



SERMON  
SERIES



# A CALL TO WEEPING

— BENJAMIN KEACH —

A  
CALL TO WEEPING

OR A WARNING TOUCHING  
APPROACHING MISERIES

IN A SERMON PREACHED ON THE 20TH OF  
MARCH, 1699. AT THE FUNERAL OF MRS.  
ELIZABETH WESTEN, LATE WIFE OF MR. JOHN  
WESTEN, WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE ON THE  
17TH OF THE SAID MONTH, IN THE 38TH  
YEAR OF HER AGE.

BY BENJAMIN KEACH

PUBLISHED  
WATERLOO, WI  
CROWDEDSHIP PUBLICATIONS  
2024

# CROWDEDSHIP

Originally published in London. Printed for and Sold by John  
Marshal at the Bible in Grace-Church-street, 1699.

The team from [Project Puritas](#) (Logan West with David Jonescue  
and Alex Sarrouf) offered an edited draft obtained from the  
[University of Michigan Library](#). Aaron Sturgill, supplemented this  
draft using a digitized original copy from archive.org from [1699](#).

Copyright © 2024 Aaron Sturgill

This is licensed under Creative Commons CC BY-NC-ND. This  
license allows reusers to copy and distribute the material in any  
medium or format in unadapted form only, for noncommercial  
purposes only, and only so long as attribution is given to the creator.

Edited and formatted by Aaron Sturgill

Cover design: Crowdedship Designs

Published by Crowdedship Publications, [date].

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface .....	5
A Call to Weeping.....	6
A Dehortation.....	8
An Exhortation.....	16
Doctrine 1: No Real Cause to Weep .....	18
Doctrine 2: Cause for Weeping.....	28

## PREFACE

To his Honored (though sorrowful) Friend, Mr. John Westen.

Worthy Sir, I cannot but be deeply sensible, and much affected, and sympathize with you in your great loss; but the consideration of the happy end and triumphant death of your dear yokefellow may greatly moderate your sorrow. O with what raptures of joy was she filled! It may well be said of her, she went away singing; if anything may convince this Atheistical age of the truth or verity of revealed religion, one would think the beholding how some believers in Christ go out of the world, might do it. Sir, forbear mourning, she is not dead, but sleeps, and that in Jesus too; her better part could not die, because she truly believed in Jesus Christ; she has left you, but is gone to him, which to her is far better. I hope you and others will never forget that wholesome and Christian advice she gave, to love God, and to live to him who willingly became a sacrifice for our sins. I was much affected, when I heard what a text she had left to be opened at her funeral; but since it was your purpose and resolution to publish the sermon, it would have been well, had I had a little more time for my study, and preparation (for the Lord's Day intervening, I had indeed but a few hours) so that I hope you and others, who either heard the sermon or now shall read it, will overlook my weaknesses; some few things are here added, which were then omitted for want of time; and that a blessing from the God of truth may accompany it, and make it profitable to all that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity (who shall vouchsafe the pains to peruse it) shall be the prayers, sir,

Of your most affectionate Brother in Christ, and Unworthy Overseer,

Benj. Keach.

Horsly-Down, March 23d. 1699.

# A CALL TO WEEPING

Or a Warning Touching Approaching Miseries

Demonstrated in a sermon preached at the funeral of  
Mrs. Elizabeth Westen, late wife of Mr. John Westen.

LUKE 23:28

*Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your Children.*

Among the many motives to a holy and pious life, the sense of death and of eternity is one. Many live as if this world would never end; and as if the world to come would never begin; and though death makes so great a change, yet how little is it thought of by the generality of people.

Indeed, one of the greatest motives to holiness, is the mercy of God, and a lively sense of his infinite love in Jesus Christ. *I beseech you by the mercy of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service* (Rom 12:1).

God's wrath being over in Jesus Christ, our sins pardoned, and he fully reconciled, how should this move us to live to him, who died for us, and rose again. *Shall we sin that grace may abound? God forbid* (Rom 6:2). We being made free from sin (as the apostle shows) *should have our fruit unto holiness, and so our end will be Everlasting Life.*

One end, purpose, and design of God in that redemption we have by Jesus Christ, is, *that we should be to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved* (Eph 1:6). My brethren, as we were chosen in Christ to be holy, so to this end I say we were redeemed, *who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purchase to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works* (Tit 2:14). Moreover God is holy, and we are

called with an holy calling, therefore we should be holy. Likewise, another great motive hereunto, is those high privileges and precious promises made unto us in Jesus Christ; as the apostle shows (2 Cor 6:17-18). *Wherefore come out from among them, and be separate says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you. He says more, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Nay, he says, I will be a Father unto you, and you shall be my my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.* And in chapter 7:1, Paul says, *having these promises (dearly beloved) let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.* Many think the grand motive to holiness is our own happiness. They strive to lead a pious life that they may be saved, and it may be feared 'tis that they trust to and rely upon. Whereas the argument to true piety with true Christians, because they are saved, 'tis to glorify God. Our inherent holiness is not our title to eternal life, though it is that which tends to make us meet for it; yet notwithstanding, there are many other motives to stir us up to a most serious and pious life, and among them those taken from the consideration of death are none of the least. I have read that Philip king of Macedon commanded one of his pages to wake him every morning by crying at his chamber door, *sir remember you are a man.* He disdained not to be put in mind of his uncertain breath by his sorry page. We ought to consider the certainty of death, and yet the uncertainty of the time, everyone must say with Isaac, *I know not the day of my death.* Likewise, to consider, what the effects of death will be, to some it will be an hour of sorrow, though to others an hour of joy? Was it not a sad bill that was put up to me yesterday, of one that said, *he was so sick he could not live, and so sinful he dare not die:* to one the thoughts of death is cause of weeping, but to another a cause of rejoicing, which brings me to the words of my text.

*Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.*

These words were spoken by our Blessed Savior, when they were leading him to Golgotha to be crucified, and such was their cruelty, that they laid on him the ponderous cross, till (as it is thought) he fainting in the way, they compelled one Simon a Cyrenian to bear part of it, and so Matthew, Mark, and Luke may be reconciled with John, who says our Savior bore the cross.

Now the good women who loved him dearly, sorely wept to see what their blessed Lord had already suffered, and was further now likely to undergo by the rage of his bloody enemies; and this was the occasion of these words, *daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, &c.*

Daughters of Jerusalem, both of the literal and mystical Jerusalem: in my text are two parts: (1) A dehortation, *weep not for me.* (2) An exhortation, *but weep for yourselves, and for your children.*

A little by way of explanation.

## A DEHORTATION

In the negative part, or dehortation, something may seem difficult, for ought we not to weep and mourn in the serious thoughts of what our Lord Jesus endured and suffered for us? What not one tear for a bleeding Jesus!

I answer, it is certainly our duty to weep bitterly; as I shall show you by and by. Therefore, the words of our Lord are to be taken with restriction.

*First*, they ought not to weep inordinately, all inordinate passion for the sufferings of Christ (which possibly might rise in some of those women from natural love and affection) may be here forbid; was it not possible for some of those women to have a natural as well as a divine love to the Lord Christ; he was nearly related to some of them in the flesh, and shall such a friend, such a relation die unbewailed? No! No! He did not forbid them thus



to weep, but he would not have them exceed therein; for [not] doth not imply, not at all in many places of the Scripture, but is to be taken with restriction.

*Secondly*, they were not to weep without hope, touching the resurrection of our blessed Lord; weep not for me (as if he should say) for though I must die, yet I shall (as I have told you) on the third day rise from the dead; and you shall see me again; and I shall die no more.

*Thirdly*, they were forbid to weep without faith, and the certain knowledge of the grand end and design of his death, which it appears for some time they were (or at leastwise some of them) ignorant of; for when our Lord told his disciples that he should die, peter replied, *far be it from thee Lord*; and this also further appears by what he said to some of them, after he rose from the dead (Luke 24:25). *O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken, ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?*

*Fourthly*, they were not to weep, as if he could not have saved himself from death, or on a supposition, that they took away his life by force, or against his will; no, weep not (as if he should say) for no man taketh my life from me; for I freely laid it down of myself, I voluntarily surrender up myself to die: indeed, if his life was taken away against his will, or if he had not power to save himself from death, it might render him miserable; nay, and worse consequences would then follow also; therefore, let me add here a few arguments to prove he died voluntarily.

1. There was no more necessity lay in God to redeem mankind, then to redeem the fallen Angels? Nor is he anymore happy or glorious in himself hereby, though his glory greatly herein appears to his creatures which he hath made.

2. And as it was a mere sovereign act of grace in God the Father, so likewise it was a mere sovereign and voluntary act of free grace and love in God the Son, which moved him to become a Redeemer; for was there any necessity of nature that lay upon the Son of God to enter into that blessed covenant with the Father in eternity, upon our account? Was he forced so to do against his own will and inclination? No, no, he was at liberty, whether he would espouse our interest or not, it was a pure voluntary act rising from himself; God being one, he acts as one and the same God. Evident it is, that the work of redemption comported with the wisdom and sovereign love and goodness of the whole Trinity; I say, there was no necessity or force put upon Christ to assume our nature, and to die for us: true, perhaps there was a necessity for him thus to do, if we were ever redeemed, and also after he had voluntarily entered into that covenant with God the Father, or had struck hands with the Father; but his striking hands, I say, was a free and voluntary act of his own sovereign grace, and love to God's elect; (and wonderful love it was indeed in him to become our surety and Savior,) which will further appear, if we consider these few things following.

(1). He was not ignorant before he became our surety, that the whole payment of our vast debts would fall upon himself: alas! Others would never strike hands in suretyship, if they knew, or foresaw that they must pay the debt for the debtor; but the son of God well knew this, and yet freely undertook for us.

(2). He was not ignorant what he was to be made, even a little lower than the Angels, yea poor and contemptible for our sakes. *You know the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for our sakes become poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich* (2 Cor 8:9).

(3). He was not ignorant of that death, that cursed and ignominious death he was to die, and yet freely undertook the work of our redemption, he foresaw (being God) what a bloody agony he was to fall into, and how his Father (he standing in our law-place) would hide his face from him in the midst of his other sorrows.

(4). He was not ignorant of their great unworthiness (for whom he came to die and suffer such inconceivable miseries) who were naturally his enemies, and cursed rebels against him.

(5). Nor was he ignorant, how long some of those sinners for whom he died would resist him and refuse the offer of his love and favor; nay, would let him stand knocking and waiting at their doors, after he had done all in point of sacrifice, and payment of their debts.

(6). Neither was he ignorant of our unkindness, and abuse of his love and infinite favor; after we came to receive and accept of the offers of his grace and cleave to him; and yet for all this, he freely struck hands with the Father in that blessed covenant.

*Obj. But doth not our Lord say, that it behooved him thus to die, or that he ought to die? Was he not then constrained so to do, thus it is written, and that it behooved Christ to suffer, &c. (Luke 24:46).*

I *Answer*, this refers to Christ as clothed with our nature, and as one that had engaged himself to suffer in our stead; considered as mediator, he become God's servant, and it was then indeed necessary. See Charnock.

God (as one well observes) cannot be forced to do anything against his will, and if Christ had been thus compelled, there had indeed been cause for the good women to weep. Besides, also no man is, or can be forced against his will to become a surety, the obligation requires that the act be free and

voluntary, and that the person be at his own free disposal in that matter, as I might further show.

Obj. *But did not our Savior show some kind of unwillingness in his bloody agony? If it be possible, let this cup pass from me. —Father, save me from this hour* (John 12:27).

*Answer*, this struggling might rise from the human nature; though the human nature of Christ was innocent, yet it was weak; as one observes.

