

“TEARS THAT FILL THE BOWL - HOW GOD USES OUR TEARS”

The other evening Denise and I were sitting at the table after dinner and she was sharing a story with me—a story that was quite painful. As she shared she began to cry. After a few minutes she looked down and saw that one of her tears had fallen on the table and she remarked, “There’s another tear that needs to go into the Lord’s bottle.” She then commented, “I hope that the ‘bottle of tears’ gets tipped when it’s full just as the ‘bowl of prayers’ do.” I then responded with, *“I’m not sure that you can tell the difference between the two.”* Sometimes when you share something, you have a sense that what you’ve said has more behind it than just your own thoughts or ideas. This was one of those times. As I shared that last statement, Denise felt the impact and immediately said that I needed to write about it. She and I both sensed the Holy Spirit’s emphasis on those words.

HE COLLECTS OUR TEARS . . . AND OUR PRAYERS

David, in Psalm 56, verse 8, writes this of the Lord: “You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book.” (NLT) In the Book of Revelation, chapter 5, verse 8, John writes, “And as he took the scroll, the four living beings and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp, and they held gold bowls filled with incense — the prayers of God’s people! (NLT)

WHY SHOULD I CRY?

Many times people will ask us, “Why should I cry? What purpose will it serve? Will it really change anything?” Though Denise and I understand the power of tears and its necessity in the process of healing and restoration, we also sometimes struggle with our own tears and ask ourselves similar questions—particularly when that part of the journey seems so long. As we were pondering this topic of “tears,” Denise was led to Psalm 126, which is a song referring to the joyful return of the Jews from Babylonian captivity after 70 years in exile. Verses five and six stood out to us: “Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy. He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him. (NIV) In her “Spirit-Filled Life Bible (NKJV),” there is a commentary written on these two verses that was very meaningful to us and will hopefully speak to you as well. It is entitled, “Tears and Brokenness in Victorious Warfare,” and says the following:

“Tears in Scripture play a unique role in spiritual breakthrough. Here we discover that the planting of seeds accompanied by a spirit of brokenness will not only bring a spiritual harvest of results, but will leave the sower with a spirit of rejoicing in the process. This passage, along with numerous others in Scripture regarding a spirit of brokenness, pictures a variety of purposes and functions related to what might be termed “the ministry of tears,” a ministry Charles H. Spurgeon defined as “liquid prayer.” First, there are tears of sorrow or suffering (2 Kin. 20:5). Second, there are tears of joy (Gen. 33:4). Third, there are tears of compassion (John 11:35). Fourth, there are tears of desperation (Esth. 4:1,3). Fifth, there are tears of travail, or giving birth (Is. 42:14). Sixth, there are tears of repentance (Joel 2:12,13).

TEARS (PRAYERS) THAT BRING IN A HARVEST

Tears often (and sometimes best) reflect the “cry” in our hearts, and God understands this language! As we sow or plant these different types of “cries” into the heart of Father God, the psalmist tells us that we ultimately will experience “a return on our investment.” However, it may not come quickly (the Jews were in exile for 70 years) and it may not look like the results we were expecting. But the “sheaves” spoken of in Ps. 126:6 speak directly of a harvest. Allow God to have His way with your heart and the cries that lie within. These tears are not only collected by Him but they, I believe, also fill the bowls of incense (prayer) and impact our lives and His Kingdom here on earth.

PLEASE PRAY WITH ME . . .

Lord Jesus, You expressed your heart openly to others, and one way that You did this was through Your tears. Lord, open up my heart to connect more with Your heart and allow me to see how You value my tears. I want to be able to rejoice with those who rejoice and mourn with those who mourn—just as You do. Help me to see that my tears can produce an eventual harvest in my life and even in the lives of others as these tears are collected by You and as they fill the bowls of incense as “liquid prayer.” Please also help me to realize that one of the greatest benefits of this “harvest” produced by my tears is the freedom to express my love to You and to others. In Jesus Name, Amen.

From the Father’s Heart,

Jerry Basel