

## Luke 13:1-9, 31-35 For whom should we weep?

At the conclusion of chapter 13, Jesus thinks about the city of Jerusalem and laments. His deep sadness in this moment is over the city itself, but I can't help but think of all the reasons he would be weeping in this moment.

1. For himself and the pain he is going to endure. He knows that his mission is leading him to the Cross. A gruesome, horrific death is waiting for him. His mission would not waver, and the empire and institutional religion of his day could not allow him to live.

2. For himself and the rejection he faced. Jesus offered himself to the world, and he was rejected. He offered good news. He offered bread for the hungry and healing for the sick, and yet people were unwilling to transform their lives for him. It is painful to be vulnerable and be rejected.

3. For his followers who would surely suffer in his absence. He knew his friends would suffer because of him. First, they would be devastated to see him murdered by Rome. Second, they would be pursued themselves for continuing to proclaim his good news.

There are many reasons why Jesus would weep, and as his followers we must consider them all. I believe though, that the beginning of the passage reveals another surprising reason Jesus would weep. He is weeping for the fig tree that does not bear fruit.

This passage begins with Jesus challenging conventional wisdom about suffering. He states clearly that not all things happen for a reason. Jesus disagrees with those who may have thought those who died at Pilate's hand or those who died in the tower collapse were being punished by God. Instead, he uses these events to build a sense of urgency. Death happens, and sometimes it is not a sign of God's punishment, so live your life now in God's path now.

Then he tells of the fig tree which is not producing fruit. Instead of cutting it down to make



Jerusalem with the Dome of the Rock

room for more productive fruit, it is given grace. It is given special treatment, more care, and more patience.

Conventional wisdom would see the extra fertilizer and extra care that the tree received as special treatment as a reward for being such a productive tree. Instead, the special treatment was a sign of coming judgment. The fruitless tree did not get the axe as it deserved, but instead received more of God's love.

This is why I believe Jesus was also lamenting the fig tree. He was weeping for those who were not producing the fruit of the kingdom. Not because he felt bad for his own rejection, but because his heart ached for them.

He wept for those who rejected him. He yearned for all to accept his precious gift. We who follow Jesus must also weep for whom Jesus weeps.

Lamentation is an important part of faith. When we weep we grow closer to the heart of Jesus who wept. We weep over those who are unable to see the light and love of Christ. We weep for those who reject the bread he offers. We weep for those who are not bearing the fruit of the Spirit.

We weep, and we spurn the axe. Instead, we pick up more fertilizer. We care more. We extend kindness, hope, love, and patience.