2. This may show, that our blessed Lord was really man as well as God, yea God-man in one person.

3. As God he knew what he was to suffer, but as man he made *supplication with strong cryings, and tears, and was heard in what he feared* (Heb 5:15). It was not, as our divines observe, from any unwillingness that was in him to die, but from the sense of that wrath which began to lie upon his soul, which we must have born forever, had he not born it for us, or in our stead: this therefore shows that what he felt and suffered was intolerable to human nature, unless supported by the infinite deity.

4. He saw the comfortable influences of God suspended, and felt the indignation of God due to us for our sins, breaking out upon his human soul and body; and also the law letting fly all its curses and fiery darts against him. God is the object of fear in his vindictive justice, his wrath is terrible, and from hence he might cry out and speak these words, that we may know the evil of sin, and the greatness of that wrath which he bore that was due to us; and also to deter all wicked men from their sins, and to make them sensible of that pain and anguish they are like forever to undergo, that so they may fly to Jesus; and that believers may prize and love their Savior with the greater affection.

5. It may be to show to us, that there was no other way to save our souls from hell, if it be possible let this cup pass from me: if it may comport with thy wisdom, justice and holiness, let me be spared; but he knowing this only was the way God had found out, cried, not my will, but thy will be done.

6. It might be to show, how we in most dismal afflictions should learn of him to submit unto the will of God.

7. May be it was not consistent (as worthy Charnock notes) with that reverence which Christ always shown to God, had he not been sensible; and also had not showed how sensible he was of the sharpness of that punishment which he must bear, as he was a constituted-sinner in our stead.

Furthermore, says this author (with others before him)

Though the person of our Savior was but one, yet he having two natures, had two wills, a divine, and a human will; otherwise he were not God and man: if he had not a human soul, he was not man; and if he had not a human will, he had not a human soul. As truly as he took our nature, so he took the laws of it, whereby it cannot effect pain, but shun whatsoever it apprehends is hurtful to it. — as wrath was an evil against human nature, Christ desired to decline it; but as it was an atonement for sin, and to appease God's wrath, and save his people through the worth of his sacrifice, so he desired to undergo it.

He willingly suffered, it appears,

1. By his entering so freely from all eternity into covenant with the Father for us.

2. By his cheerful coming into the world to do his Father's will, it was his meat and drink. *Lo I come to do thy will, o God* (Heb 10:5).

3. By declaring that his delight was with the sons of men (Prov 8:31) from everlasting.
4. By his own expressions concerning his laying down his life (John 10:17, 18). *Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it up again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself: I have power to lay it down and have power to take it up again.*
5. By his saying, to this end he came into the world.
6. By saying, how am I straitened until this work is accomplished (Luke 12:50).
7. How did he rebuke peter, when he said, Lord, far be it from thee.
8. By saying, *the cup which my Father gives me to drink, shall I not drink it* (John 18:11).
9. Also how freely did he surrender himself, whom do ye seek? Jesus of Nazareth; I am he. He was God, therefore could not be constrained; it had been injustice to punish an innocent person forced to become a surety.

The merits of his sufferings also depended upon the Father's acceptance, and the son's voluntary obedience, as all our reverend writers do accord. So that from the whole I infer, they were not to weep through the ignorance of this matter, as thinking his life was forced from him.

*Fifthly*, neither should they weep as if he was by death made miserable. Some in death are undone forever, viz. They die and are damned to an endless eternity: may be David's fear touching the state of Absalom, made him weep so bitterly for his death, who died in rebellion against his Father; but my brethren, although great wrath, and the horrid guilt of our sins lay on Christ, yet he was not utterly forsaken and deserted of his Father, because he fully satisfied his divine justice, and could plead in the midst of his anguish his

interest in God, *my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* He knew full well all his sorrows would be soon over, therefore could not be lamented as one miserable and forever cast off by the blessed God. *Death hereby was conquered, by death he destroyed death, and he that had the power of death, which is the devil, and delivered them who through the fear of death were all their lives time subject to bondage* (Heb 2:14).

*Sixthly*, it was his Father's will (as you have heard) that he should die, nay the result of that blessed counsel held in eternity, *him being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain*; therefore they were not to weep in opposition to, or, as being ignorant of the will and purpose of God, touching his death.

*Seventhly*, they were not to weep, as being ignorant of that great glory which his death would bring unto God, in respect unto all the glorious attributes, and *how mercy, truth and justice would hereby meet together, and righteousness and peace kiss each other* (Psal 85:10).

*Eighthly*, nor should they weep, as being ignorant of the necessity of his death, if ever we are redeemed; nor of that infinite good that would hereby redound to all God's elect.

*Ninthly*, they should not weep, because death would put an end to all his sorrows and miseries, whose whole life was a life of trouble, and therefore he was called *a man of sorrow, and acquainted with grief*. What shall he now be near to his happy deliverance out of this miserable world, so as never to know or feel pain and misery more, and shall his dearest friends weep?

*Tenthly* and lastly, they were not to weep, because by death he should be exalted, and enter into his glory. *For we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor*. He merited a crown of glory for himself, and for all his elect; *therefore, will I*

*divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured forth his soul unto death, and he was numbered with transgressors* (Isaiah 53:12).

## AN EXHORTATION

In the affirmative, *we may, nay ought to weep, and be affected and afflicted for what Christ suffered for us.*

*Firstly*, because our sins were one cause of his suffering; our sins slew him, and may be said to be the spear that pierced his tender heart.

*Secondly*, because of the bitterness of his sorrows and sufferings for us. Certainly it is so far lawful to weep upon this account, that it is a sin not to do it: and now that this is our duty, appears,

1. From the type, *the Passover was to be eaten with bitter herbs*; and what did that figure forth, but that we who receive Jesus Christ should feed by faith upon him in the bitter sense of our sins, that put him to so much pain and sorrow.

