

WCCC 2025

Brother Ted Peng

Those Who Sow in Tears Shall Reap with Shouts of Joy

(3)

Good afternoon, brothers and sisters. This is the last session of our sharing, and I am very thankful for your patience with me. We all know that the theme of this conference is: **“Whom I have created for My glory.”** The burden the brothers gave me this time is to share Psalm 126, and I hope you all love Psalm 126. Let us read it once more.

Scripture Reading

Psalm 126:

“When the LORD brought back the captive ones of Zion, we were like those who dream. Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with joyful shouting; Then they said among the nations, ‘The LORD has done great things for them.’ The LORD has done great things for us; we are glad.” (vv. 1-3 NASB1995)

The first three verses speak of what has already happened; the last three verses express a hope for the future:

*“Restore our captivity, O LORD,
As the streams in the South.
Those who sow in tears shall reap with joyful shouting.
He who goes to and fro weeping, carrying his bag of seed,
Shall indeed come again with a shout of joy, bringing his sheaves with him.” (vv. 4–6 NASB1995)*

In this psalm, I have been speaking on three points:

- 1. Zion**
- 2. The bringing back of the captives**
- 3. Verse 5: Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy**

The day before yesterday, I spoke on Zion; yesterday I spoke on the return of the captives; today I will speak on **“Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy.”** Let us bow our heads for prayer.

Prayer

Lord, we truly thank and praise You that we can gather together this time. Lord, we know You have a burden for us, and You also have expectations and encouragement for us. Lord, we thank You because once again You have drawn our hearts to Yourself. We ask that Your Spirit be with us, that we may see what it means that those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy, so that we may truly see Your glory — the glory that those throughout the ages who wept were able to see. Thank You for being with us. In the Lord's name we pray. Amen.

Review

Thank the Lord — He has given us **Zion**. When we think of the Lord's glory, especially His glory and His purpose, we see that in the days of David and Isaiah, they were striving to focus the Lord's glory on this place called **Zion**. Over the past two days, we have come to understand that Zion refers to **the heavenly Jerusalem**, the dwelling place of God, the place where His glory is. Those who have a heart for God all set their hearts toward Zion. So let me remind you again: **the Zion we speak of is the heavenly Jerusalem**, not the earthly one.

Hebrews 12:22 says:

“But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem...”

From the writer's perspective, Zion is the heavenly Jerusalem. So whenever we speak of Zion, we think of the heavenly Jerusalem. This is a spiritual matter, but not merely future — it is **present**. When our hearts turn to God, when we desire to follow Him and walk the heavenly way, we have come to the heavenly Jerusalem — we are at Zion. Thank the Lord — this is the first reminder.

Yesterday, we spoke of the testimony of those in the land of captivity. Did they weep? Yes, they wept. They were in captivity for **160 years**.

When Daniel recalled the past and understood that the time of return had come, the first thing he did was say to God:

“Lord, we have sinned against You. For hundreds of years, we have sinned against You. What You led us to do, we did not do. Our ancestors, our leaders, and we ourselves — we have all sinned against You.”

Eighty years later, when Ezra led the second group back, he prayed in Jerusalem: “Lord, we have sinned against You. Many years ago, You told us to follow You, but we failed. Now You have brought us back, but our condition is not good.” And he wept.

Nehemiah also wept:

“Lord, our walls are broken down, our gates burned with fire. But You have brought us back — we can rebuild the wall.”

Fifty-two days later, the wall was rebuilt.

Then what happened?

The people gathered at the Water Gate, and when they heard the words of the Law, **they all wept**. Nehemiah said:

“Do not weep, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.”

The Lord’s heart was full of delight. When they saw the Lord’s delight, they were strengthened. When God is pleased, His glory is manifested. Then, when they read the Law, they discovered the Feast of Tabernacles, so the next day they gathered to keep it. Scripture says the last time they had kept the Feast of Tabernacles like that was **a thousand years earlier**, in the days of Joshua. Thank the Lord — these people truly saw God’s glory and experienced it together.

