

Weeping Where You Worship

2 Samuel 15:30: And David went up by the ascent of [mount] Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot: and all the people that [was] with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up. (KJV)

2 Samuel 15:32: And it came to pass, that [when] David was come to the top [of the mount], where he [usually] worshipped God, behold, Hushai the Archite came to meet him with his coat rent, and earth upon his head: (KJV)

A Place Of Mercy

The Mount of Olives is a place to the east of Jerusalem rich in history. Because it lies to the east of the temple in Jerusalem, anyone standing at the temple would see the sun rising over the Mount of Olives every morning.

So from the point of view of someone standing in the Temple Mount, the Mount of Olives came to represent the place of new beginnings. Every day began fresh with the Lord's mercy renewed daily.

Lamentations 3:22: [It is of] the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. (KJV)

Lamentations 3:23: [They are] new every morning: great [is] thy faithfulness. (KJV)

Every day the Lord renews His mercy. Just like the sun rising over the Mount of Olives and shining upon the Temple, so the Lord's mercies would rise every morning and be brand new upon the lives of His people.

Yesterday you made your mistakes, but today is a new day and a new opportunity to live your life as the Lord instructs.

A Place Of Fruit

In the time of the Bible the place was covered with fruit trees of all types. The soil on the mountain is very chalky and is perfect for growing fruit trees of all kinds. In ancient times the mountain was covered with groves of olives, citrus trees, laurels.

There is also a wind that grows almost constantly on the mountain, so slow growing trees like the olive would be bent at an odd angle on the mountain. The branches would be deformed so that the trees would grow with their branches permanently bent in the direction of the wind.

The Bible often talks about us as being like trees that the Lord has planted on the earth. Like fruit trees, we are expected to grow fruit. However just because we have been planted by the Lord does not mean that there will not be winds that will try to blow us over.

The world may subject us to many hardships that try to push us over. We may find ourselves being placed into situations that are hard for us to endure and even harder for us to understand.

Those situations may permanently alter who we are. Like a wind that permanently pushes the branches of a tree in one direction, we may find that our lives may be pushed in ugly, unfair directions. The sins and cares of the world may alter us permanently.

But even an ugly tree can bear good fruit. That is because the quality of the fruit is not determined by the strength of the wind, but by the strength of the roots.

When a tree is blown by the wind it has two choices: it can allow the wind to blow it over and die or it can put down more roots. A tree that is bent by the wind is

also one that has roots that go deep into the ground. Deep roots mean that the tree is drawing more nutrients from the soil. A healthy tree produces even better fruit.

I once got laid off from my jobs 3 times in 3 years. Before that I knew that people lost their jobs, but in the back of my mind I thought that it must be their fault. I thought that they probably deserved it somehow.

Either they had gotten lazy and had not prepared themselves for the changes that were happening in their workplace, or they were slacking off on the job. But then I got laid off from a job that I had previously been rewarded for doing, but the company just decided they didn't want to do it anymore.

I was doing exactly what the company asked me to do, but keeping or losing the job was entirely outside of my control. As a result I am much more compassionate towards people who are experiencing job loss now than I was before.

I also came to realize that it is all in God's hands and I have too little control over it. I knew compassion when I would give presents to "needy kids" at Christmas, but I truly came to understand compassion when my kids were the ones receiving gifts from strangers.

One of the things you learn when working with the youth is that they tend to have very little patience for the sick or the elderly. The reason is that they are going through the healthiest times of their lives.

They wake up every morning literally feeling stronger than they did the day before. They have not experienced losing their strength due to disease or age. To them the only people who are sick, or weak, or overweight are people who are lazy.

But as you age you begin to lose your strength. You lose your eyesight. You don't recover from injury as quickly as you once did, if at all. Who is the person who has the most compassion for you when you have the flu?

The person who had the flu the week before. The more we experience loss the more we are able to minister to others when they experience it.

When the winds of this world blow on us, we should put our roots deep into the soil of the Lord. The cares of the world may hurt and it may change us in ways that we would not choose, but if we use that energy to put our roots deeper into the Lord we will find that we are able to produce stronger fruit in him.

A Place Of Community

In Leviticus the Lord told Moses that the people should live in booths or tabernacles made from the branches of trees.