2. Because it is the effect of saving grace: such that receive the grace of God in truth are moved to mourn for him. *I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace, &c.* — what then? What effects will this have on their hearts? *They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourned for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born* (Zech 12:10).

3. Because of the great dignity of his person, he was God co-equal with the Father, his eternal son; *the brightness of the Fathers glory, and the express image of his person* (Heb 1:1-3). What not one tear to see such a



person hang on the tree, and lie bleeding on the cross? He that was the darling of heaven, the object of the Fathers most choice affections, and the delight of his soul: shall he be afflicted by heaven, earth, and hell, and we be not grieved? Shall Judas one of his own disciples betray him, peter deny him, and the Father forsake him, and we not mourn?

4. Consider, for whom he died, were they his friends, or such that loved him, were they deserving persons, were they such that were lovely, and might draw his affections by the excellency of their beauty; or such that could ever requite him, for such expressions of his love and favor; no, no, not friends but enemies, not well deserving but ill deserving, nay hell deserving creatures; not beautiful and nobly descended, but vile, loathsome, and filthy creatures, base born, and the offspring of an ignoble and cursed stock, and such that were never able to make him the least recompence.

5. Is not the Holy Supper ordained, partly to move our affections, and melt our souls into tears; hath he appointed an ordinance to represent his bloody passion, and set before our eyes, how his body was broken, and his blood poured forth; and would he not have us weep upon the sight and thoughts thereof? No surely, and would he have this often repeated, and yet not have our souls affected? Certainly, this cannot be his meaning: so much as to this.

But *thirdly*, whereas our Lord said, *weep not for me*, it may denote three things: (1) his fittedness or preparedness to die, (2) his willingness to die, and (3) his happiness in death.

And thus it was, I doubt not, in a measure, with our dear friend departed. She was prepared to die, she was willing to die, and was happy in her death,

and therefore could say weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.

From my text thus opened, I shall observe two points of doctrine. (1) There is no real cause to weep for such that are fitted and prepared to die. (2) That there may be cause to weep for ourselves, and for our children, who service.

## DOCTRINE 1: NO REAL CAUSE TO WEEP

A little briefly to each of these propositions. I shall in speaking to the first of them (1) prove it, and (2) apply it.

### Proof

*First*, now that there is no cause to mourn or weep for them that are fitted and prepared to die; (I mean upon their account) may appear and be fully demonstrated from the considerations of those great benefits such do receive at death. My brethren, most of that which a believer hopes for he receives not until then, 'tis not in this life, *no, if in this life only, we had hope in Christ, we were of all men most miserable* (1 Cor 15). *The wicked is driven away in his wickedness, but the righteous hath hope in his death* (Prov 14:32). The best of a believer's comfort begins when his life ends; *the day of their death is better then the day of ones birth* (Eccl 7:1). But woe to the wicked, death is that terrible gate that opens unto them a frightful, endless eternity, and strips them of all their rich treasure and honor. Woe (says Christ) *to you that are rich* (rich but ungodly) *you have received your consolation* (Luke 6:28). I have read of a queen of this realm, who said she preferred her coffin before her cradle, but every true believer may prefer a coffin before an earthly crown and kingdom.

A believer at death receives great benefit and immunities, history tells us of one, who after he had done most noble exploits in a religious way, *begged of*

*God that which would be most beneficial to him*, who going to bed slept his last; which caused his friends to say, death was most profitable. But, to descend to particulars.

1. A saint at death obtains his freedom, apprentices and bondmen long till their time is out; our time of bondage and servitude is not out till death comes, then we are out of our time in eternity, and made free forever.

2. A believer then is freed of the body of sin and death, it may be called a body, because of its weightiness; and a body of death, because of its loathsomeness, it is the relics of the worst of filthiness. *O wretched man that I am* (says Paul) *who shall deliver me from this body of sin and death* (Rom 7:24).

3. It is a base makebate, that sets a man against himself, others set one neighbor against another, and that is a horrid thing; but this makebate sets a man at variance against himself, it puts all out of order, and into confusion in a man's own soul; so that his peace is continually interrupted.

(2). It is like a cursed inmate, that continually disturbs us, but we cannot warn him out, he is never dispossessed until death comes.

(3). Or like evil-seed, or a cursed weed so rooted in our garden, that we cannot pluck it up though it spoils the good seed and hinders the growth of all those precious flowers planted therein.

(4). Or it is like a filthy ulcer that mars our beauty.

(5). Or like a cursed law which destroys our liberty, and holds us in bondage, or carries us into captivity, being furiously executed by the prince of darkness, and that remaining strength which he hath still in our hearts.

(6). Or it is like an evil disease that enfeebles, and debilitates all the members, and powers of the new man; so that a believer may say with David (hereby) *I am become weak this day, though anointed king* (2 Sam 3:39). These sons of Zeruah are too often too hard for us; *the good I would, I do not, but the evil I would not that do I*. Now brethren we are not, cannot be freed from this body of sin until death comes, and then we are forever delivered from it, we put off our body of flesh, and body of sin, both together.

*Secondly*, because at death a believer is freed from all his fears. True, he is delivered from slavish-fear whilst he lives; Christ hath freed all that believe on him from the servile-tormenting fear of death, which blessing they possess according to the degree, or measure, and exercise of faith; but notwithstanding this, yet they are not delivered from all sorts of disquieting fear until they die.

1. Their own sins makes them fear, lest God should withdraw, or hide his face from them.

2. They fear the consequences or effects of the sins of professors, and of the horrid sins of a wicked world: *I am afraid of thy judgments, says david, and again says he, at what time I am afraid I will trust in thee*. The dismal dispensation of God's providences makes the best of men to fear; nay, and this fear may soon, to purpose, distress the living, *men's hearts shall fail for fear, and for looking after those things which shall come to pass* (Luke 21:26).