Tears — the wondrous experience of those who follow the Lord

Today we speak on **sowing in tears**. In the past, whenever I thought of this phrase, I thought of the wonderful missionaries — those who left England for China or Africa. When their stories were told, people would say they “sowed in tears.”

But this time, as I reread Psalm 126 and gathered all the biblical references to tears and sowing, I realized I had missed something. Sowing in tears is **not limited to missionaries**. Many nights I could not sleep. Finally, I decided to search the Scriptures and ask:

Did the faithful ones I know shed tears?

When I asked this question, everything opened up. I want to share three sets of stories with you.

1. **Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph** — Did you know Abraham wept? He did.
2. **Moses and David** — Scripture does not explicitly say Moses wept, but he suffered deeply for God.
3. **The era of captivity and return** — Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah.

Then I thought of Jesus — He also wept. I spent time considering why Jesus wept. Then in the New Testament, I saw the apostles: **Peter wept, Paul wept, and John wept**. When I saw their tears, I thanked the Lord. They entered deep experiences — as Brother Congdon said, they passed through heavy dealings; their tears were their wondrous experience.

Let me share these with you.

Abraham's Tears

Scripture records only one instance of Abraham weeping — when his wife Sarah died (Genesis 23). They had been married for many years. Abraham was 137; Sarah was 127. When she died, Abraham mourned and wept. His heart was heavy.

From the beginning, Abraham and Sarah were together. They had no children. When God's glory appeared to Abraham, Sarah went with him out of Ur into Canaan. Life in Canaan was not easy. When Abraham went down to Egypt, Sarah went with him. Abraham told her, "If they ask who you are, say you are my sister," and she did so.

Later, God promised them a child. First, He promised descendants, and Sarah arranged for Abraham to have a child through another woman. For about thirteen years, God did not speak to them. Then God appeared again and promised a son. Twenty years later, God asked Abraham to offer Isaac as a burnt offering. Abraham obeyed; Sarah followed. Whatever Abraham suffered, Sarah suffered with him.

When Sarah died, Abraham mourned and wept. He insisted on buying a burial place for her in Hebron. The locals said, "You are a prince among us; bury her wherever you wish." But Abraham said no — he must bury her in the land he purchased. That field in Hebron became the only piece of land they owned in the promised land.

Later, Abraham sought a wife for Isaac. His servant asked, "If the girl will not come to Canaan, may I take Isaac back there?" Abraham said, "Absolutely not. God's covenant is with Isaac, and only in this land."

We know Hebron means **fellowship**, but we must see more. Hebron was where Abraham and Sarah lived the longest — about twenty years. In Hebron, Abraham met Melchizedek. In Hebron, God told Abraham to look at the stars: "If you can count them, so shall your descendants be." Abraham believed, and God counted it as righteousness **in Hebron**. Isaac was promised in Hebron. Sarah was buried there; Abraham was buried there; Isaac and his wife were buried there. Jacob, before dying in Egypt, told Joseph: "Do not bury me in Egypt. Bring my bones back to Hebron."

From that time until the days of Joshua and Caleb, when Caleb spied out the land, the first place he saw was the mountain of Hebron. He knew that land must be theirs. Though giants lived there, he said, "We must take this land." Forty years passed before they could enter. At eighty-five, Caleb said to Joshua: "Give

me this mountain.” Hebron’s story is tied to Sarah, Abraham, and the entire family.

Jacob’s Tears

Jacob left home and came to Bethel, where he encountered God at night. He did not know what Bethel meant — only that God was there, and God’s house was there. He vowed: “If You bring me back, I will give You a tenth.”

He spent twenty years with his uncle, who constantly cheated him, though Jacob also outsmarted his uncle. Yet after twenty years, Jacob was empty inside. He had wives, concubines, eleven sons, flocks — but he was empty. God said, “Return to Bethel.” Jacob told his wives, “We are going back.”

