



Loving Him ... With His Tears on My Face

We had just said goodbye to a radiant young bride-to-be. She had come over to our house to tell my husband, my children and me some of the exciting details of her upcoming wedding. Her eyes had been flashing; her smile sparkling; her dark, glossy hair bouncing as her excitement had spilled over her every word and gesture. As the door closed behind her, Rachel-Ruth, my youngest daughter, burst into tears and ran from the room! Tomorrow, my 10-year-old, was as astonished as I was. We bolted after Rachel-Ruth and found her sobbing in the living room. Her hands were frantically tearing at her long braids as though she would pull them from her little head and, between choking breaths, she was saying, “I hate my curly hair! I’m not pretty at all!” Tomorrow and I stared at Rachel-Ruth aghast. Then we burst into tears, threw our arms around her, and the three of us crumpled on the floor in a

heap of despair! Over curly hair, instead of straight hair! Over braided hair, instead of bobbed hair! Over an 8-year-old body—instead of a 21-year old figure!

What ridiculous nonsense, you might say. But when you love someone with all your heart, that person’s pain is yours. As her mother, I so empathize with Rachel-Ruth that her tears are mine.

Likewise, our heavenly Father so closely identifies with His children that our tears are His. And in response to such loyalty and love, I, in turn, desire to so closely identify with Him—with His grief, His joy, His love, His pain, His blessing, His honor—that His tears are on my face.

Read John 12:1-8

TEARS OF GRIEF

- Read John 11:1-44, and explain why Mary wept (verse 33).

“I...desire to so closely identify with [God] ...that His tears are on my face.”



Anne Graham Lotz, founder and president of AnGeL Ministries and a daughter of Billy and Ruth Bell Graham, is a best-selling author of six books, including “Just Give Me Jesus” and her most recent book, “Why?”

- Knowing He would raise Lazarus within a few moments, why do you think Jesus wept (John 11:35)?
- When was the last time you wept? Why were you weeping?
- Give phrases from the following verses that show God feels our pain: Psalm 56:8; Isaiah 63:9; Hebrews 4:15.

TEARS OF JOY

- Who were some of the guests at the dinner given in Jesus’ honor, according to Matthew 26:6-8 and John 12:2-4?
- What was the reason for the dinner, according to John 12:1-2? Describe in your own words the emotions of Simon, Lazarus, Mary and Martha.
- When was the last time your gratitude for what God has done for you broke out into genuine celebration?
- Describe the contrast between the atmosphere in Simon’s home and the turmoil that was brewing outside. See John 11:45-57; Mark 14:10-11; John 12:9-11.
- Relative to the way Jesus is acknowledged, talked about and generally treated in today’s society, how much of a contrast is there between what takes place in your home and what takes place outside its walls?
- When was the last time you wept with joy over what God has done for you?

TEARS OF LOVE

- From Luke 10:38-42 and John 11:28-32, describe Mary. How did she exemplify faith *and* a failure to trust?
- Describe the scene in John 12:1-3. Assuming Mary’s jar of perfume was the equivalent of her life’s savings and her dowry, what did it represent? What do you think motivated her to pour it all out on Jesus?
- What is your most precious possession—your “alabaster jar”? Would you be willing to give it all to Jesus? If so, why?
- From John 12:7, what did Jesus say was the underlying reason for Mary’s sacrifice? Relate this to Philippians 3:10. Put into your own words what you think is meant by “the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings” (NIV).
- When have you shared Christ’s Cross?

TEARS OF PAIN

- How did others at the dinner party react to Mary’s extravagant sacrifice? See John 12:4-5; Mark 14:4-5

- and Matthew 26:8-9. Put their reactions into your own words. How do you think they made Mary feel?
- As you pour out the contents of your alabaster jar, has anyone ever made fun of your faith, criticized your commitment, faulted your service or sneered at your love for Jesus saying, in essence, “You’re wasting your life, your time, your money”—on Him? How did it make you feel?

TEARS OF BLESSING

- What was Jesus’ response in Mark 14:6-9 to the harsh treatment of Mary? List at least four of His statements and put them into your own words.
 - How have you sensed God’s pleasure in your sacrifice? What encouragement do you receive from the following verses? Psalm 51:16-17; Isaiah 57:15; Mark 10:29-30; Matthew 25:21; Hebrews 13:16.
- Would you choose to love Jesus with His tears on your face? Reflect on His love for you.

In the early light of Creation’s dawn, the Father held His Alabaster Jar. It gleamed with the beauty of the Morning Star and was scented with the fragrance of the Rose of Sharon. It was His most precious possession. As His omniscient eyes looked down the years that stretched out before Him into generations and centuries and ages and millenniums, *He knew ...*

The Father slipped into the darkness of the world He had made and loved. The hands that held the Jar—His Son—with such tender, eternal love, relaxed and opened as He placed the Jar ever so gently on the manger bed of hay. During the years that followed, the beauty and the glory of the Jar were shared and admired by those who had eyes to see.

And then the Father once again picked up His Alabaster Jar. And on a hill so far away from His celestial home—a hill that was cold, barren and bleak, swarming with an angry mob that was unruly and obscene—the Father smashed His Alabaster Jar on a rugged, wooden cross. As the contents of flesh and blood were all poured out and the fragrance of His love permeated human history forever, *our tears were on His face.* ❏ ©ANNE GRAHAM LOTZ

Portions of this Bible study were adapted by permission from “My Heart’s Cry,” by Anne Graham Lotz, ©2002 Anne Graham Lotz, published by W Publishing Group, a Division of Thomas Nelson, Inc., Nashville, Tenn.