O says a child of God, what will become of the Gospel? What will become of the churches? What will become of our liberties? Of our estates, of our children, if God should leave us? How shall I stand at the overflowing of Jordan? How shall I escape all those things, that shall come to pass and stand

before the Son of Man? Do you not see a cloud arising as big as a mans hand, which makes you afraid.

3. Because a believer at death is freed from all his troubles and incumbrances to which whilst in this world he is subjected, life and sorrow (while we are here) are married together, and death only breaks those bonds, *man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upwards* (Job 5:7).

4. At death a believer is freed from the tyranny, and oppression of the ungodly; *there the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest* (Job 3:17). *There the prisoners rest together, they hear not the voice of the oppressor,* verse 18. What can we look for or expect in this world but tribulation, that lion that now seems to be chained, may soon be loosed again; we cannot say, yet trouble shall not rise up the second time, for until Satan is bound, the godly must look for little quiet.

5. A believer at death is freed from all his care; the mind of a Christian is full of perplexing thoughts while he remains here, there is a care though it is not sinful, yet it is afflictive; many a believer is made to eat the bread of carefulness, as well as to drink the water of affliction.

6. At death a believer is freed from all clouds, that oftentimes while here interpose betwixt his soul and Jesus Christ; he loses too often the sight of the *Sun of Righteousness*, though it is so pleasant for his eyes to behold him; *the children of the day, and of the light, may walk in darkness, and have but little, nay no light of comfort at all* (Isa 50:10).

7. He is then freed also from all his labor, all things here are full of labor (Eccl 1:8). Man is to eat his bread with the sweat of his brows; there is the labor of the hands, and the labor of the heart, the mind of man is full of laboring cogitations to attain that which he pursues, *Paul labored more abundantly then them all* (1 Cor 15:10). The work of a Christian is laborious,

but their labor is not in vain in the Lord (1 Cor 15:58). Ministers are called laborers, *wherefore we labor and suffer reproach, know them that labor among you* (1 Thes 5:12). All that fear God find their hands full of labor, this is our working-time, but at death we go to bed, *blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth yea, says the spirit, that they may rest from their labor; and their works do follow them* (Rev 14:13).

*Thirdly*, we ought not inordinately to weep for such that are fitted and prepared to die; because death is gain unto them, they gain, says one, a writ of ease from all trouble; I, but that is not all. For,

1. They gain a perfect state, perfection is not to be attained to in this life, but the souls of believers are made perfect at death, not before, nor after death, but in dying; our breath, and the pollution of our souls depart together, we read of *the spirits of just men made perfect* (Heb 12:23). They are made perfect in holiness, here we are delivered from the guilt, power, and punishment of sin; but at death from the being of sin, though we are sanctified in every part while we live, yet it is but in part, but at death perfectly: death therefore does more for believers, then all ordinances do, or can do for them; they do not only obtain perfect peace, or enter into peace, but obtain also glorious purity; not one vain thought more shall their souls be molested with, nor any temptation of Satan. *He that is dead, ceases from sin*; death is the passage into the true Canaan, that flows with milk and honey, with innocence, and happiness forever; there is nothing which can disturb the peace, or corrupt the purity of the blessed that die in the Lord: all the faculties of the soul are raised to the highest degrees of natural and divine perfection now they are only renewed, but at death elevated to the highest pitch; the understanding clear, the memory firm, the will, and affections ardent and vigorous.

2. They gain more clear and glorious sights of God in Jesus Christ, they are near the throne and are in his glorious presence; *where there is fullness of joy, and inconceivable pleasures for evermore*, how refreshing is the sight of Christ by faith, *if now though we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory*. What will the fruition and clear vision be? Those blessed spirits above behold the glorified body of Jesus Christ, *while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord* (2 Cor 5:6).

3. They gain more peace undisturbed peace; we have peace with war here, but their warfare is accomplished; we have peace in Christ but they have peace with Christ. A woman whose husband is a thousand leagues from her, yet hearing of him, and receiving kind tokens of his love hath much peace and satisfaction, but what is that to her enjoying his presence and company?

4. They at death gain a better place, they go from the valley of tears, to the mount of joy; from a place of dragons, nay of devils to a place where no devil is, nor diabolical emissaries. It was a strange saying of a pretty child, about six years of age, to his mother not long since, and not far off of this place, *Mother, I would not live here, but go to a place where there is no Devil*. Indeed this world is full of devils who *go about like roaring lions seeking whom they may devour*. But there is no devil above!

They leave a poor cottage to dwell in a noble palace. *For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not with hands, eternal in the heavens* (2 Cor 5:1).

5. They gain better company; true, they had the society of the saints here; ay, but they are such saints that often grieved them, frail, and imperfect saints too inconstant in their love and wavering in their affections, divided saints, some of them too subject to reproach and revile each other, saints that have their spots, and many blemishes; but they go to glorified saints, who are all

of one heart, and not only one in affection, but in judgment also; which agree and harmoniously sing eternal hosanna's to God and the Lamb.

6. They gain perfect victory, dignity and honor, white robes and celestial crowns are given unto them (Rev 6:9). *I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God—and white robes were given to everyone of them, &c. —they cast their crowns at Jesus feet (Rev 4:10). Or before the throne.*

7. They hunger no more, and thirst no more, all tears are wiped from their faces, they sin no more, suffer no more, and die no more, their gain and blessedness exceeds all our thoughts, and explicit desires; what short of the eloquence and experience of an Angel can set forth what they gain and possess above? Besides that which crowns all, is that the life above is eternal; as they have full communion with Christ and enjoy the fountain of life, and swim in rivers of pleasures, so what can interrupt or put an end to their happiness which is everlasting or eternal. Thus from the whole we may say, *weep not for them*; there is no cause, these things being considered, but a little by way of improvement.

