

Each of the four Gospels tell us about the crucifixion of Jesus. If you were to read all four of them together, you would get the same story. All four of them talk about Jesus suffering. All four of them talk about Jesus being condemned. All four of them talk about him being crucified. But each of the Gospels has its own little details, things that they say that none of the other Gospels do. Matthew, for example, tells us that when Jesus died, tombs broke open, and some of the saints went in to Jerusalem. Mark tells us about a young man who fled out of the garden of Gethsemane when Jesus was arrested. And John includes a lot of details about the conversation between Pilate and Jesus. There are other details, of course, but we can see that they each have their own part of the story to tell.

Luke has his own points too. And one example of this comes when Jesus is carrying his cross to Golgotha. He is unable to go any further. He stumbles and falls, and the soldiers force Simon of Cyrene to carry the cross for him. Now, up to this point Matthew and Mark also tell us about Simon, but now Luke gives us a little extra detail. Luke tells us that a great crowd was following Jesus, a crowd made up especially of women. And these women were weeping and crying and lamenting, clearly upset at what was happening to Jesus. It was upsetting to see what he had gone through. It was terrible to see him beaten, to see him bloodied, to see him stumbling, and weak, and barely able to stand. It was hard for them not to feel sorry for him. It was hard for them not to say, "Poor Jesus!"

But Jesus turns to them, and he says in chapter 23, verse 28: "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children." Because as terrible as what Jesus was going through was, he was not the one they should be weeping for. They should be weeping for themselves and for their children, weeping over what was to come, weeping over the judgment that was going to fall upon the city of Jerusalem. And earlier in the Gospel of Luke, we are told why. Luke chapter 19 says: "And when Jesus drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, 'Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.'" They should've known the things that made for peace. In other words, they should've known Jesus. They should have recognized that he is their king. They should have recognized that he is the promised one, the Son of David. They should have known that he had come to claim his father's throne, that he was going to reign as king. But they didn't. In the hardness of their heart, they turned away from him. They refused to believe in him and handed him over to Pilate to be crucified. That was a very great sin indeed.

And because of that great sin, judgment was going to fall upon Jerusalem. Jesus again says, Luke 19: "For the days will come upon you when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation." In other words, the Romans would come, and they would destroy the city, not leaving one stone upon another, not even sparing the Temple itself. It would be a time of great distress, a time of great judgment. And it would be better in those days to have never been born. So yes, they should not weep for Jesus, but rather weep for themselves and for their children. Weep for what is to come, because they did not know the time of their visitation.

But Jesus is not leaving them hopeless by saying this. He is not just spreading doom and gloom. Rather, Jesus is calling them through this to recognize what it is that they have done, to recognize their sin, and to turn away from it. To not weep because of sadness, but to weep because of

remorse, because of regret. To turn away from their sin, to repent, and live. It's similar to what Peter would say to the crowd on Pentecost. We are told in Acts chapter 2 that Peter says: "Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified." This Jesus whom you crucified, this Jesus whom you handed over to be killed, is Lord and Christ. They had crucified the Lord himself--a very great sin! But Peter is not just accusing them. Peter also calls for them to turn from that sin and live. We're told again in Acts chapter 2: "Now, when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles: 'Brothers, what shall we do?' And Peter said to them, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'" Even though they had crucified Jesus, they could be forgiven. Even they could find new life through faith in Jesus. They were not beyond hope. They were not beyond forgiveness. Mercy could be shown to the repentant. And the same is true with what Jesus says here to the daughters of Jerusalem. Do not weep for Jesus, but rather weep for yourselves and for your children. Weep for your sins, repent, and live!

And Christians, on this Good Friday, let us listen to what Jesus has to say. Don't weep for him, thinking, "Poor Jesus! How terrible it was what happened to him!" Rather, weep for yourselves. Weep for your sins and find forgiveness in Jesus Christ. Because it was our sins, Christians, that put Jesus on that cross. Jesus endured all of these things because of what we have done or have not done. Jesus died on the cross because we turned away from God. Look at that cross, Christians. Look at what your sins required. How can we look at that cross and remain unmoved? How can we look at that cross and continue in our sins? When we look at that cross and when we consider what it cost Jesus to pay for our sins, we should not leave the same as we were before. Do not weep for him, but weep for your sins on this Good Friday!

But like those on Pentecost, Christians, weep for your sins and turn away from them. Our tears should drive us away from ourselves and drive us towards Christ. Because look at that cross again. There is forgiveness. There is life. There is a new heart. There is freedom from your sins. There is salvation from the judgment which is to come. Jesus died on that cross so that we would not be condemned. Jesus died on that cross so that we will be able to stand before him on the great judgment day. Weep for your sins, Christians, repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will find life in his name!

Let us pray. Merciful Father, who opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble, lead us to weep for our sins this day and blot out our iniquities through the blood of your Son so that we would not perish, but find eternal life in him. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.