

## For Crying Out Loud!

Rev. Michael J. Mattil

***Luke 13:31-35 31 At that time some Pharisees came to Jesus and said to him, "Leave this place and go somewhere else. Herod wants to kill you." 32 He replied, "Go tell that fox, 'I will drive out demons and heal people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will reach my goal.' 33 In any case, I must keep going today and tomorrow and the next day-- for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem! 34 "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! 35 Look, your house is left to you desolate. I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'" (NIV)***

There's this little guy sitting inside a bar, just looking at his drink. He stays like that for half-an-hour. Then, this big trouble-making truck driver steps next to him, takes the drink from the guy, and just drinks it all down. The poor man starts crying. The truck driver says: "Come on man, I was just joking. Here, I'll buy you another drink. I just can't stand to see a man crying." "No, it's not that. Today day is the worst of my life. First, I overslept and was late to an important meeting. My boss, outraged, fired me. When I left the building to get my car, I found out it was stolen. The police said they could do nothing. I got a cab to return home, and after I paid the cab driver and the cab had gone, I found that I left my whole wallet in the cab. I got home only to find a note from my wife saying she was leaving me to run off with the guy I thought was my best friend. So I left home and came to this bar. And when I was thinking about putting an end to my life, you show up and drink my poison!" **(Play clip of "Crying!" By Roy Orbison)**

We have different reasons that we cry. I think the stereotype is that women cry more easily than men, but we all have things that bring us to tears. Some of them are tears of joy, others are tears of sadness and grief and trauma and hurt that are beyond our ability to control. Death, broken relationships, loss. All cause for tears. And then there is that phrase we sometimes use: "For crying out loud!" You've heard it. A lot of you use it. My mom uses that phrase a lot. It is often spoken when your are upset or frustrated by something. I heard about something that happened here at Grace last week that made me think, "Oh, for crying out loud!" **(Clip from Forrest Gump on bus)**

We watch that and think, "Poor Forrest. How can people be so cruel. Thank goodness Jenny was kind a lets him sit by her." Would you think of yourself being more like Jenny, or more like all the kids who said, "This seat's taken!" Imagine you are attending this church for the first time, you see an open spot, you start to sit down, only to hear, "It's taken" – not once, but several times. It may not be said in a mean or nasty way, but it is said nonetheless. How would you feel? How willing do

you think that person would be to come back to this church? How welcome was that person made to feel? When I hear about that happening here, which it did last week, I get frustrated, but it also hurts my heart, and makes me want to cry. We all need to remember that we only get one chance to make a first impression. You need to ask yourselves, “Am I showing the face of Christ by the way I treat others.” Is it more important to save a seat for someone or to make the visitor feel welcome? For crying out loud. Jesus commends those who welcome Him by welcoming strangers, saying,

***Matthew 25:40 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'***

For crying out loud.

During the season of Lent, we think about Jesus heading to Jerusalem to face the penalty for the sins of the world. He has set His face to go to Jerusalem for our sake, and we travel with Him throughout Lent. In today's Gospel lesson, he asserts that Jerusalem is the only place for a prophet to be killed. This passage does not mention Him crying, but you can almost hear the anguish in His voice when He said,

***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!***

And just a few chapters later, Luke records for us how Jesus wept over Jerusalem as He approached it on Palm Sunday. Crying out loud.

**How does it you make you feel to think about Jesus crying over you?** While Mr. Orbison's song that I played earlier was not referring to Jesus, it does describe what He did: “*Crying over you.*” Most of us have been in the situation where we have driven someone else to tears, and know how that feels. But what about knowing that you have driven God Himself to tears? Have you ever considered that? Jesus was crying over you!

I came across a story about a Lutheran missionary in Japan who was having a heart-to-heart talk with his Japanese brother in Christ. He admitted that he was very homesick, recalling the night before he and his wife left Chicago for their first trip to Japan. His family had gathered together for meal, followed by the Lord's Supper in their church's sanctuary. Then came the good-byes, and the tears started flowing all around. While he was describing this scene to his Japanese friend, the tears

were once again welling up in the missionaries eyes. The Japanese brother put a new spin on the nostalgia that had been keeping the missionary from giving himself wholeheartedly to his work. He said to the American, “Look how fortunate you are to have people who think enough of you to cry for you. Many people are not so blessed.”

Consider **how fortunate you are that Jesus would cry over you!** He cares about you. He was sent here for you. He loved you so much that He was on His way to Jerusalem for you, knowing that was where they killed the prophets and would kill Him as well. Jesus was willing not only to cry for you, He was willing to die for you.

Don't see **His tears** as a sign of weakness, because they are not. Nor are His tears the result of feeling sorry for Himself. The tears of Jesus are the result of caring and loving so deeply. When He heard that Lazarus had died, we read the simple phrase, “Jesus wept” (John 11:35). He cries because He loves and cares. Today's Gospel reading expresses that by saying He wants to gather us all in as a hen gathers her chicks, He wants to shield us and protect us not only from the world but from all the harm we bring upon ourselves by our disobedience, thinking we know better, thinking we don't need His laws or that they don't apply to us. Jesus cries out loud because He loves you so much and doesn't want to see you get hurt. Instead, He let Himself be hurt to spare you. He took the punishment for all sins on Himself and paid the awful price of a brutal crucifixion. He did that so that He could welcome you to your eternal home. Not because you are perfect, but because you are forgiven. For crying out loud.

I've used that phrase a lot today, and I'm doing so for a reason that may not be readily apparent to you. “For crying out loud” is a **euphemism**, where you say one thing but actually mean something else. This is actually a subcategory of euphemisms called a “**minced oath**,” something people would say instead of swearing. It comes from a time when people took more seriously the prohibition against taking God's name in vain or misusing His name or speaking profanity. Here are some other “minced oaths.”

- Gosh            God
- Heck            Hell
- Dang, Darn    Damn
- Jiminy Cricket    Jesus Christ
- Gadzooks        God's hooks (referring to the nails that held Jesus on the cross)

So what do you think the minced oath “**for Crying out loud**” means? Originally it was said instead of saying “**for Christ’s sake.**” For crying out loud = for Christ’s sake. Granted we don’t want to say that thoughtlessly. We should always use God’s name reverently, to call upon Him in prayer and thanksgiving. But consider how this meaning changes your understanding of the following phrases:

- You have been saved, for crying out loud!
- You should welcome strangers and visitors, for crying out loud!
- You are forgiven, for crying out loud!

You and I are privileged to know what Jesus accomplished for us with His perfect life in our place and His self-sacrifice for our sins. Because we have been led to faith in Him, our Savior is ready to welcome us to our eternal home. This is who we are, those destined for heaven through faith in Christ, but we are not there yet. On this side of heaven, we need to reflect who we are, redeemed children of God, so others can see our Lord and Savior. Jesus found you in your sins and invited you to come home with Him. He felt so deeply about this that He was not afraid to express it by crying. And you should be willing to do the same, for crying out loud!