At the Jabbok, he sent his family across the river. That night, an angel wrestled with him. The angel could not prevail, so he touched Jacob’s thigh, and Jacob became lame. The angel said, “Let me go.” Jacob said, “You cannot leave me.” Hosea 12:4 says Jacob **wept and pleaded**. He clung to the angel: “You must bless me.”

He had everything outwardly — but his only desire was:
“You must not leave me.”

The angel said, “Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel.” Israel means “prince of God.” Jacob would represent God and bear His inheritance. From that moment, he was different — no longer cunning, but focused on Bethel, God’s house, and his family representing God.

Psalm 126 says those who sow in tears sow seeds. What did Jacob sow? He sowed **Israel** — his family becoming God’s people, twelve tribes representing God.

Joseph’s Tears

At seventeen, Joseph was loved by his father and hated by his brothers. They wanted to kill him, but two brothers intervened. He was sold to traders and taken to Egypt. For twenty years, he suffered in Potiphar’s house, in prison, with no one to confide in. But he remembered God.

At thirty-seven, famine struck. His brothers came to buy grain. They did not recognize him, but he recognized them. After some events, Joseph said, “I am your brother.” They were terrified. For twenty years, the family had lived under darkness — lies, guilt, fear. Jacob thought Joseph was dead. The brothers had lied, saying a wild animal had killed him.

Then the man standing before them spoke: "I am Joseph." Joseph truly loved them; as he revealed these things to them, he wept—and his brothers were terrified. Joseph said to them: "Do not be afraid, nor should you reproach or blame yourselves. Although you sold me into slavery here years ago, God sent me ahead of you to this place to preserve life."

Praise the Lord. Joseph shed tears—not just once, but many times. He restored his family; he rescued them from the darkness of deceit, restoring them to a wholesome family unit—restoring them to the state in which Israel ought to be. There were no longer any lies, only forgiveness; the relationship between father and sons was restored. This is the reason Joseph wept.

Moses' Suffering

Moses spent forty years in the wilderness. God had expectations for His people, but the first generation repeatedly disappointed Him. Who knew God's sorrow? Moses did. Who knew the failures of two million people? Moses did. His small heart bore God's sorrow and the people's failure.

At one point, God said, "I will not go with you." Moses pleaded: "The people are sinful, but You must go with us. If You will not go, blot me out of Your book." This was Moses' heart.

Because Moses misrepresented God by striking the rock the second time, God said he could not enter Canaan. Moses did not complain. God let him see the land from a mountain. Though he did not enter physically, he surely entered spiritually. God buried him, and no one knows where. God honored him. Moses saw God's glory many times.

David's Tears

David's psalms show his tears. When Saul pursued him, he wept often. Psalm 6:8:

"The LORD has heard the sound of my weeping."

When David sinned, he came to God. Psalm 30:5:

"Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning."

David wanted to build God a house — a dwelling place. God would not allow him because he was a man of war. But God's heart was touched. Psalm 132 says David vowed not to rest until he found a dwelling place for God. David's tears were **for God's house**, not for himself.

Why They Sowed in Tears

These people had three things in their hearts:

1. **God's will and purpose** — “Lord, what You want is what I want.”
2. **God's people** — Abraham saw a city full of God's people; Jacob cared for God's house; Joseph cared for his family; Moses cared for God's people, and David cared for God's house.
3. **The way of the cross** — difficult, but filled with God's presence and love.

The cross is not merely suffering — it is the way toward God's purpose. Jesus said, “On this rock I will build My Church,” and immediately, “Take up your cross and follow Me.”

