

Russell Kelfer

Four Things That Make God Cry

530-A

Series: The Beatitudes



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INTO HIS LIKENESS RADIO

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Four Things That Make God Cry

Have you ever seen God cry? Yes, you have. If you have studied Scripture for any time at all, you have seen the Living God, the Creator of the universe, the Alpha and the Omega, the king of Kings weep. You have seen Him mourn and grieve. You have seen His heart break. You have seen God cry.

Crying is not a sign of weakness, it is a sign of strength. It is a sign that the heart is open to the needs of others. It is a sign that the heart has the capacity to feel, to grieve, and to enter into the hurts of those whose hearts are breaking. If you can only cry over your own needs, your weeping is simply a sign of unfinished business where God is concerned. You are open to grief, but only your own. God can take care of that.

The deeper problems, however, some of you do not seem to have the capacity to weep at all. If your senses lack the ability to express grief, that means there are two steps missing on the stairway of your heart. The missing steps are your ability both to know God and to care about others. It will probably be severely affected by these missing links.

As we said, God knows how to weep and He wants us to understand the miracle of mourning and the wonder of weeping. So as we approach the second symptom of self-contained joy, we move into this most unusual arena. Jesus, sitting on a hillside, facing an unusual conglomeration of a congregation, having built a foundation of humility and dependence, now makes His second shocking statement. He says, "Oh what bliss, what self-contained joy for the man who learns to cry with grief. He has the capacity to receive the comfort of God." In other words, He said,

Blessed are the those that mourn, for they shall be comforted.
(Matthew 5:4 NKJV)

My first reaction to this verse has always been to avoid it. Somehow I can relate to the need for humility, the need for meekness, the need for spiritual hunger and the need for purity in the body, but what can be blissful about weeping or mourning?

Four Things That Make God Cry

That is what we desire to explore next.

Let's begin by defining the subject of mourning. "*Blessed are they that mourn.*" The Greek word is "*pentheo*. The word literally means to mourn or lament. It means deep agony of soul that reflects a broken heart. Literally, if you want to write a definition, we might try this one on for size: mourning - the process of experiencing and expressing grief to the point of weeping.

Luke 6:25 gives us an illustration of this. Jesus said,

Woe to you that laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.
(Luke 6:25 NKJV)

He said this in regard to how they looked lightly at their sin.

Mourning and weeping almost always come together in Scripture. Mourning is the inner grief or attitude of deep sadness that wells up inside of us. Weeping meanwhile is the visible, external expression of that grief. Matthew 16:10 describes how Mary Magdalene was comforting others after she had seen Jesus. It says that the people were gathered together mourning and weeping. They had an inner grief over the loss of Christ and were weeping as a visible expression of that inner loss.

Mourning must always be preceded by something. Remember, being able to mourn over sin or anything else is a second step on the stair step of attitudes. Man must, first of all, be brought low before he can cry, whether the tears are tears of repentance, tears of sorrow or tears of sensitivity. In other words, you must have a broken heart to weep, *but you must have a broken spirit to have a broken heart.*

Blessed is the man who is poor in spirit. He has the capacity to mourn. A servant can weep when he has offended the king. A servant can weep when others have offended the king. They are not bothered by relative insignificance, because their pride doesn't interfere. They are not bothered by relative expectations because temporal things do not interfere. Pride, you see, builds a wall of insulated indifference between a Christian and his sensitivity.

Mourning is needed but avoided by most Christians. We live in an age and atmosphere where the expression of emotions of any kind constitutes the absence of self-control and manliness. It is true that excesses in this area have seemingly made emotional wrecks of some parts of Christianity. We may, however, be guilty

Four Things That Make God Cry

of the sin of overkill, overreacting to others' overreactions. The physical body cannot be itself if the nerve endings, the tiny little broadcasting stations that send impulses to the brain, are either raw or deadened.

I was talking with a friend recently. He was discussing the need in certain situations to deaden parts of the nerves in a person's body. He said, "It seems to me that you could do away with a lot of pain by deadening certain parts of the body." As we discussed this, what came to light was the fact that, yes, you can deaden parts of the body, but there are at least two consequences. The first consequence is that if you deaden that part of your body, it tends to become lifeless. It loses its expression of life. Secondly, disease can creep into that part of the body and you never know it because the nerves were God's warning signals to tell you that something was amiss. So you cannot just deaden parts of the body at will because in so doing, you may control pain, but you will also deaden your awareness of disease and external problems.

