

March 11, 2018

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

-Today: We hope to have a morning passion reading service and an evening catechism (#47) reading service. Classes following the morning service.

-This Week Tuesday, Rev. Vergunst is in Sioux Center at 7:00 p.m. and Rev. Adams in Rock Valley at 7:30 p.m. for Prayer Services.

-Next Week: We hope to have morning catechism reading service and an evening reading service. Classes following the morning service.

-Advance Notices:

March 29, 7:00 p.m. Rev. Adams Good Friday service
April 5, 7:00 p.m. Rev. Brugge Midweek
April 22 9:30 a.m., 2:30 p.m. Student de Leeuw
-All the Lord willing-

Offerings Today: 1st General Fund Next week: 1st General Fund
2nd Living Bread 2nd School Fund

There are new **Treasured Meditations** in the rack. Please take some for friends or family.

We Remember in Prayer:

-Those who have been unable to gather with us for some time, thinking especially of Mr. G. Hoogendoorn, Mr. Decker, and Mr. & Mrs. Roberts.
-Our widows and widowers, our elderly, the unborn, prodigal sons and daughters, any others who are unable to gather with us today, are under doctor's care, and all those who have hidden crosses.

MEDITATION

"And there followed Him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented Him. But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children." Luke 23:27-28

The Lord had spoken in His Word about a mourning people. "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted" (Matthew 5:4). This

world is a valley of tears. We see the widow of Nain on the way to the grave to bring her only son. She weeps. There is weeping because of grief and sorrow of heart. On the way to Golgotha we also see weeping women. Not only Jesus' enemies surrounded Him, but there were also others who were moved with compassion. They saw Jesus' suffering and how He nearly perished under the heavy burden laid upon Him. They probably knew that He went round about the country, healing those who were oppressed by the devil, and that He had performed many miracles. Now they saw this Benefactor on the way to the cross. They feel there is injustice in this punishment. It is not right that He has to suffer so heavily. Finally there seemed to be some support for the Lord Jesus. The disciples had caused Him sorrow. They slept in Gethsemane. They denied Him and left Him.

Now these women wept. The original word means to raise an outcry, to weep loudly. They were deeply touched and showed their sympathy with the suffering Man of Sorrows. They showed compassion. We would say that this must have been balm in Jesus' wounds. But no, we read that Jesus said, "Weep not for Me, but for yourselves." We see here tears which He rejects. He is not pleased with this kind of weeping. In fact, it was a temptation for Him. If He could be led to self-pity, Satan would have the victory, for a person with self-pity resists the leading of God and disagrees with Him. There was a temptation in the weeping of these women. There was a protest against His suffering. Although these women felt pity and compassion and felt hurt that this Man was treated so cruelly, though they were offended by all those rough dealings, and they showed their soft heart, yet they did not weep rightly. They wept because of what others did to Jesus, but they did not weep because of their own sins. They had an affected heart, but not a broken and a contrite heart. In fact, they were stumbling blocks on His way. So was Peter when he said, "Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee" (Matthew 16:22b).

These women also did not agree with this way. We can see the sin and guilt of others, while we are blind for our own corrupt heart. We can shed tears like Esau and Orpah did, while yet our enmity has not been broken, so that we still say with Pilate, "What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?" (Matthew 27:22). In this weeping there was no self-abasement, self-humiliation, or repentance, although they were moved or touched by seeing this suffering. How many might also have been touched when they heard about the suffering of the Mediator, when they heard about His pain, His grief, and about the cruel treatments and dealings with this great Prophet!

Oh, how we are inclined to make a foundation and ground of such feelings and of our tears! We would rather wash ourselves in our tears than in the blood of Christ.

These women, instead of complaining about human injustice, should have seen that it was above all the hand of God's justice because of the sins of His people. We can have pity and sorrow. We can weep like these women, but then our tears are tears of enmity and rejection. We read of the rich young man that he left Jesus and was very sorrowful, for he was

rich. Such tears do not fall in God's bottle, but are shed because of the consequences of sin. There may be tears of impressions and convictions, but, friends, we need more than this. We need a broken and a contrite heart. We need first to weep for ourselves. They are the tears which He desires. Stony-hearted hearers may be deeply touched. Temporary faith may show great emotion, and there may be joy or sorrow.

Augustine, while still an idolater, an unbeliever, sometimes heard Ambrose. He said he was often greatly affected when hearing him, even unto tears. It was not because of the heavy nature of the subject, but because of the abilities of the speaker. Our heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Therefore it is so dangerous to rest upon the tears which we shed because of our emotions, we being stirred, even by the message of the gospel. We need to become the cause of His suffering ourselves. We need to see that the chastisement of our peace is upon Him. He was bruised for our iniquities. We need to weep for ourselves. We read in the Word of God, "They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for His only Son" (Zechariah 12:10). When the Lord opens the eyes of the blind, they see their dangerous and sad condition ~ the separation between God and their soul, their guilt and what they have done against God. The Lord works godly sorrow. "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world worketh death" (2 Corinthians 7:10).

~Rev. C. Vogelaar

NOTES

Netherlands Reformed Congregation

Sioux Falls, SD



Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah. Psalm 24:10

Church Times: 9:30 a.m. and 2:30 or 6:30 p.m.