Thus, the way of the cross is centered on what God desires; it is directed toward God's ultimate purpose. In the person of our Lord Jesus, He calls us to take up our own crosses and follow Him—with the specific aim of witnessing Him build His Church upon the Rock. Brothers and sisters, we may look upon the way of the cross and say, “Oh, I am enduring suffering.” Yet, we can also say, “The Lord desires us to follow Him so that we may witness Him building His Church upon the Rock.” This is a profoundly positive experience.

For Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph, their experiences were exceedingly arduous, for they walked the way of the cross; yet, because they perceived the ultimate purpose—because they discerned God's Will and the Will of the Lord Jesus Christ—they were willing to walk that path. Indeed, they were not merely willing, but they walked it with joy. Furthermore, the way of the cross revealed to them the depth of God's love for them.

As we walk the way of the cross, do we realize who is constantly watching over us? Even when we stumble or fail, do we know who remains ever-watchful? Do we know who cares for us unceasingly? It is our Lord. Do not imagine that we walk the way of the cross in solitude; that is not the case, for our Lord is constantly watching over us. I believe this is the reason these individuals shed tears: they wept as they sowed their seeds—seeds that would surely sprout, bringing forth the very harvest for which their hearts had longed.

Their tears were seeds — seeds that would grow into what they hoped for.

Jesus' Tears — for God's Glory

John 11:35: "Jesus wept."

For a long time, I did not understand why Jesus wept. People said He loved Lazarus — but it was more.

Jesus delayed two days and said, "This sickness is for the glory of God."

Martha and Mary both said, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died."

Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life he who believes in Me will live even if he dies."

He was truly saying to them, "I am your resurrection; I am your life." The difficult part to believe is the latter half: if you believe—even if you die—you shall rise again; and if you are alive and believe, you shall never die. It is no wonder that Martha and Mary did not understand; indeed, I doubt anyone could truly comprehend it. If we do not believe in the Lord, we cannot understand it; yet, even after believing in the Lord, it remains profoundly difficult to grasp.

Then they went to Lazarus's tomb; as the Bible records, Jesus wept. Afterward, He said: "Martha, if you believe, you will see the glory of God." The Lord called Lazarus forth from the tomb, and from that moment on, Mary and Martha were transformed. Yet there is a deeper truth—a statement the Lord made twice in this chapter: that He acted in this manner for the sake of God's glory—that His delay was for the sake of God's glory, and that His raising of Lazarus to life was for the sake of God's glory.

At the tomb, Jesus wept — because He saw humanity bound by death, helpless before it. His glory was not only in raising Lazarus, but in declaring:

"I am the resurrection and the life." he who believes in Me will live even if he dies,

When the Lord wept, it was because He saw that no human being could escape the dominion of death, nor the utter helplessness felt in its face; the sorrow of death held all people in its grip. Where, then, lies the Lord's glory? It is found not merely in His raising of Lazarus, but—more profoundly—in the words He spoke to Martha and Mary: "I am the resurrection and the life."

Brothers and sisters, if we believe that Christ Jesus is our resurrection and our life, then death shall no longer hold us in bondage. At that time, there were Jews who witnessed Jesus raising Lazarus, yet failed to perceive the glory of God. They went to the Pharisees and reported to them what Jesus had done.

The Lord said to Mary and Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life"; and the Lord says to each one of us as well, "I am your resurrection; I am your life."

Let us reflect upon the latter part of this statement: "Whoever believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live." I do not believe that I will live past the age of one hundred and ten; indeed, throughout the history of humanity—over the past one or two millennia—no one has lived to be one hundred and forty or one hundred and fifty years old. So, what does the Lord mean when He says, "Whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die"? Praise be to the Lord—we are Christians! Praise be to the Lord—we place our trust in Him! Praise be to the Lord—Christ Jesus has accomplished so much within us, and we know that He is our very life.

