

"THE HEN REVEALS A GRIEVING SAVIOR"

{Matthew 23:37-39 and John 9:1-25}

Trinity Presbyterian Church

March 9, 2008

Dr. Luke describes Jesus' lament as He approached the city of Jerusalem by writing... *"He saw the city and wept over it!"* {19:41}

Jesus' tears came from a heart that was breaking for the people of that city who had rejected Him. Eugene Peterson writes of this in the *"Message Bible"*—

"He came to His own people, but they didn't want Him! But whoever did want Him, who believed He was who He claimed and would do what He said, He made to be their true selves, their child-of-God selves." {John 1:11-12}

Or, as written in the New Living Translation...

"To all who believed Him and accepted Him, He gave the right to become children of God!" {John 1:12}

Think of that first sentence: *"He came to His own people, but they didn't want Him!"*

Isaiah wrote...

"He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with sufferings...He was despised, and we esteemed Him not!" {Isaiah 53:3, NIV}

It has been said many times, that when Jesus died on the cross, it was *not* from wounds inflicted Him; *not* from the horrendous beating by the Roman soldiers; *not* from the agony of the cross...**Jesus died from a broken heart.**

Those whom He came to save rejected Him.

Those whom He loved despised Him.

Those to whom He offered life plotted His death.

...and Jesus wept!

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see Me again until you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'"

These words are spoken with such tenderness...from the broken heart of a lover to those whom He loved so intimately!

He reminds them of the incredible patience of God who passionately longs for the world He created...whose desire is that all humankind would

respond to His divine initiative and *turn* for their evil ways!

He illustrates His love and longing to be in relationship with His children by comparing that love with a hen gathering her chicks under her wings.

THE HEN...

...protects her chicks with her very life. She nurtures, cares for, and shows continual concern for her young brood; whereas, the male fowl, is disinterested and uninvolved after breeding.

- ✚ She gathers the chicks for feeding and watering by a low clucking sound known as a brooding call.
- ✚ She serves as a sentry—a defense force—she is forever alert. She gives out an alarm call in a different frequency with her brooding sounds.
- ✚ When the chicks then run to their mother, she tenderly gathers them under her wings...fluffing her feathers to look as large and impressive as possible in hopes of frightening an intruder.
- ✚ If danger persists—or draws too close—she may attack.
- ✚ She also has an assembly call to gather her chicks when they are spread out in too large an area—chicks are known to respond from as far away as 40 acres.

Jesus says that He longs with all His heart to gather those who blindly walk in darkness...those to whom He was sent to offer light and to give sight...He longs to thrust His arms around them...

- ...to nurture/feed them spiritually
- ...to protect them from danger and harm
- ...to stave off the enemy
- ...to shepherd those who might stray too far
 - ...but, they were not willing
 - ...they rejected His appeals
 - ...they scorned His love
 - ...and He wept!

LIFE APART FROM CHRIST IS MISERABLE...

...like walking in blindness...darkness! When men and women reject

God, they create their own form of demagoguery...Calvin called it *“total depravity!”* Apart from God the evil that lurks in the minds of those whom God created is almost beyond imagination.

The Prophet Jeremiah wrote...

“The human heart is most deceitful and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is? But I know! I, the Lord, search all hearts and examine secretive motives. I give all people their due rewards, according to what their actions deserve!” {17:9-10, NLT}

“This is what the Lord said to me, ‘Can an Ethiopian change the color of his skin? Can a leopard take away its spots? Neither can you start doing good, for you always do evil...because you have forgotten Me and put your trust in false gods. I Myself will expose you to shame. I am keenly aware of your adultery and lust,, and your abominable idol worship out in the fields and on the hills. Your destruction is sure...how long will it be before you are pure?’” {13:23,25b-27}

And Jesus wept!

UGANDA

Our Ryan Tally arrived in Kampala, Uganda on Friday evening—the East African nation, the country ruled by for eight years {1971-1979} by the tyrant Idi Amin—notorious for being one of the bloodiest dictators of the 20th century. The mass tortures and murders during his reign of terror estimates range from 200,000-800,000. He was illiterate and he hated Asians—*most of whom were well educated and well-to-do*—and ordered all 80,000 in the country to leave within 90 days—many of whom had been born in Uganda. Many forced to leave were the educated class—whom he despised: doctors,, dentists, veterinarians, teachers, and technicians—the expulsion crippled hospitals and schools and especially the economy of the nation and created a vacuum that remains 30 years after their forced exodus. He even murdered the Archbishop of the Church of Uganda, Janan Luwum in 1977.

Jesus weeps!

Today, parts of Northern Uganda once again are mired in a conflict between the Lord’s Resistance Army {LRA} and the government-backed militia. The conflict has claimed many civilian victims, with both sides targeting civilian populations, and atrocities are horrific. More than 20,000 children have been abducted—raped—many of whom are then diagnosed with some type of STD or HIV/AIDS.

I want to thank Dr. Kenneth Dorst for supplying us with a copy of a report aired on ABC Sunday Night News on March 2nd.

The country has never recovered and today is one of the world's poorest—ranked 150 out of 173 countries by the United Nations Human Development Index.

Ryan told me on the phone of walking down the streets of Kampala seeing people so skinny from starvation that he could wrap one hand around their hip and thigh at the same time.

And, perhaps worst of all—those in the country who escape the bullets and guns, now face another giant—HIV/AIDS which is epidemic proportions...a monster worse than all other atrocities.

- ✚ 2.2 million people have been infected with HIV since 1982
- ✚ currently more than 1 million people are living with HIV/AIDS *{the majority are women and children}*
- ✚ over 800,000 Ugandans have died from HIV/AIDS
- ✚ 15% of the women between the ages of 25-44 are infected
- ✚ more than 100,000 children currently are infected
- ✚ 23% of all new infections are children
- ✚ 3.1 million children have been orphaned by parents who died of AIDS

And, Jesus weeps!

CONCLUSION/APPLICATION

Jesus today looks down and sees the world for whom He died. He sees Rwanda...Kenya...Darfur...Uganda...and He calls to His church—**2 billion strong**--to remove their blinders...put aside their prejudice...and get involved while it is yet day.

- ...the church *can* make a difference
- ...this church *can* make a difference
- ...people in Sub-Saharan Africa see nothing but hopelessness
- ...the church offers hope
- ...hope is not to be found in the private sector
- ...hope is to be found in the body of Christ
- ...change is not found in politics and international bodies
- ...change is found when Jesus Christ opens our eyes

Ryan said to me yesterday, *“Jack, it’s true...I see Jesus in the eyes of the*

children...the poor...and in Elijah and Christian leaders in this poor country!"

I'm asking you this morning for your hearts...join me in this campaign to help the hopeless in Uganda...or, wherever else God may lead us. Let's dare to set goals so high that they seem outrageous to everyone...but to God. With Him...**all things are possible...and nothing is impossible.**

"O Uganda, Uganda, the country that kills the prophets and stones God's messengers! How often I have wanted to gather your children together as a hen protects chicks beneath her wings....O people of Trinity, Trinity...be My hands...be My feet...be My ears...be My mouthpiece and help these my people. I've sent you My children from Watoto...I've sent you Elijah Sebuchu from Kampala...I'm returning Ryan to challenge you....Surround these my children in Uganda with your love, your care, your prayers, and your support!"