

A Reason to Cry

“Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations...” (Acts 20:19a).

I remember fondly when my wife and I were blessed to have our daughter, Glenda, and our two grandchildren, Rory and Anthony, visit with us—observing those two grandchildren was one of the joys of life. Rory, at that time, was about three years old, and she was a chatterbox and a little bundle of mischievousness—she rarely, like a whirlwind, left an area like she found it. Anthony, having just turned one and had only recently just found his legs, would amble about his world in staggering steps, all the while chanting some strange song in an unknown tongue.

Crying was no stranger to either of those small wonders; however, there was a noticeable difference in the usage of their crying. Anthony, like most all babies, cried to communicate almost every discomfort he experienced—diaper problems, hunger, sleepy, bruised knees from falling, or just on principle alone, seldom was his crying due to emotional inspiration. It is more of an alert siren concerning some ongoing physical condition. Rory, on the other hand, had developed a more refined crying. She cried more often from an emotional situation rather than a physical one. Rory was able to communicate her feelings and wants with words. If she was hungry, she announced it verbally to her mom. Her crying, more often than not, was usually due to hurt feelings, disappointment due to not having her way, or not wanting to go to bed.

It appears, therefore, that the older we become, the more refined our crying becomes, but if we are honest, we realize that we never truly outgrow the need to cry.

We are born to cry. Literally, our first action outside the womb is crying, a response to feeling wet, cold, hungry, starved of oxygen, etc. Crying is something unique to humans, the only species that has a link between the tear-producing gland and the area of the brain that processes emotion.

As a newborn, the sound of our screams and the tears on our faces reassured the nurses, doctors, and family that we were healthy babies, and our audience responded with expressions of delight (perhaps even with tears themselves) and eagerly reached out to us, positively reinforcing our action.

From this early age of approximately one minute, we begin to realize the efficacy of our crying. People rapidly respond to and alleviate any physical and emotional discomfort that we're experiencing, offering us blankets, a nipple to suckle, and the security of our mother's nurturing arms. It is not until we develop the capacity for speech that crying ceases to be our primary means of communication.

Though the motive for tears has changed for us as adults, it may be useful to continue to think of crying as a form of communication that's employed when verbal communication proves inadequate. Children, like many adults, lack the capacity to understand and express their emotions coherently, and so they use crying to articulate their general state of distress.

Unlike most children, adults usually desire to cry in private. In this case, crying is not manipulative, for there is no bystander to be influenced, and the only overt purpose is to bring about some internal relief. It is this internal relief or catharsis that serves as positive reinforcement for private crying. Crying allows people to turn abstract emotion into something tangible, which is often more manageable and controllable.

It seems God designed this “liquid voice of tears” to be a part of our lives, both male and female. We all know the cliches surrounding the subject of crying, such as “Big boys don’t cry,” which, in truth, is simply not so. While “no one likes a crybaby” (another obvious fallacy), we are made to understand that crying still has a unique and special place in our lives by divine design.

Reading the Bible from Genesis all the way to [Rev. 21:4](#) where it states: “He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away,” we see a trail of tears.

The Bible (Strong's Concordance) provides 697 references for verses associated with crying (weep, cry, tears). One of the first Bible references for tears is in the book of Genesis when Abraham wept over the death of Sarah. Hannah wept before the Lord in her barren state. Esau wept over his father, Isaac, asking for a blessing. King David writes prolifically in the Psalms of his tears before the Lord, even saying they were his portion day and night.

As far as “Big boys don’t cry,” I humbly submit that Jesus Christ was indeed a Big Boy Who cried. The tears of Jesus take place as He travels to Jerusalem, just after the triumphal entry is described. "And when he came into view of the city, as he approached it, he broke into loud weeping, exclaiming; 'Oh that at this time you knew, yes, even you, on what your peace depends! The time will come for you when your enemies will throw ramparts around you, and encompass you, and shut you in on every side, and raze you to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another.'" -[Luke 19:41-44](#). The Greek word used for weeping in this verse is *klaioo*, meaning to weep audibly, to burst into tears. Consider, “He, in the days of his flesh, having offered up prayers and petitions with **strong crying and tears** to him who was able to save him from death, and having been heard for his godly fear.”

Also, the Apostle Paul stated at various times his association with tears. “Serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears, and with trials which happened to me by the plots of the Jews;” and “Therefore watch, remembering that for a period of three years I didn't cease to admonish everyone night and day with tears” and “For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears, not that you should be made sorry, but that you might know the love that I have so abundantly for you,” and many other suchlike verses.

God, the Divine Architect, seems to have gifted man with a language that helps us speak those things when normal vocabulary proves inadequate—a liquid voice of the soul. Prayer, at appropriate times, finds this voice, as does our worship. Our burdens are best communicated sometimes in that voice as when “He that goeth forth weeping bearing precious seed shall doubtless come again rejoicing bringing his sheaves *with him.*”

The vigil over the coffin of a loved one utilizes that voice to compact a score of years of fellowship into trickling drops that cascade down the face— “Weeping may endure for the night...” The giving of a daughter’s hand to her love tells her in that voice how loved she is from the time of her birth through all the years and a promise to continue that love as she leaves the home of her mother and father.

It was the Psalmist that asked, “Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: *are they* not in thy book?” Telling us that God truly does keep the records—liquid records. This reveals to us that God not only sees our tears but that He understands them, counting them as another version of man-to-God communication.

“Weeping may endure for the night, but joy cometh in the morning.” Yes, indeed, there is a reason to cry.

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