This is precisely what Paul wrote in the Book of Colossians. If we truly believe that His life is our life, then we shall never die. Our spiritual life shall never perish; when our physical bodies pass away, our spirits will soar to heaven to be with our Lord. Is this not so? Our spiritual life is eternal because Christ Jesus lives within us—this is the truth declared by the Lord Jesus Himself. This concept is difficult for non-believers to grasp; yet, for all who believe in the Lord Jesus, there is liberation—they are no longer held in bondage by death; death no longer holds dominion over them. Praise be to the Lord! I believe that this is the very glory of God. For us—this gathering of over a hundred brothers and sisters—were it not for the life of Christ dwelling within us, sooner or later we would all pass away along with our physical bodies. But praise be to the Lord! Because the life of Christ resides within us, although our physical bodies will eventually pass away, our spiritual lives remain eternally hidden with Christ in God. Glory be to God! It is truly marvelous—this is the work that our Lord Jesus has accomplished.

Another time, Jesus wept — Luke 19 — over Jerusalem. Not merely because of the coming destruction, but because the temple had become a den of thieves. He wept because God desired Jerusalem to shine with His glory, but the people did not care.

Another instance where the Lord is recorded as shedding tears is found in Luke, chapter 19. As the Lord Jesus approached Jerusalem—while He was still outside the city—He wept aloud: "O Jerusalem, if only you had known, on this day, the things that make for your peace!"

Why did He weep? We know that in A.D. 70, a Roman general would come to burn the city of Jerusalem to the ground; one might assume that this is what the Lord was referring to. But are you certain? I do not believe so. For immediately afterward, our Lord entered the Temple, drove out those who were buying and selling within it, and declared to them: "This house is a place of prayer, but you have turned it into a den of thieves." This, then, is the reason our Lord wept.

Our Lord—our God—desired for Jerusalem to shine forth as a beacon of light; yet the people of Jerusalem remained indifferent. Seeing that the place had

become a den of thieves, our Lord wept in sorrow. While His weeping may possibly have stemmed from other causes as well, we know that at that time, no one on earth bore a heavier burden for the city of Jerusalem than the Lord Jesus. His burden was so profound that He could do nothing but weep.

Viewed from another perspective, He did not give up. Today, as we contemplate God's eternal purpose and the household of God—regardless of our own capabilities or limitations—we desire to dedicate our efforts to the sake of God's house. It is just as a servant declared in the Book of Deuteronomy: "I love my master and my master's household; although I have the option to leave and gain my freedom, because I love my master, I am willing to serve him and his household for the rest of my life." The master then led him to the doorframe and pierced his ear; in this manner, he served his master and his master's household for his entire life.

Brothers and sisters, on that day when our Lord wept, He was sowing seeds. Today, the fact that so many people are willing to live for the sake of His house is the fruit of that sowing in tears—these are the sheaves. Today, we approach the service of God with great earnestness; we also recognize our duty to love our brothers and sisters, for we live for the glory of God's house. These are the very sheaves that our Lord Jesus sowed and has now gathered in.

Peter's Tears

Now, let us turn our attention to the apostles; why did the Apostle Peter shed tears? The Lord Jesus was about to be crucified; on that very evening, while He was with His disciples, Peter declared that although all the others might abandon the Lord, he never would. Later that night, the Lord Jesus was led into the courtyard of the High Priest, and Peter followed Him there. The High Priest and his attendants were in the midst of accusing and interrogating Jesus. Before this, the Lord Jesus had said, "Peter, this will not be easy for you; before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." Peter had replied: "I will never deny You." Yet, on that very same night—while standing in the High Priest's courtyard—when a young servant girl questioned him, Peter denied the Lord three times. The third time he did so, the rooster crowed; Peter looked up and saw the Lord Jesus gazing at him, and he went out and wept bitterly.

I imagine his inner turmoil was profound and complex: on the one hand, he had failed; yet on the other, the Lord's love for him was being made manifest right there. The Lord Jesus was being accused by the High Priest and a crowd of people, yet the Lord's heart was not fixed upon those events; rather, His heart was fixed upon His disciple, Peter. In the moment of his failure, Peter saw that Jesus was

looking at him. That is why he went out and wept bitterly. Two thoughts weighed upon his soul: "I have failed so miserably," and "My Lord Jesus loves me so deeply."

