

No More Tears!

No More Tears!

Michael J. Nielsen / General

Resurrection; Mercy and Compassion / Revelation 7:9–17

- › Grace, mercy, and peace be yours from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Vale of Tears

Do you know where the term “vale of tears” comes from? Many times life in this world is described as the “vale of tears.” This expression comes from a singular biblical text from Psalm 84:6.

English Standard Version Psalm 84

5 Blessed are those whose strength is in you,
in whose heart are the highways to Zion.

6 As they go through the Valley of Baca
they make it a place of springs;
the early rain also covers it with pools.

The Valley of Baca. This Hebrew Word Baca is related to weeping. Really could say, “As they go through the valley of weeping.” Or a valley of sorrows or a vale of tears. It’s a way of describing the pilgrimage of God’s people through this life, through this vale of tears as we journey towards to the eternal joy’s of God’s everlasting kingdom.

We indeed understand the term “Valley of Tears” or “Vale of tears” as we experience it in our lifelong journey.

That experience of the vale of tears is not just precluded for God’s Saints. We who believe in Jesus are GOD’s Saints, but we are not immune to pain and sorrows and tears. Yet, today, on this All Saints Sunday as we have remembered those that have died in the past year, do rejoice, because there is coming a day when there will be NO MORE TEARS.

Truly a Vale of Tears

This world truly is a vale of tears. Pop psychology tells us such a view is unhealthy, and advertisers and marketers tell us it’s unnecessary, it remains true. Think about the many ads you hear and see or perhaps the self-help books in the library or bookstore.

We all know that there are many many sources of tears. We experience them all:

- 1) Physical pain - cancer, arthritis, sprained ankles and broken arms.
- 2) Grief over death - of a parent, child, spouse, friend.
- 3) Injustice, mistreatment, persecution - whether from friends, family members, enemies, or complete strangers
- 4) Loneliness or rejection - whether you suffer loneliness within your home and family or our hundreds of miles from family. Perhaps you've been rejected by friends, a potential girlfriend or boyfriend or even by church members.
- 5) Disappointments - of yourself, of your parents, of your kids.
- 6) Sympathy for others
- 7) Our own sin and guilt - Think about Peter when he denied his Lord.

English Standard Version Chapter 26

75 And Peter remembered the saying of Jesus, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.

If we saw our own sins rightfully and fully, we, too, like Peter, would weep greatly and bitterly.

Tears are real.

When I am speaking with someone with real tears or even myself is suffering from one of those tear-jerkers I go to the Psalms and realize I am not alone.

English Standard Version Psalm 31

9 Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am in distress;
my eye is wasted from grief;
my soul and my body also.

English Standard Version Psalm 42

3 My tears have been my food
day and night,
while they say to me all the day long,
"Where is your God?"

And even in our happiest moments there is often some sorrow. Henri Nouwen writes in his book, *Out of Solitude: Meditations on the Christian Life*:

There is a quality of sadness that pervades all the moments of our lives. It seems that there is no such thing as clear-cut pure joy, but that even in the most happy moments of our existence, we sense a tinge of sadness. In every satisfaction, there is an awareness of limitations. In every

success, there is the fear of jealousy. Behind every smile, there is a tear. In every embrace, there is loneliness. In every friendship, distance. And in all form of light, there is the knowledge of surrounding darkness. When you touch the hand of a returning friend, you already know that he will have to leave you again...But this intimate experience in which every bit of death can point us beyond the limits of our existence. It can do so by making us look forward in expectation to the day when our hearts will be filled with perfect joy, a joy that no one shall take away from us.”

Compassion

In compassion for us, Jesus entered into our vale of tears. God is not blind or deaf to our weeping. He heard the cry of the children of Israel as they were enslaved in Egypt. He heard the cry of Hagar in the wilderness after she was kicked out of Abraham’s house. He heard the cry of childless Hannah who desperately wanted a child.

What tears have you shed? Maybe it’s physical pain or grief or mistreatment of loneliness or disappointments or sympathy for others or your own sin. Dear Saints, God has seen your tears and heard your weeping.

The Psalms speak of God storing up our tears in a bottle and recoding them in a book.

English Standard Version Psalm 56

8 You have kept count of my tossings;
put my tears in your bottle.
Are they not in your book?

But God has done more than notice our tears. In Christ, he entered into our vale of tears, our valley of sorrows. There was no room for Jesus’ parents in the inn. Soon after Jesus’ birth, Herod would come seeking his life, and many mothers of slaughtered sons would be wailing.

Jesus himself experiences all the sorrow of this world.

John 11:35 tells us Jesus wept. He wept with Martha and Mary at the death of Lazarus.

Jesus weeps over Jerusalem and the coming divine judgment.

Jesus cries out in sorrow over the bitter path of betrayal, abandonment, and death before Him. The writer to the Hebrews describes it in this way:

English Standard Version Chapter 5

7 In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence.

But Jesus Christ comes to do more than simply weep and share in our sorrows; **he came to take away the tears!**

To the widow at Nain, Jesus comes to raise her dead son, saying, “Do not weep.”

To Mary and Martha, Jesus comes to bring out of the tomb as he says, “Lazarus come forth.”

To those wailing at the death of a man’s little daughter, he says, “Do not weep for she is not dead but sleeping.” At first they mock him, but soon the girl is alive, and their tears are gone!

To Mary Magdalene, weeping in the garden outside his tomb, Jesus comes to speak her name and to bring her resurrection joy!

No More tears

One day, yes a coming day, God will wipe away every tear - forever! This world is a vale of tears in its present state, but its tears are temporary! This is God’s promise to us as he declares in John 16

English Standard Version Chapter 16

20 Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy. 21 When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. 22 So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.

A day is coming dear Saints when John’s vision will not only be our vision, but our reality.

A huge multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language, all in white, with Palm Branches and song working Christ the Lamb and saying, “Salvation belong to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.” There will no hunger! No thirst! and NO MORE TEARS!

In that day, God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

Think about the last time you were crying and someone came up to you and offered to wipe away your tears. This is one of the most intimate of all personal interactions. It’s what a parent does for their child and a child for a parent. It’s what a husband does for his wife and a wife for her husband. It’s the very picture of empathy and compassion - the caring of one is acknowledged and sharing the hurt and the grief behind those tears.

I’ve been on the receiving end of the tissue and the giving end.

But the simple act of wiping away someone’s tears is not simply joining with them in grief; it’s not just “weeping with those who weep.” Taking your fingers and the tissue and drying someone’s tears says something; it personally promises hope: “Let me dry your tears. You are not alone. I’m here to help, to shoulder the burden, to mend things. No more tears now! It will get better! I promise!”

But even when that happens, and for now we wait. And often, yes, we will weep. In this life, we sow in tears, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."

And as we wait for the day God will dry our tears, we look for opportunities to dry the tears of others, to extend to them God's own compassion for them, to bring them the good news of Jesus Christ - who sees their tears, carried their sorrows, cleansed them by His blood, who will one day wipe every from their eyes.

This is promise isn't just for them. It's also for you. You too God will wipe away every tear.

Today, we celebrate God's faithfulness to those who have died in the faith...we named their names - Joan Eggebraaten, Leo Johnson, Bev Radi - whose struggles and sorrow are over, whose tears have ended. God's saints shed many tears in this world. But for his Saints in heaven, there is no more crying - just joy. They will behold the face of God and God will behold them. He will reach out his nail-marked hands to them - to us - to you- and wipe away every tear! And the promise will be fulfilled of "No more tears!"

In Jesus Name. Amen.

- › Now may the peace of God which passes all human understanding, guard your hearts and your minds and keep them focused in Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior. Amen.