Leviticus 23:40: And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days.

Leviticus 23:42: Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths:

The purpose was to be a sort of “family reunion” for all of Judaism. People would travel to Jerusalem and live in small booths made of the branches of trees, sort of a big camping trip to the Holy Land.

It was considered holy enough that you were not permitted to do any work during the week of the celebration, but not so holy that you were not allowed cooking or carrying things.

Hence the people would take the time to have a huge vacation where they camped out, ate big meals, and had time to talk and play with old friends from all over the world.

God mandated that everyone take a week of vacation every year altogether in the same place. We sometimes get so busy in the doing of our lives inside and outside of church that we sometimes forget why we are doing it in the first place.

We have to be at church for Sunday morning English service, Sunday afternoon Spanish service, Sunday evening English service, Monday night Angels/Boy Scouts/ATAs, Wednesday night Bible study, Friday night youth service, Saturday night prayer.

We get so busy into the logistics of church services that we can forget why we have a church to begin with. The Lord tells us to relax, look and around, and have fun with you family once in a while.

A Place Of Oil

The olives that were grown on the Mount of Olives were pressed into oil. Sometimes that oil was used for cooking, but it was also used for anointing and burning. Oil is often used as a symbol for the Holy Ghost in the Bible.

The High Priest was anointed with oil before he went into the temple. When we pray for the sick we anoint them with oil as a symbol of what is happening in the spiritual realm: that the Holy Ghost is touching them in the spirit just as the oil is touching them in the body.

The oil was also used for lamps. The lamps in the Temple and in the homes were filled with olive oil and burned to create light. Light is such that it drives out darkness wherever it goes. Light does not retreat from darkness; darkness goes away wherever there is light. So it is with the Holy Ghost that is within us. Jesus said:

Matthew 5:16: Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

If you are going to have light to shine before men, you need to have something to burn. You need to have the oil of the Holy Ghost in order to burn to make light. With the Holy Ghost to make light within your life, you can be a light to the world. Your light will show others the way to Jesus.

A Place Of Light For The World

Not only did the Mount of Olives provide oil for the lamps in Jerusalem, it was also the place where the priests would light a fire at the beginning of every month.

There were many holidays in Judaism that are dictated to occur on certain days of the year; we have discussed some of them here. It was important that the holidays be celebrated, on the same day, by everyone, no matter where they lived.

What you may not know, however, is that the Jewish calendar at the time was a lunar calendar. The months of the year began whenever there was a new moon.

The new moon, however, could only be certified by the Levites in the Temple in Jerusalem. So each month began and ended only when the priests in the Temple said it did.

This caused a problem for the Jews living far away from the Temple and Jerusalem itself. How could one get his calendar started on the correct day if you lived many days away from the Temple itself? The trick was to use signal fires.

When the priest certified a new moon, a large fire would be built at the top of the Mount of Olives. Many tens or hundreds of miles away there would be people on other mountains looking for that fire. When they saw the fire on the Mount of Olives, they would light their own fire.

Miles away another fire would start, then another and another. In the course of a single evening people for thousands of miles would know that the calendar had started that very night. The Mount of Olives literally was “the light of the world.”

A Place Of Worship, A Place Of Weeping

The Temple was a place of offering and of sacrifice, but the Mount of Olives was a place of worship. 2 Samuel 15:32 says that the top of the mountain is a place where David would usually stop to worship God.

Worship is something that we give God because it is great and powerful. We don't worship God because we want something; we worship Him because he deserves it. We also worship Him because that is how we gain access to Him.

Psalm 22:3: But thou [art] holy, [O thou] that inhabitest the praises of Israel.

The Lord lives within our praise. So if we want to have Him live within us, we need to fill ourselves with praise. Once we have invited the Lord into our presence with our worship, then we can approach him with our needs.

On this occasion in 2 Samuel, however, David is weeping. Where David would normally worship the Lord, this time he is weeping. In this case he is weeping because he is running from his own son who wants to kill him.

He is weeping because he must hurry and flee the kingdom before his son Absalom tries to kill him when he takes over the kingdom.

But the truth is, sometimes you need to weep before the Lord before He will answer your prayer. The same thing works with the Lord: sometimes we need to weep before Him in order to express how much we desire Him to move.