Later, by the Sea of Tiberias, Jesus asked, "Do you love Me?" Peter could not say yes boldly. Jesus said, "Feed My sheep." Then He told Peter he would die as Jesus did. But Peter did not weep — he had already wept. Now the Lord's love was his strength. He was ready to be bound and to die. His life was set to feed the Lord's sheep.

Brothers and sisters, Peter shed tears for a specific reason; yet, were you to ask Peter himself, he would not offer you an explanation. However, when you observe his story, you see that it is the will of God—the will of Christ Jesus. It concerns God's people—the people of Christ Jesus. It reveals the path of the Cross—a path so noble that he was willing to walk it, willing to be bound, and willing to walk alongside the Lord. This is the path of the Cross; this is Peter's experience.

Paul's Tears

Paul, a strong man, wept many times.

2 Corinthians 2:4 — he wrote,

"For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears".

Why? because he loved them.

The Corinthians were a source of great vexation to the Apostle Paul. He had previously written to them, administering much discipline; yet, when he came to write the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, he did not wish to cause them further distress, and so, he wrote it with tears. This is that letter.

Philippians 3:18 — For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ,

Paul harbored such love and hope for the Philippians; he encouraged them to walk with the Lord along the path of the cross—to know Christ and to suffer together with Him. This is a beautiful thing; yet, he noted that among them were some who were enemies of the cross of Christ. What did he mean by this? Among the brethren in Philippi, there were those who said: "Let us not bring such suffering upon ourselves; let us not bear the cross."

What, then, is the meaning of the cross? In Matthew chapter 16, the Lord Jesus said that we must take up our own cross and follow Him. Years later, the Apostle Paul discovered a profound truth: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me." This was the deeper reality he uncovered—a revelation that transformed his entire life. Wherever Paul went, it was no longer his own self dwelling within him, but Christ; hence he declared, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me." This is precisely what he longed to see realized among the brothers and sisters in Philippi. Yet, some among them—whether brothers or sisters—objected: "We do not wish to live this way! Let us forget about this cross; do not subject us to such suffering. Let us instead look out for our own interests—let others honor us. We want to avoid suffering; we do not want to follow Christ." Consequently, Paul wept. He wept because some walked as enemies of the cross.

In another instance, Paul wept for the entire church in Ephesus. This occurred when the Gospel was first brought to Ephesus, as recorded in the twentieth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. Paul said: "For three years I did not cease night and day to admonish everyone of you with tears."

He did not shed these tears in a prayer room, but rather while he was visiting the brothers and sisters. Such was the Apostle Paul. Why did he weep? In Acts chapter 20, Paul told them: "I have not hesitated to declare to you anything that was profitable. I have declared to you the whole counsel of God."

It is not easy to speak out about everything that is beneficial to our brothers and sisters. For instance, when a brother approaches me to offer words for my own good, I sometimes feel quite resentful: "Who do you think you are? I intend to walk my own path."

An even more serious matter concerns God's complete will. For example, a brother might come to me and say, "Brother, you need to understand God's eternal purpose." I would reply, "I am already very busy. All I want is to have joy and peace in my heart; simply being saved is enough for me. I have my own things to attend to. I come to the meetings every Sunday, and I only want to know what is personally beneficial to me. So, Brother, please go elsewhere for now; come find me another time.

Why was Paul weeping? Because it is no easy task to urge people to pay heed to God's eternal purpose. The WCCC (West Coast Conference) has been emphasizing God's eternal purpose for over thirty years now, and we have all shared in this experience: at times, the brothers and sisters show little interest. They say, "I am already so busy—aren't there any other topics you could speak on? The Bible study groups at such-and-such university don't discuss these things; when we visit other places, they don't discuss them either. They ask: 'Why do you insist on speaking about this particular subject?'"

