

Scripture:

Matthew 2:18

<sup>18</sup> In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

Title:

**“The Tears of Rachel “ (Sobering Truths for God’s Glory at Christmas)**

Christmas joy, singing, and miracles, are reminders that joy can exist and overcome the most difficult of circumstances. Jesus was born as Joy into a world of sorrow. It was not the world was doing splendid when Jesus was born. No, the world was full of sin and all the vices and troubles that follow. Christmas (the birth of Christ) is not joy upon joy, but Joy injected into sorrow. They exist side by side until the full joy of our complete glorification emerges. Christmas is real and the emotions of the time are real. Jesus entered a sin cursed world. A world of hate, thirst for power, murder, division, greed, sickness, and death. Jesus would experience the full sting and might of sin in His life. Isaiah told of a virgin who would conceive and give birth to a Son. This Son would be called the Prince of peace, Emmanuel, Counselor, and Mighty God. Isaiah also described Him as smitten before God and a Man of Sorrows. Christmas is a reminder that the world has been invaded by the dark damnation of sin, that God loves sinful people, and a suffering Savior is needed for man to come to a Holy God. “I celebrate Christmas” carries with it the implications that:

- 1) God is real and Just

- 2) Sin is real and the full wrath of God falls on sinners
- 3) All people are guilty of sin and deserve the wrath of God
- 4) Jesus's birth is joyous because He came to stand in our place of God's wrath on the cross and bear our punishment, while at the same time giving us His righteousness so we can be accepted by God who is the supreme Joy of all things.
- 5) A relationship with God is the most prized possession over all things in heaven or earth.

When we celebrate Christmas we also embrace sorrow. We agree that it is vividly real. We fear before God, and He ministers to us in a unique way. Sorrow can teach lessons that man cannot achieve over many life times. Here is what we learn from scripture concerning sorrow.

### **I. The Sorrows and Horror of Christmas are Real**

It sounds morbid to say that real infants and toddlers were murdered, mothers wept till exhaustion overcame them, screams of distress were heard through the region, pain cut to the deepest regions of the soul, fear shook families to the core. Sadly, the reality of this world is morbid. The sorrows and horror of this world are consequences of sin, which is esteeming anything greater than God. Rebellion against God to any degree is fire, though it be a spark it is still fire. Sin is what caused weeping and screaming to echo through the town streets in our text. Sin is the root of hatred, murder, sickness, death, and all other terrors of this life. Sin is so dreadful, powerful, and an offensive to God that no known power in all creation could uproot it, except for the suffering death of the Eternal Son of God.

- a) What has sin wrought (Romans 3:23)- The payment, the result, the consequence of sin is death. Death comes in many shapes and forms. The first death in scripture was caused by murder. Cain killed his brother Able. Their parents, Adam and Eve, were no doubt hurt deeply because they lost two sons that day. Scripture is not silent concerning the payment of sin. Sin separates man from God and then man slowly dies until he awakens to eternal death that does not die. Job said that people were born to live short days filled with troubles, and as sure as a spark fly upward men are born into trouble (Job 14:1, Job 5:7). James 4:14 tells us that our lives are very short lived. Sin has brought sorrow and horror to this world it guarantees nothing but a short life of pleasure and after that the judgement (Hebrews 11:25, Hebrews 9:27).
- b) What hath God Wrought (Matthew 4:16)- While sin has captured and locked man in a dungeon of torment, God has done a marvelous work that frees man from chains of damnation. Jesus came into a dark world as a great light. The darkness tried to settle itself. Herod was on the throne as the imposter king. He was a murderer and was going to murder. When Jesus was born dawn had arrived and the settled darkness began to be driven away. The dawn of salvation was upon man and darkness was uprooted. This is what God has wrought, Great Joy in our sorrow!

Application: Does your heart yearn to worship in your sorrow?

## **II. You do not Weep alone**

Jesus is sinless, but He was born into a sin filled world, amongst sin filled people, we can conclude that Christmas is not sinless, which means it is not void of sorrow and horror. The weeping in Matthew 2 is the weeping of families who experienced the results of sin (James 1:15). These people were not alone in their weeping and pain. Consider other believers who understand your weeping and weep with you and be comforted and encouraged.