By the same token, you cannot leave something raw and exposed. I remember going to a doctor, because there was a place on my hand which had been cut. He told me not to put a band-aid on it in order to leave it exposed to the air for a few days in order for it to heal properly. It wasn't bothering him, but it was driving me crazy. Every time I would put my hand in my pocket, I would jerk like I had some kind of nervous disorder. Every time I would hold it in front of air conditioning and the air would blow on it, I would move my hand back. It was raw and open and had nothing to protect it. Until it healed I thought of that passage, *the wicked flee when no one chases them*. Proverbs 28:1. All I had to do was think about something, and I was off and running. I would jerk and jump.

Those are the two extremes in Christian experience. Balanced emotional perspective, on the other hand, means that you have a broken spirit. You can be moved by your emotions, but that is coupled with self-control. You are not *controlled* by your emotions. That is the balanced emotional Christian life. Weeping, you see, is a major part of Scripture. Crying Christians, in the right sense, are in good company. Let me give you some illustrations.

Genesis 21 says, *Hagar wept*.

Genesis 27 says, *Esau wept*.

Genesis 29 says, *Jacob wept*.

Four Things That Make God Cry

Genesis 42 says, *Joseph wept.*

Judges 14 says, *Samson's wife wept.*

I Samuel 1 says, *Hannah wept.*

I Samuel 20 says, *Jonathan wept.*

I Samuel 30 says, *Saul wept.*

II Samuel 1 says, *David wept.*

II Kings 8 says, *the man of God wept.*

II Kings 13 says, *Joash wept.*

II Kings 20 says, *Hezekiah wept.*

Matthew 26 says, *Peter wept.*

John 11 says, *Jesus wept.*

John 20 says, *Mary wept.*

It surfaces immediately that men and women of God who were greatly used by God had the ability to express their emotions before God. There are two basic problems, however. I am going to call them "Operation Overkill" and "Operation Manhood".

The first problem is "Operation Overkill". This has to do with over-sensitizing our emotions until they are in control. I believe it goes something like this. You and I, as believers, find ourselves caught between two extremes that Satan desires to use to destroy the effectiveness of the church. He likes to draw us from one extreme to another. If he can get us off dead center, he can destroy at least a part of the work we set out to do. On the one hand, there are those who allow emotions to become their god. They become experience oriented and believe that God leads through feelings rather than fact. They believe God speaks through experience more than through the Word.

Because many of us believe that this leads to roller coaster Christianity, we tend to move, and Satan encourages us, in the opposite direction. Some Christians then allow doctrine to become their god. They become intellect oriented and stifled emotionally. They express the absence of love, even though the Scripture says,

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not love, I am nothing. (I Corinthians 13:1 paraphrased)

Sometimes they become legalistic and externally void of joy. This, too, is an extreme.

In the center is effective Christianity. This is a delicate

Four Things That Make God Cry

balance of a life that is Word-centered and application oriented, but where emotions are free to express themselves but not to lead their actions. I believe this kind of Christianity leads to healthy fruit-bearing.

The second basic problem is “Operation Manhood”. Most men don’t feel that it is manly to cry, to weep, or to show emotions. I believe that is one reason why the people with the gift of mercy are so important to the body of Christ. I think there ought to be one person with the gift of mercy on every committee in every church and in every Bible study. There just needs to be one. If you get a whole bunch of them they can get sidetracked. The point is that they are the nerve ends of the body of Christ. They keep things in perspective. They sensitize us to people’s feelings. They keep us aware.

By the same token, this is why God designed women the way He did. Women seem to have a sensitivity to express emotions that men don’t have. As men, we can’t relate to their emotional bent, particularly their tears. I turn to putty when a woman cries. We men are so insensitive, we don’t know what to do. Do we pretend they are not crying? Do we shove a box of tissues their way? What do we do? We may be missing a blessing because we miss the point. This little poem may explain what I mean:

WHEN WOMEN CRY

When women cry, we wonder why,
And oftentimes we groan.
And with pious condescension,
We respond with eyes of stone.