For three years, Paul—weeping day and night—proclaimed God’s eternal purpose and taught them those things that were beneficial for them. Yet, beyond these two points, Paul added, "Soon you will see my face no more. I warn you: fierce wolves will come in to carry you away captive; you must be on your guard. Furthermore—even from among your own ranks—men will rise up seeking to draw you after themselves; they do not want you to follow the Lord, so you must be vigilant. All these things will come to pass after I have departed." This, too, was the reason for the Apostle Paul’s tears; his heart was wholly devoted to God’s people, for he knew that God desired to make His people holy, to clothe them in glory, to enable them to shine, and to lead them to pursue the Lord.

He wept because he loved God’s people and God’s purpose.

This is why he was weeping. For he loved God’s people, and he loved God’s Will—just as he had declared: "For three years, I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God." He feared that external forces would seek to capture the hearts of the brothers and sisters; he also feared that, from among their own ranks, individuals would rise up to draw others after themselves, leading them away from following the Lord.

This was the reason for his tears. Praise the Lord! Four or five years later, while imprisoned in Rome, this brother penned a letter to the saints in Ephesus, revealing to them the nature of God’s eternal purpose: that at the fullness of the times, all things in heaven and on earth would be gathered together in unity in Christ—this is God’s eternal purpose. With His church in view, God intends to use His church to demonstrate His manifold wisdom to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms—this, too, is God’s eternal purpose.

Brothers and sisters, you and I bear a profound responsibility: when outsiders observe us, they should behold the manifold wisdom of God. In other words, both you and I ought to be an expression of God’s glory—a living testimony to His glory. The Apostle Paul’s expectations for God’s children were nothing less than this. When he shed tears, he was sowing seeds; and as those seeds grew—becoming filled with the Lord Jesus and ripening into sheaves—you and I became integral parts of that very harvest, becoming an expression: an expression of God’s glory, of God’s good pleasure, and of God’s wisdom.

Therefore, brothers and sisters, do not underestimate yourselves; Paul certainly did not view you that way. If we were all to say, "This is too difficult—far too difficult!" do you know what would happen? Paul would once again be moved to tears—weeping, in fact, both day and night. Such was the Apostle Paul.

John's Tears

Finally, there is the Apostle John; when did he shed tears?

In Revelation, Chapter 5. At the time, he was over ninety years old; having experienced a great deal, he was on the Isle of Patmos when the Lord appeared to him and subsequently, in the Spirit, caught him up into heaven. He beheld the throne of God, the elders, and the angels; in God's hand lay a scroll sealed with seven seals. An angel proclaimed that throughout the entire universe, there was no one worthy to take the scroll and break its seven seals. At that moment, John wept bitterly.

The Bible does not explicitly state why he wept so bitterly; however, shortly thereafter, one of the elders said to him: "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed; He is able to open the scroll and break its seven seals" (Rev. 5:5). Why did he weep so bitterly? If you and I were taken up to heaven to witness all of this, would we weep? I do not know.

Revelation 5 — John, over ninety years old, was caught up to heaven. He saw the scroll sealed with seven seals. No one was worthy to open it, and he **wept greatly**.

Why? Perhaps he thought: "If the scroll is not opened, how will we know God's future? How will we know God's victory? How will we know the New Jerusalem? How will we know the Lamb's triumph?"

I do not know if he was pondering these things, yet I believe he was. He had followed the Lord for over sixty years—spending three and a half years in His very presence—and subsequently served the Lord alongside the other apostles, ministering among God's people through the power of the Holy Spirit. He knew these things; he understood the profound importance of being able to foresee the future. He knew that the path ahead would be fraught with forces hostile to God, yet he also knew that God would triumph over them all. He must have wondered: "How can I play a part in this? How can I attain such peace? How am I to serve my God?" We cannot know precisely what thoughts occupied his mind, but there he stood, weeping bitterly.