### **The Application**

1. We infer, that there is a vast difference between the state of saints on earth and the saints in heaven; the best of men and women here have bitter as well as sweet sorrow as well as joy, and sin as well as grace, they have their butts, their imperfections, we have not put off our armor; but though it be thus, yet must not the virtues of saints be mentioned? Do they deserve no praise? Because in some things they may not be praise-worthy, the scripture records the sins and miscarriages of gracious persons as Noah, Lot, Jacob, Moses, David, Peter, and many others also, but doth it not record their virtues, or what was praise-worthy in them? A saint carries all to heaven with him, that was his riches he carries his gold thither, and leaves all his dross behind him.



Our dear friend departed, I am sure excelled many (though all have their butts, their weaknesses, their infirmities) *yet her works praise her in the gate*. What zeal for God did she show, and what love to his people? And how did she long to see her relations, and all those she dearly loved to be in Christ. O the prayers she put up for them, and the pains she took with them, and the good counsel she gave them, and o what a blessed end did she make? The *end crowns all*, with what joy was she filled? She even broke forth into raptures of joy; she would have none to pray for her life; I am certain, our honored brother hath lost a dear and helpful yokefellow, and her near relations and kindred, a good friend; and this congregation a good member, yet mind the text she left, *weep not for me, &c.* No, no, there is no cause in respect of her, *death is gain* to her, *she had hope in her death* and let her *be had in everlasting remembrance*, but it is loss to them she has left behind.

2. I infer, that none are so happy as believers, neither are they so happy whilst they live, as they are when they die.

3. Moreover, I infer, there is a vast difference between the death of the godly, and the wicked; the one are great gainers, the other are great losers. The wicked at death are great losers.

(1). *They lose the world*, which they valued above Jesus Christ, they lose their God, and what had they more? The world is their God, they lose their treasure, their gold and silver, which was their hope, and die not worth one groate, they carry none of their riches out of the world with them (1 Tim 6:7). They lose their pleasures, and all their honor, and are brought to shame and everlasting contempt. Saladine a Turkish emperor, commanded after his glorious victories, that a white sheet should be carried before him to his grave, upon the point of a spear, with this proclamation, *these are the spoils that saladine carrieth away with him of*

*all his triumphs, and victories, of all the riches and realms that he had, now nothing is left but this sheet.*

(2). *They lose their hope*; wicked men are full of hope, of a better life, but at death all their hope perishes, their hope of long life, their hope of heaven is then cut off (Job 3:14). *Whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be as the spiders web.*

(3). *They lose their souls*, and nothing can repair that loss, *what doth it profit a man, if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul* (Mat 16:26). No loss like this loss, many bewail the body forsaken of the soul; but O how should he be bewailed, that is forever forsaken by the blessed God: O there is ground to weep indeed for the ungodly, who at death lose their souls.

(4). *They at death lose heaven*; I mean, they then see that they have lost God, lost Christ, and have lost heaven, and that too for the love to a cursed world, and through love to their base and filthy lusts, they depart from him as being cursed and undone creatures forever more; and are cast into hell, in that hour their breath departs out of their bodies, their souls are in torment; as it is said of the rich man's soul. The rich man died, and what's next, *in hell he lifted up his eyes being in torment* (Luk 16:23).

4. We infer, that there is no reason for any true Christian to be unwilling to die. Are any unwilling to accept of the highest preferment [advancement]? Is a young prince troubled that his coronation-day is come, or an heir that he is arrived to full age, to inherit his estate? Does a virgin grieve that her wedding-day is come, when she is to be married to a great noble, whose goodness, honor and beauty is admirable? Or is a man who is wearied with hard labor, troubled to think he is going to rest? At death a believer's chief

preferment is come, his coronation-day is come, his marriage-day is come, and his weary body then goes to bed, and his soul to eternal rest. Brethren, the righteousness of Christ is our title to heaven, viz. His active, perfect, obedience to the law of God, but death gives us the immediate possession thereof.

5. We may therefore from hence also infer, what great folly they are guilty of that seek not this only title to heaven, by laying hold of Jesus Christ by the faith of the operation of God, or through the Spirit do not seek a vital mystical union with the Lord Jesus. Many think that their faith, their repentance, their obedience, or their inherent righteousness is their title to heaven. O take heed, be not deceived by the errors of these times if you have no other title to heaven, but what is wrought in you, or done by you; you will certainly at death drop into hell. Faith, &c. May evidence the goodness of your state, but you cannot plead your faith, nor your holiness and sincere obedience as that which gives you a right and title to eternal life. It is only Christ's obedience, and yet without faith no man is actually possessed of this title, *Christ in you the hope of glory* (Col 1:27). *He that believeth not shall be damned* (Mark 16:16).

Here is comfort to dear pious relations, who mourn for the deceased. Your wife *is taken away from the evil to come*, and which evil may soon come; your friend is gone to Christ and when Christ comes she and all that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. *When Christ who is our life shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory* (Col 3:4). Therefore, weep not for her, *weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children*.

This brings me to the second proposition.

## DOCTRINE 2: CAUSE FOR WEeping

*That there may be cause to weep for ourselves and for our children that survive.*

This also I shall endeavor (1) to prove and demonstrate, and (2) apply it.

### **Proof**

First, there may be cause to weep in respect of internal evils that we groan under. Secondly, in respect of external evils which we feel and have cause to fear.

*Firstly*, weep for yourselves (as if our Lord should say) for you are left to combat still with your spiritual enemies, viz. The flesh, the world, and the devil: you have not yet put off your armor, you are still and shall be afflicted with *the body of sin and death, we groan being burdened* (2 Cor 2:5, 4). We have peace but not without trouble, we have light but not without darkness, joy but not without sorrow, honor but not without reproach, and dishonor; we have faith but not without doubts, especially it is thus with some of us; we have grace but not without sins. We meet with sore trials and temptations from Satan and sometimes may be under the hidings of God's face and the withdrawing, of Jesus Christ, and be tossed as with a tempest and not comforted.

*Secondly*, we may have cause to weep for ourselves and for our children, in respect of external evils which we feel, and may fear.