Sometimes we grin, sometimes we scowl,
We don’t know what to say,
And so we do the ultimate:
We look the other way.

We’re absolutely so confused,
Unable to relate.
We hope that they will overcome
If we will only wait.

What fools we are, we cannot see
The tears these ladies shed,
May be a signal from the Lord
Our senses may be dead.

Four Things That Make God Cry

“We’re men!” we cry, and “Men don’t cry!”
And so throughout the years,
We’ve bottled our emotions,
And hidden all our tears.

We sneer and laugh and fail to love
When weeping fills the air,
We call those weeping “immature”.
Beloved, that’s not fair.

What fools we are to try to see
Such “manly” standards kept,
While overlooking one great phrase
That echoes, “Jesus wept.”

You see, the church and the family are usually led by men, and biblically we understand that. But oftentimes as men we fail to communicate that the healthy expression of tears is not only scripturally acceptable, but sometimes it is scripturally necessary.

Now the key is to mourn or to grieve at the right time, over the right thing, in the right way. So we need to find out, “When did God cry?” Jesus said, “*When you have seen Me, you have seen the Father.*” Jesus was the visible expression of the deity of God in a human body. So if we can just watch Jesus, we know that when He cried, God cried. Jesus said, “I never do anything but what the Father does. What He does, I do.” We looked at those passages in the last lesson. So every time we see Jesus cry in Scripture, that means that the Father was crying too. Now if there are four things in the world, at least, that made God cry, that ought to be good enough for us. I think we ought to be able to look at those four things to discern just what it is that we ought to cry about.

Reason 1- Jesus wept when others were hurt or grieved. How about you? The passage we will look at is one that we will cover twice in this lesson,

Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.”

Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled.

And He said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to Him, “Lord, come and see.”

Jesus wept.

(John 11:32-35 NKJV)

Four Things That Make God Cry

I think it is important that we recognize in the use of this passage that Jesus was not weeping because of the loss of Lazarus. First of all, He knew that He was going to bring Lazarus back to life. Second, He knew that even if He did not bring him back to life, Lazarus was going to be resurrected, and He would be with him for all eternity. Jesus was not weeping over the loss of Lazarus. Jesus was weeping over the grief of His loved ones. He looked at Mary. He looked at the Jews who were with her. He saw their grief. The minute He saw their grief, there welled up inside of God a deep sense of sympathy, and He cried. God cried because they cried.

In Romans 12 we read a very important, but oft' overlooked commandment,

Rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep.

(Romans 12:15 NASB)

Literally, it means to enter into the joy and sadness of everyone else in the family of Christ. We see this in I Corinthians 12,

so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another.

And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

(I Corinthians 12:25-26 NASB)

These verses say that there should be no schism in the body. We agree with that. It goes on to tell us how to avoid it. The members should care for each other as they would care for their own bodies. Verse 26 tells us that if one suffers, all should suffer. If one is honored, all should rejoice. That is the way the body of Christ is supposed to function.

How desperate are you to do that? That *is* Christianity. Are you willing to ask God to take you to others who are hurting, whatever the cost to you? Or, do you really *not* want to know? Most of us don't. How often do we walk up to someone and ask, "*How are you doing today?*" and they reply, "*Fine.*" You say, "*That's good,*" and you feel as though you have accomplished your purpose and you walk on. You may even know they are really hurting, but so long as they say, "*Fine*", you move on, somewhat relieved.

If, however, they throw a monkey wrench and respond with, "*Thank you for asking, I really do have a problem.*," You don't know what to do. First of all, you don't want to panic. Second, most of the time you don't want to get involved, so you either

Four Things That Make God Cry

say nothing or share something superficial. I can tell you, having been on both sides of that conversation, that is not what people need.

Often, someone comes up to you to ask how *you* are doing and you say, “*Great!*” even if it isn’t true, because that is what you think they want to hear, and you don’t want to bother them. Granted, we want to give a good report and a good testimony, but there are times when others in the body of Christ need to be let into our lives for the purpose of encouragement and prayer. We need to do this for our sakes *and for theirs*. Every once in a while, when we are struggling, we need to let people know.