Then the elder said, "Do not weep! The Lion of Judah has overcome."

John's heart carried the weight of God's glory.

The glory of the Lord shall become a weight within us.

Brother Congdon said: Glory is a weight in the heart.
If we have no weight, we likely have not seen God's glory.

Praise be to the Lord! John bore this burden in his heart; Paul bore this burden in his heart; and Peter, too, bore this burden in his heart. Peter failed time and again, and the path of the Cross was exceedingly arduous; yet he knew that those sufferings were ones he had to endure, for the glory of God was present therein. He knew that he must please God. Such was the resolve of Peter, the resolve of Paul, and the resolve of John as well.

John had it. Paul had it. Peter had it.

Our predecessors also sowed in tears. Brother Watchman Nee wrote the hymn "From Bethany." Our brother says: Since You parted ways with us at Bethany, a void has remained in my heart that nothing can fill; whenever I think of You, I long for You to return soon, and I call to mind the many saints throughout the ages who have awaited Your appearing. Lord, we are waiting here; we desire to see You.

Brother Lin in Alhambra would weep whenever it was sung. Brother Stephen Kaung, at age 100, wept as he exhorted the older saints to remain fresh in spirit. "Lord, so many saints, generation after generation, have been waiting for You; we, too, are waiting for You. If You are not among us, we are but emptiness. Lord, come!"

In 2014, during the Far East Ministry Conference in Taipei—at a time when he was one hundred years old—Brother Kaung spoke during the third session. He said: "When I woke up this morning, I felt that we older ones truly need the brothers and sisters to pray for us. We often pray for the young ones, but we really need the brothers and sisters to pray for the older ones. We cannot allow our spirit to become stale; we cannot slow down; we cannot cease to continue growing." As he spoke these words, he wept—for perhaps two or three minutes. I was serving as his interpreter at the time; he was one hundred years old, and I was seventy. I did not feel that his reference to "older brothers and sisters" was directed at me personally, yet I found myself unable to continue translating, for the burden within me had become so heavy. His heart was fully with the brothers and sisters; he still earnestly desired that the older ones among them would experience spiritual renewal. He remarked, "Why have I lived to such an advanced age? It is because I have been too slow to learn; God has granted me these remaining days so that I may continue to learn the lessons He intends for me." He wept, and we all wept with him.

Praise the Lord! Our tears draw us closer to Him. We do not shed tears for our own sake, but for the sake of the Lord's will; we weep for our brothers and sisters, and we shed tears out of gratitude to the Lord for granting us this path of the cross. Thus, our lives will never be devoid of meaning, nor will they ever be lived in vain.

Brothers and sisters, when we contemplate these matters—when we read the Scriptures—we realize that the Bible is not merely a collection of words and phrases; it is a book steeped in blood and tears. It is filled with the testimonies of so many who beheld God’s glory, resolved to follow the Lord, and willingly embraced the path of the cross. Praise the Lord! Not only did they follow Him, but they also became a true blessing to those around them. We give thanks to the Lord that, because these saints of the past sowed their seeds in tears, we today have become the sheaves of the harvest. May God inspire us, so that we, too, may be willing to sow in tears today—that one day we may become a blessing to others, enabling them, in turn, to become sheaves of the harvest. As Isaiah proclaimed: When the Redeemer comes to Zion, He will make Zion an everlasting splendor and a joy for all generations.

Their tears drew them close to the Lord. Their tears were for God’s will, for the saints, for the cross. Their lives were not wasted.

Prayer

Lord, we commit these words into Your hands. We cannot recount all You have done. We have pain, sorrow, mistakes, and failures — yet You do not despise us. You lift us to follow You. We sow in tears, hoping to reap with joy. Lord, thank You for Your expectation toward us. Bless my dear brothers and sisters, especially the young ones. Thank You, Lord. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

July 26, 2025