1. *From those losses*, and sad disappointments which we do, and may meet with all; we perhaps, *have sown much and bring in little, we eat and yet may ye have not enough* (Hag 1:6). *Clothed but not warm, earn wages, but put into a bag with holes*; God has strangely blasted men in their trades callings and expectations. O says one, if the times hold thus what shall I do for bread for my family? And says another, what shall I do to get money to pay my debts?

Distress of nations, Sirs, are come and a coming, and this may be because for such to weep that do survive.

2. *We may have cause to weep, from those pains, diseases, and sad distempers, which afflict our bodies; many may and do groan upon this account.*

3. *And also upon the consideration of their children, who go on in the broad-way, taking wicked courses, and seem to be wholly under the ruling power of the God of this world, O says the poor Father and the poor and sorrowful mother, this and that child I think will anon break my heart, they are stubborn, and rebellious, hardened, I fear in sin, and regard not my cries, nor my prayers and good counsel. I know not what will become of their bodies, but O what will become of their precious souls, O their souls! their souls!*

4. *The enormities and great evils of professors is cause enough to make us weep and all that love Jesus Christ, we may wish with Jeremiah, Oh that my head were water and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night, why what is the matter, they are an assembly of treacherous-men, they bend their tongues like their bow for lies, but are not valiant for the truth upon the earth, they proceed from evil to evil &c. Take heed everyone of his neighbor and trust not in a brother (Jer 9:1, 2:3, 4). If ever any day looked like the day the prophet saw, I think it is this, we may say with Paul, many walk of whom I have told you often and now tell you even weeping, they are enemies of the cross of Christ (Phil 3:18). How is religion exposed, and God's name dishonored, few have a heart to do for God, and some that God stirs up with some degree of zeal, are but defamed, and vilified for so doing, especially if things prosper not according to expectation.*

5. *Have we not cause to weep for the horrid and crying evils and abominations of this wicked generation; certainly, no times exceeded these upon this account, I beheld transgressions and was grieved, says David (Psal 119:158). Again, he*

says, *rivers of water run down mine eyes because men keep not thy law* (Psal 119:136).

6. And more directly to the purport and design of our Blessed Lord in my text, we ought to mourn for ourselves and for our children in regard of those sore and bitter calamities that are approaching. Our Lord, no doubt, on this occasion gave these women a hint of those lamentable and dismal distresses that were coming upon Jerusalem, and on the whole nation of the Jews, and upon the Church of God; mind the words following, *for behold* (says he) *the days are coming in which they shall say, blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the breasts which never gave suck, then shall they begin to say to the mountains, fall on us, and to the hills cover us* (Luke 23:29, 30). *For if they have done all these things to the green tree what will they do to the dry*, ver. 31. Blessed are they (as if our Lord had said) that have no children: no sons to be exposed to war, blood and slaughter; no daughter to be ravished, and then fearfully mangled, and cut, and torn into pieces, which fell out upon many of them and their children: well and what of this (perhaps some may say) what is this to us? Why brethren, see now we are in peace, blessed be God, under a good king whom God in mercy preserve, we have the gospel, we have ordinances, and liberty, and set under our own vines, and fig-trees, and none at the present make us afraid, but alas, alas! What evils are near we know not; may be God set this text of Scripture upon the heart of our dear friend deceased for me to open, as God might help me, at her funeral, to warn us; and as for my part I fear that a dismal day is coming (of which I have often hinted to some of you) when perhaps (as one some years ago hath written) such that *now walk the streets in state shall run the streets in distraction* the crown I fear is near falling *from our heads, and we may say, woe to us, we have sinned* (Lam 5:16). We may ere long, cry, *Ichibod, the glory is departed, or where is the glory?* (1 Sam 4:21). We have many sad signs upon us as

Jerusalem had, though perhaps many see them not, nor will believe what I speak of, I wish it be not the removing the gospel—is it entailed on us and on our children? No, no, the seven churches in Asia lost it, their candlesticks are long ago removed, France and the Palatinate once had it, but have now near lost it, O what a woeful condition are the witnesses of Christ or saints of God in there, and look to it O England, is not your day near? *Are the witnesses yet slain? If not, what is approaching?* How have our prophets been mistaken? They have found no vision (Lam 2:9). Or as the Spirit says, *they have seen vain and foolish things, they have not discovered your iniquities, but have seen for you false burdens*, ver. 14. Who is able to tell us, when will be the end of the wonders what a confederation is there at this time amongst the popish princes, how low is the Protestant interest a broad? And how weak and divided at home? That year, that some have often talked of, as the beginning of our joys, may prove the beginning of our greater sorrows Sirs I am no prophet, nor son of a prophet, but, *shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people be not afraid?* (Amos 3:6). *The lion hath roared, who will not fear? The Lord hath spoken? Who can but prophesy*, ver. 8. The symptoms and signs we have upon us, are as when a lion roars when near his prey, God seems to be angry, and will rise up and terribly, shake both heaven and earth, if it prove Babylon's ruin (for there it may issue) yet, *who shall live when God does this?* Satan is come down in a great rage because his time is short, let me here add some of those things which I fear are sad presages of approaching miseries and cause of weeping for ourselves and for our children.

(1). What a time of spiritual plenty we have had! How has England, especially London been exalted to heaven in respect of means, but hath this plenty been prized, and this great means improved? Have we served the Lord with joy of heart, in the abundance of all things. Alas no! Most

professors have rather served themselves in a pursuit of the world and their own worldly interest. It seems as if there has been *a price put into the hands of fools that have had no heart to it* (Prov 17:16). Therefore God may cause us *to serve our enemies with hunger, and nakedness, and in the want of all things*. I fear a famine is a coming, a famine, but not of bread. *Behold the days come, says the Lord, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor of thirst of water, but of hearing the word of the Lord* (Amos 8:11). The removal of the Gospel is the greatest judgment; the greatest sign of God's anger was when the glory went from the cherubim (Ezek 9:2). The Gospel is the greatest mercy a people can enjoy, therefore the taking it away must be the worst of punishments: when that goes, God goes, Christ goes, and then popery, the devil, and all evil comes, *Woe to them when I depart*. How little is it prized? Sound doctrine is cast under contempt, and many are most pleased with airy speculations, and uncouth notions. People rather hear to feed their ears and curiosities, than for edification and profit to their souls; the heavenly manna is esteemed but light bread; few will hear but at times, when they have nothing else to do, and when they hear the Word, they will not do it.