I got a phone call one night from a friend who definitely doesn’t have the gift of mercy, but who is a real good friend. I won’t go into the details but he said, “I understand that you are having a problem. I just wanted you to know that I am in it with you. I hurt with you.” I just choked up. With that phone call, I gained a flood of love and understanding. This is not a normally emotional friend and there was nothing gooey or gushy about his words. But there was genuine compassion to the point of expressing that he cared and had entered into the suffering I was facing concerning this problem.

Another question is, “Are you willing to go to your knees and stay there on behalf of that person until you mourn for them?” Most of us aren’t. Most of us say, “Lord, my friend is having a problem. I guess You already know that. Please bless them. Amen.” Back to the television set you go. Back to something else you go. I’m not joking. That is the level of grief we often have (or fail to have) when others are hurting. We remind ourselves that a friend is going through a difficult time and we need to remember them in our prayers. We say, “Lord, thank You for the food. Help our friend. Amen.” We then go on eating without another thought or concern for that friend. Are you willing to go to a friend’s side when you are needed? Are you willing to call them? Are you willing to be available to them?

Lastly, are you willing to enter emotionally into their joy and grief? I want to share another phone call one night. It came at 2:30 in the morning. It was a young woman. My wife is better at answering the phone at that time of the night. I’m not even good at being coherent at that time. She very calmly told me who it was. With all the love I could muster I said, “Hello.” The woman

Four Things That Make God Cry

was grieved to the point of tears. She had a very complicated problem, and there was absolutely nothing I could do about it except commiserate with her.

I may have said some of the right things, but inside there was only one basic underlying thought, “How will I ever go back to sleep?” That was all the compassion I had. I couldn’t go back to sleep, and I think it serves me right. But the difference between those two calls got me to realize that even though I couldn’t do anything to solve the problem for the woman, I could have fallen to my knees and wept in my heart, at least, and prayed for her. What didn’t seem so big to me was really big to her. Blessed are you when you mourn over the needs of other people.

Right now, there are people everywhere who are hurting. Many of them are depressed. Many are confused. Many are lonely. Sunday mornings we put on our Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes. Everybody has their religious smile, their spiritual attitudes and are involved in spiritual activities. Everybody thinks everybody else is happy. Deep down inside, many are hiding a life full of tears. I think that most of us shrink from the possibility that we might find out what they are and get physically and emotionally involved. We shrink back when we should be drawn because we are afraid to be drained. That is true in our homes. That is true in our church. That is true in our offices.

Reason 2- God cried over the effects of sin in our world. Do you? I’m not talking about our own sins. We will talk about that in the next lesson. I’m talking about the sin in the world and what it cost Him. In Luke 19 we read,

When He had said this, He went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.

And it came to pass, when He drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mountain called Olivet, that He sent two of His disciples,

saying, “Go into the village opposite you, where as you enter you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Loose it and bring it here.

And if anyone asks you, ‘Why are you loosing it?’ thus you shall say to him, ‘Because the Lord has need of it.’”

So those who were sent went their way and found it just as He had said to them.

But as they were loosing the colt, the owners of it said to

Four Things That Make God Cry

them, "Why are you loosing the colt?"

And they said, "The Lord has need of him."

Then they brought him to Jesus. And they threw their own clothes on the colt, and they set Jesus on him.

And as He went, many spread their clothes on the road.

Then, as He was now drawing near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen,

saying: "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"

And some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples."

But He answered and said to them, "I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out."

Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it,

saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.

For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side,

(Luke 19:28-43 NKJV)

The people were honoring Him overtly, but without repentance. Jesus knew their hearts and knew what was to come into their lives. He knew what sin had cost and He cried. It wasn't the first time either. In Luke 13 Jesus said,

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing!

(Luke 13:34 NKJV)

And He wept over the city.

In Philippians 3:18 Paul wept over the unbelievers within the body of Christ and the heresy that they were sharing with the congregation.

Now let's take your spheres of influence: your Jerusalem. We are told that our lives are to affect Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the uttermost parts of the earth. We are to start with Jerusalem. How heavy is your burden for your family? Not just your immediate family. How about your neighborhood? How about the people you work with? How about your old friends that you knew before you

Four Things That Make God Cry

became a Christian? Do you ever weep over your city? Or do you pray, “God save Aunt Emma, she needs it. Amen.” Or, “God save my husband, it’ll make my life easier. Amen.”