- a) Rachel- Rachel is the person in our text that is said to be weeping. She is known as the lovely, bright bride, of Jacob. Jacob worked 14 years to pay her father Laban for her. Jacob underwent many hardships to obtain Rachel and all her beauty. We can see from the narrative in Genesis about Jacob and Rachel gospel shadows. Jacob labored and suffered wrong for his bride and Jesus would suffer for His bride the Church. Rachel's beauty did not keep her from sorrow. Genesis 35:16-21 gives record of Rachel's final moments. Her last words "Benoni" which means son of my sorrows, then she died. Rachel knew and understood pain and sorrow in a circumstance that was also full of joy. The prophet Jeremiah uses Rachel as a symbol of sorrow when the nation of Israel lost people to death and captivity. Matthew uses the birth of Christ to "fill up" the meaning behind Rachel's life. Her children were always in trouble so she wept and could not find comfort. God's children are always in trouble in this world, and our tears should fall as we mourn tragedy and sin, while at the same time clinging to the promise that those that mourn shall be comforted (Matthew 5:4)
- b) David- David was anointed King of God's people at a young age. I am sure it was a joy and extremely exciting to be given such an honor at a tender age. Along with David's

anointing came the hatred of Saul, the reigning king. David spent years of his life hiding because of his anointing. David's years on the run equaled tears. He wrote heartfelt songs of pain and agony. Consider Psalm 6:6 "I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears." David was a weeping worshipper. He wept over enemies, loneliness, and his own sin. You may weep, but you weep with mothers and kings! Christmas is a reminder of tears shared among all Christians.

- c) Nehemiah- Nehemiah was a man's man. He was a mix of a president, general, preacher, and builder. Nehemiah knew how to get the job finished no matter the obstacles that faced him. I usually do not feel like I am any of those things, but I have something in common with Nehemiah, tears for God's people (Nehemiah 1:4). At Christmas I share one thing in common with all believer's tears of joy, sorrow, and concern. Tears are the commonality amongst all believers. Gifts, tradition, and location separate us, but tears bind us together.
- d) Paul- Paul's ministry was unique. A Genius in his own right. He was a focused and fearless leader. Yet he wept (Acts 20:31). Christmas would not be reality without tears. Tears are part of our lineage and they are powerful in the economy of God.
- e) Jesus- John 11:35, Luke 19:41 confirms that Jesus was a man of tears. He wept in full compassion and love for others. He had feelings of the fullest sort. They were not numb by sin, but were in full force for others. When sorrow feels your heart, remember you do not weep alone. Joy's existence does not mean that sorrow is extinct. Rather joy and sorrow coexist for the glory of God.

Application: Will your joy and sorrow work together to glorify God?

**III. Sorrow will be blessed and Turned to Eternal Comfort and Joy (Psalm 30:5, Matthew 5:4, John 16:20, 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 4:17)**

Sorrow can be so deep and so painful that it seems to be permanent, but it is simply a seed that when it is fully grown is eternal glory. Mary's son lived and the other mothers suffered great loss, but because Jesus lived the sin that killed their children itself died. Jesus lived to die and in His death, death died. Death was swallowed up in victory. Consider these things as you await your sorrow's transformation to joy:

- A) The pain you feel as a Christian is real- If you sorrow over sin, the lost state of a loved one, a personal failure, death, sickness, or circumstances it is real. Sorrow is important to God. Godly sorrow leads each of us to repentance (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 7:10). It leads us to warn others, and to building healthy walls. I have found that real pain leads to real results.
- B) The pain you feel as a Christian is temporary- God shall wipe away all tears from the eyes of His people (Revelation 21:4). Tears will be wiped away never to return, because the former things that brought pain and affliction mainly sin and Satan are completely done away with. When pain is great remind yourself of the greater promises of God.
- C) Christ pain captured your pain and releases your Joy- Jesus knowing that He would please His Father and free people from the root cause of all sorrow was His joy through His life (Hebrews 12:2). God the Father found pleasure in the suffering and death of His Son, for it satisfied His wrath and revealed His unity and love within the Godhead (Isaiah

53:10). Jesus did not come to live an easy life and tell us all the wrongs we have committed. He came to pay for all the wrongs we have committed! He came to suffer for sin in the flesh that He might condemn and destroy sin in the flesh (Romans 8:3; 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:21). Christ died for the glory of God and sake of man. Judgement has passed from us and soon the words will be spoken “enter into the joy of your Lord” (Matthew 25:23)

Application: Will you trust in the work of Christ for your joy?