(2). What sad divisions, strife and contentions are amongst us, and what contempt is cast upon the authority of true churches; nay, and what tearing of churches to pieces, under the pretense of zeal for God, when pride, ignorance and self-conceitedness is the cause of all. When the sheep fight and quarrel one with another, the shepherd foretells a storm is near: was there ever a more dismal presage on this account upon a people than is amongst us? Yea, and it appears to be universal, i.e. amongst, people of all persuasions. How do some professors expose



others and load them with reproaches and infamy. *Report say they, and we will report*; 'tis the voice of their practices, if not of their tongues.

(3). How many faithful ministers are taken away, (when a king calls home his ambassadors, tis a sign he intends war): and how are they that are left behind slighted! What arrows are let fly daily against them and what little care taken of them, or of some who sometimes were greatly esteemed! Some are looked upon as enemies for telling them the truth, and how are some truths and ordinances decried for errors, nay as bad as popery that lie plain in God's Word. Nay, and if you will vindicate; and practice them, look to it, you shall be under their new persecution, your consciences imposed on, or your persons vilified, and this not in a corner but publicly. O sirs, what can we look for!

(4). How loose and carnal, earthly and worldly, the generality of professors become? What difference do you see between professors and the profane in many respects? Do but observe them in their tradings, converse, and conversations, how like vain wantons do the daughters of Zion go. O the horrid pride shown in their garbs and dresses and will not be reformed! Where is that holy, heavenly and humble walker with God. Do not many rest upon a mere profession, without the life and power of religion? Are there not now many foolish virgins, nay are they not half of them such, who have lamps and no oil? What then? Why look for the midnight cry, 'tis at the door.

(5). Is not the horrid profaneness of these times a just ground to fear, that a shower of wrath and divine vengeance is a coming? Was there worse wickedness found in Sodom than is now in London, nay is not sodomy and what not found in this city? Be astonished, O ye heavens! what is London a city of such light, a place of vision, become the shame

and derision of nations. Have not our fruits been grapes of Sodom, and our clusters of Gomorrah, sure the harvest is near ripe for cutting down.

(6). Is not atheism, horrid errors, and detestable heresies (which never certainly so much abounded) a grand cause to fear a dismal hour is near? What old abominable error and heresy is not broached among us daily.

(7). Is not the contempt of all revealed religion and the treading Christ underfoot a sad symptom of approaching judgments. Instead of being Christianized are we not in danger of being paganized, while natural religion is cried up as sufficient to save men's souls. Men will not believe things which their natural depraved human reason, cannot comprehend though the gospel is full of mysteries, yet some are so bold to affirm there is nothing mysterious in it: but is it not a mystery to believe three to be one, and one to be three; to believe the Father not older than the Son, and the Son to be equal with the Father; to believe in one nature there are three persons, and in one person two natures; to believe the ancient of days to become a babe of a day old, to believe a virgin to have been a mother, and her son to be her Creator, to believe a man is freely forgiven and pardoned; and yet all his debts were fully paid; to believe we are just and without sin, and yet sinners; and that we are justified and righteous by another righteousness. I say some, these are your fancies and idle dreams; why so? Because they by their human reason cannot comprehend them. And thus to these Gentiles, the preaching of the gospel is accounted foolishness as it was of old to the learned Greeks (1 Cor 1:18, 23). How boldly do some deny the Deity of the blessed Jesus? what cursed books daily come forth.

8. Is not the great neglect of a further prosecution of the laws or not providing better to suppress profaneness, a sad sign of God's displeasure?

Are we not more zealous for our own concerns, then for the concerns of God and Jesus Christ?

9. Is not the barrenness of the Church, and Gods withdrawing, or withholding that success from the Word, which is used to have a fearful symptom he is going away, and our day is near gone? Are not the shadows of the evening large upon us, the shadow being more and longer than the substance.

10. and Lastly, Let us look about; are there not other signs also upon us of God's threatened wrath? From the whole, is there not cause for us to *weep for ourselves and for our children?*

### **Application**

1. Let us bewail the great apostasy of these times. Do we thus requite the Almighty for all his choice favors, and infinite love, and goodness? What could he do more for us, and what could we do more against him? And,

2. O let us all cry to God, take hold of God, and humble ourselves: and blessed be his name, who put it into the heart of the king and counsel to put us upon this work! What need have we to smite upon our breasts, and cry out what have we done, and to keep many days of humiliation?

3. But how doth this reprove such, whose brow of brass will not suffer them to confess their sins to God ; and is it not as bad in such whose principles do not lead them forth so to do ?

4. Let us all strive to believe in Jesus, and improve the Gospel; nay, and to live the Gospel while we have it.

5. And let us look for that hour of temptation that is coming upon all that dwells upon the earth, and be ready to meet the Lord in the way of his

judgements (who says) *thus will I do unto thee, o Israel, and because I will do thus unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.*

6. Moreover, let us all be prepared to die, death will come and we ought to be ready for it continually; and such who are, need fear no evil, *say to the righteous, it shall go well with you.*

7. Lastly, let us bear poor England upon our hearts, and pray for the king and Parliament, that God would give them wisdom and zeal for his cause and interest; and let us cry for London, and for God's Zion; yea, and for ourselves and children; but let us be moderate in weeping for such who are in heaven, or that are fitted to die; and thus I shall end as I begun; *weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.*

F I N I S