Do you ever pray for revival in your city until your heart breaks? How do you pray for the world? What about those men and women on the mission field who write back asking us to agonize before God on their behalf? As they share the burden of their hearts and we read their letters, do we pray that the Spirit of God might minister to the people they minister to? Do we pray with all the intensity of our hearts? Do we really grasp what we should be doing? Do we really grasp the magnitude of the difference between heaven and hell? Between life and death? Do we really realize that every man and woman will mourn some day, but it will be too late? Listen to God’s word:

Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be filled.
Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.
(Luke 6:21 NKJV)

Woe to you who are full, for you shall hunger. Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.
(Luke 6:25 NKJV)

So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it.

But one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.”
(Revelation 5:4,5 NKJV)

Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.
(Matthew 24:30 NKJV)

But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
(Matthew 8:12 NKJV)

This isn’t the Super Bowl. This is the game of life. I guess I’m too hard on the people with the bumper sticker that says, “This car will self-destruct when the rapture comes”. It always bothers me. One reason is that it gives the impression we will be gone, so it’s not our problem. Not so. Suppose the rapture were to come this afternoon. Sure, you would make it, if you know Christ, but what about the four houses immediately around yours? Who would be left? It’s a matter of life or death. Do you

Four Things That Make God Cry

pray for them as though it is a matter of life or death? What about the six employees nearest to you where you work? How many will be there? What about the ten closest relatives you have? That is your Jerusalem. That is my Jerusalem. Some of us need to have a funeral in our minds for them. Maybe then we would realize that they are spiritually dead and begin to pray for them. If someone dies physically, we mourn. If someone is dead spiritually, they are dead for all eternity. That is when real mourning ought to take place.

We see that God cried when Jesus wept over the effects of sin in the world. Again in John 11 we see where He was weeping over the death of Lazarus. The second significance of the passage is that He was viewing death and separation personally. These were two of the effects of sin in the world and He was grieved. In I Corinthians 5:1,2 we read that sin had corrupted the fellowship of the Corinthian church. It had diluted the power and broken their testimony. Paul rebuked the Corinthians and said, "You are not mourning, you are taking this too lightly. It is important." You and I see greed and corruption in the world and we joke about it. We see the moral breakdown in the world around us and we joke. We see families dissolving at the highest rate in history and we shrug our shoulders. We see drugs taking over even in the schools where smaller children go and we say, "That's too bad." We see apostasy settle in on the church at large and we say, "Well, that's the way it is. You ought to come to my church."

Satan is winning battles all over this world and we are not even mourning. Jesus grieved over what sin was doing to men and what sin was doing to this world. We don't. We have been anesthetized by the world around us and "squeezed" as one translation says, into it's mold.

Reason 3- God cried in Matthew 26 when Jesus wept on His knees, pleading with the Father over the cost of doing the will of God because of the effects of sin. He was in Gethsemane. The Scripture says that He was *exceeding sorrowful unto death*. He asked the disciples to pray with Him. One writer says *He was deeply grieved, almost dying of sorrow*. We read about it again in Hebrews 5:7-8. One author says, "*Jesus pleaded with God, praying with tears and agony of soul.*"

How honestly do you agonize over doing the perfect will of God even in the small details of life? In the morning as you have

Four Things That Make God Cry

your quiet time, do you casually say, “Lord, lead me today.” Are you like the disciples in that your prayer time is nap time? Do we stay on our knees until we see direction from God?

Most of us can remember how as young Christians we would do anything rather than offend the Spirit of God. We were so excited about being a Christian that we didn’t want to do anything outside the focus of the will of God. Do you remember that? Young children are perfect examples. They will do anything to please Mommy or Daddy. They ask, “Mommy would you like me to do this? Daddy, would you like me to do that? Can I, huh, huh?” But something changes, at least in some, and especially as teenagers. Suddenly, it isn’t, “Mommy can I?” it is, “Aw, gee, Mom, do I have to?”

Now I don’t know about you, but as we become teenagers and adults in our Christian experience, we ought to become more and more excited about finding and doing the will of God no matter the cost. Unfortunately, instead, we often become apostate in our thinking. We do things that offend the Spirit of God, and because nothing dramatic happens, we reset our standards slightly lower. Jesus didn’t breathe without the Father, but we use Him like a spiritual Medicare program.