It is not something that we do to manipulate Him; it is how we express how deeply it means to us.

I was once praying to the Lord for something. I was being very logical and unemotional in my appeal. The Lord, spoke to me and said, “Why should I answer your prayer?”

I paused for a moment and tried to express my need a different way. He stopped me and said, “Look, if you don’t want it badly enough to cry for it, then why should I move Heaven to make it happen?”

There was a book several years ago called, “Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus.” In that book there was a premise that men and women speak completely different emotional languages.

As a result they are often unable to communicate with each other well. I read an article recently where some scientists took some pictures of men and women expressing different emotions: fear, anger, happiness, etc.

They showed those pictures to a group of men and women and asked if they could tell what emotion the person in the picture was expressing. The women were very good at determining what other women were feeling.

The women were also pretty good and recognizing the emotions of the men. Then they showed the pictures to the men. The men could pretty easily determine the emotions that were expressed by other men.

The men, however, had no clue what emotions the women were expressing. They found that while men may be from Mars and women from Venus, the women at least know how to speak a little Martian. The men know very little Venusian.

The Bible says that we are the “bride of Christ.” That we, men and women, are a bride and Jesus is our husband. As a bride, we may need to express our needs to the Lord, but like men and women on the earth, we may not have the language required to really express it.

When that happens we may have to break down and express our feelings on a very emotional level. We may need to cry. We may need to speak in a language we do not understand that we call “speaking in tongues.”

The Lord is God of the entire Universe, while we are humans living within our tiny little lives. We want to talk to the Lord and tell him what we need, but sometimes we simply lack the ability to express our needs.

We can't communicate with God as though He is our equal because there is no one equal with God. When we are filled with the Holy Ghost, we have the ability to at least attempt communication with God.

That communication may mean that we have to speak in a language we don't understand.

Romans 8:26: Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

Romans 8:27: And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what [is] the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to [the will of] God.

Sometimes those groanings are words in a heavenly language we cannot understand, but sometimes they are even more basic; they are simply emotions that we express to the Lord through our tears.

Don't be afraid to mix weeping with your worship.

You may not have the words to express your needs to the Lord, but neither may you have the words to express his Greatness either.

The Lord's ways are much higher than our ways and the words we would need to express His greatness are much higher than our ability to speak. When you speak to the Lord do so with words to the best of your ability, but don't be afraid to also

speak to Him with you weeping and your laughter. Those emotions may be the only language you have to communicate with Him.

A Place Where God Meets Your Needs

The Mount of Olives was the best place to view the Holy of Holies. It was said that if you stood on the Mount of Olives you could look across the valley and into the Holy of Holies.

The Ark of the Covenant could not be seen from within the Temple. The Ark was elevated above the people and was hidden behind doors and a curtain. From across the valley, however, one could catch a glimpse of the Ark on the Day of Atonement when the High Priest would enter the Holy of Holies to anoint it with the blood of the ram.

As odd as it sounds, if you wanted to see the holy places of God, you needed to get far away from Him. But Ezekiel once prophesied that God Himself would once stand on the Mount of Olives.

Ezekiel 11:23: And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which [is] on the east side of the city.

The mountain that is east of the city of Jerusalem is the Mount of Olives. Ezekiel said that the Lord would stand on that mountain.

Ephesians 2:13: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

So we who once had to stand afar off and away from the temple mount can now be close to the Lord. But is not we who have moved closer to Him; it is the Lord who has moved closer to us.

Where we once had to stand all the way across the valley on the Mount of Olives in order to catch a glimpse of the Lord in the Ark of the Covenant, now the Lord Himself stands on the Mount of Olives with us. He stands next to us.

The Lord stood next to the disciples on the Mount of Olives and He came down to our place of worship, to our place of weeping, and he stood next to us.

We couldn't go to Him, so He came to us.

Luke 24:51: And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.

The Lord ascended into Heaven. Once again there is a valley that separates us, but the Lord promises that He will return to earth; He will return to the Mount of Olives, the same way that he departed.

In the meantime we are in the Mount of Olives, a place of worship and a place of weeping.

We long for the time that we can be with Him again. But in the meantime climb the Mount of Olives. Worship Him. Weep for Him. Bring your needs to Him in any way that you can.