

Date: 8th April 2012

Reading: Luke 23:24-33

Speaker: Stephen Whitmore

Subject: Weep Not for Me

The Lord was led away to be crucified after the crowd had cried, "Crucify Him". As He went, he turned to women who were weeping and told them not to weep for Him. We want to look at three questions:

1. Why were they weeping?
2. Why does He say not to weep for Him?
3. Why does He warn that they should weep for their children?

1. The setting is the end of the life of the Lord.. These women had followed Him. They remembered how he spoke with genuine love and compassion for those to whom He spoke. They heard Someone Who was different to every other person. "The people were astonished at his doctrine: For He taught them as One having authority, and not as the scribes" (Matt 7:28,29). Everything that He said was real. Everything that He said and did was consistent. He told the people, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 5:20), but He demonstrated what He taught. He lived in the recognition that God looks on the heart. Others said of Him, "Never Man spake like this Man" (John 7:46). Peter testified that He "went about doing good" (Acts 10:38). The women were weeping because they saw a good man being led away to be crucified, Someone Who always did good. Someone Who had time for everyone and showed love and compassion to all who came to Him. It is no wonder they wept for Him.

2. He told them not to weep because He knew that, even if He lived a perfect life that never ended, the world would still be condemned because of sin. His perfect life could never answer the demands of God for anyone else. The only way for the judgement to be removed was for Him to die. God looked down and saw our need. He knew there was no alternative. For the whole of history up to this point, He gave man opportunity but it only served to prove that man could not please God. At first, He set man in a perfect environment, but man chose to rebel against God. He allowed man to live by his conscience but "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen 6:5). He started again with one family and within 100 years, men were rebelling and making a tower in defiance of God. He gave the law but men twisted it to suit themselves instead of obeying it. With every test, man proved that he is totally sinful and unable to do what God wants. The Lord Jesus went to the cross to do what we cannot do for ourselves. We can never satisfy the demands of God. The women were not to weep because He wanted them to realise that He was answering their deepest need. He was going to take their judgement and break the power of sin that gripped all men. On the cross, the only Man who lived in fellowship with God in every moment of His life would cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?". God would make the full weight of our sin and iniquity fall on Him (Isa 53:6). He was wounded for our transgressions..." (Isa 53:5). This is the only way in which God could pardon any of us sinners.

3. He told the women to weep for themselves and their children because He knew the judgement that would come on them. This is true for each of us. Everyone deserves the judgement of God. The Bible tells us of the place of judgement. It uses the picture of fire and brimstone and warns that we can never get out of that place. In the list of those who will be in that place, the Bible includes those who love and make a lie. This shows how holy and righteous God is. We may think that there are times when a "white lie" is necessary. God cannot allow even this. He cannot even allow those who may believe a lie without actually telling one. No one needs to be there because Christ died to save sinners and rose again but it is not enough just to believe the facts. Many believe the facts but they

are not prepared to commit their lives to Christ. They will not accept that they are the sinner who needs the Saviour. We need to make this personal. To recognise that He took MY place. The moment you take that place as a sinner and rest in Him to deliver you from your sin, you are assured of salvation because everything then depends on Him. Robert Murray McCheyne wrote a hymn to describe his experience. He had been like these daughters of Jerusalem and wrote:

Like tears from the daughters of Zion that roll,
I wept when the waters went over His soul;
Yet thought not that my sins had nailed to the tree
Jehovah Tsidkenu - twas nothing to me.