In the next lesson, we will be dealing with the most important reason of all for men and women to cry. It is the crux of this beatitude. God intends for us to be increasingly grieved over our own sin. We will explore what the effects of this increased sensitivity and increased accountability should have on Christians as they grow. We will ask ourselves why Peter wept, why Judas wept and why the Psalmist wept. We will see how real grief leads to repentance and how repentance leads to joy. We will end by studying the principle of temporary grief. The Scripture says,

Weeping endures for a night, but joy always comes in the morning.
(Psalm 30:5 paraphrased)

We will ask the question, “When does that joy come, here or in heaven?”

God cries. I believe He weeps over your sin and mine. I believe He weeps over the hardness of Israel’s heart and over the apathy of the church. I believe He weeps over the effects of sin in our world, over the inroads false religions are making, over the compromises in the Christian community, and over the abolishing of Biblical principles in so-called Christian nations. I believe He grieves over

Four Things That Make God Cry

sin in high places, over hypocrisy in the body of Christ, and over our seeming unconcern over the certainty of His return. I believe He grieves over those who are still lost and over our apparent lack of zeal on their behalf. I believe God cries when He sees the victories Satan is winning in these last days simply because the church is playing church, rather than suiting up for the battle to end all battles.

God is crying. The question is, “Why aren’t we?” Have we lost sight of the urgency and the importance of the conflict? *Yes.* Have we become enamored by the lure of “things” until eternal rewards no longer beckon to us? *Yes.* Have we, in our desire not to be men and women who are led by our emotions, so stifled those emotions until we no longer care that we do not care? *Yes.*

Then, what can we do about it? We can ask God to sensitize our spirits until the hardness melts under the warmth of His love, and the self-centered veil over our eyes dissolves and we can see those hurting people all around us and truly enter into their grief and their pain.

God will answer that prayer. How do I know? Because if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And this is according to His will. How do I know? Because He lives in us, and we have seen Him cry. Now, beloved He is waiting to see us cry as He lives His life through us.

God still cries. May we learn to let Him.

For Further Study and Application

1- When was the last time you wept over the hurts of other people? When was the last time were you so grieved to tears over someone else’s problems that you forgot your own? Study again Jesus’ reaction to Lazarus’ death? Why did He cry?

2- Have you ever been moved to tears over the sin in the world? When you see the inroads Satan has made in our society, and the progress heathen religions are making in the world, are you a) intellectually moved, b) spiritually grieved, or c) both of the above? Why did Jesus weep over Jerusalem? Have you ever wept over the city you live in? Over the crime? Over the corruption? Over the spiritual apathy?

3- When last did you pray until you wept for revival? How

Four Things That Make God Cry

often do you pray for the pastors by name of other churches in your city other than your own?

4- Do you view crying as a form of emotional weakness? Why? Was Jesus weak? Then, why do you think He cried?

5- Have we deadened the nerve ends of our hearts under the guise of spirituality or are we willing to pray this week, *“Dear God, teach me how to weep in a healthy way over the needs of the body, over the unbelievers in my Jerusalem and over the corruption that sin has brought into this world and over the need to surrender to the will of God. Teach me, Lord, to so enter into the fellowship of Your sufferings that I might develop the capacity to comfort others. Amen.”*

6- If you prayed that prayer, expect God to open your eyes and sensitize your heart this week. Expect to see hurting people you walked right by before. Expect to see needs in your family you never saw before. Expect to see the lost in a different light. Expect to be grieved to tears. Then promise God that *as He opens your eyes, you will do something about it*. You will weep with those who weep, and you will remember that what you do for the least of these, will have been done for Him.

7- As He answers that prayer, remember to praise Him.

Note: Russell wrote each of these lessons in a manner that would enable him to clearly communicate them to his weekly class. The grammar or punctuation you encounter may not be technically perfect, but you will certainly “hear” his unique gift for making the message applicable to the common man in everyday situations.

It’s been said of him that he was really a writer who read his stuff. And that’s a very accurate statement!

May you be richly blessed as you “hear” as you read.

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10602 Mossbank, San Antonio, TX 78230
210-226-0000 or 1-800-375-7778
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