. What would Jesus do with this? What did Jesus do with the suffering that he faced 2000 years ago? He didn’t refuse to escape from the danger; he didn’t walk away from the threat; he didn’t ignore the pain and suffering of others; and he compassionately wept for the slaughtered prophets, the people of God in history.

Sisters and brothers, we believe in the power of prayer, so let’s pray to God. The world needs our prayers which are more sincere than ever. Let us weep together. Recall Jesus’ tears towards the City of Jerusalem, the city of pain, of unjust, and of violence. As Jesus did, and as Apostle Paul suggested, let us weep with those who weep in the Lenten season. And also let us weep for our own selves, not of self-pity but of repentance to God. Then the God of consolation, the God of healing, and the God of

¹ Romans 12:15.

recovery will be upon us, upon the marginalized, upon creation, and upon Ukraine and Russia. Let us pray silently.