

A Word on Wednesday from Pastor Tonia

"I'll Cry If I Want To" 9/28/22

As soon as I heard these words I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven. (Nehemiah 1:4)

Stiff upper lip, don't cha know. Don't let them see you cry. We're taught to hide our feelings – from others, from ourselves. Big Girls Don't Cry i-i.

But sorrow comes to all of us. It's a tender feeling. It's a monster. It's natural, not to be hidden. We need to be honest with our feelings. Life is hard enough without stuffing how we feel, putting it off until it becomes overwhelming.

The wall around Jerusalem had been destroyed, the gates burned down, and on top of the damage which had befallen the holy city, no one was doing anything about it. Nehemiah was distraught. He sat down and wept and mourned for days, he fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. This was his honest reaction and he wasn't embarrassed to write it down and to be remembered for his feelings about this loss.

Cry about it, then do something about it. Grieve and grow. Tears and transition. As the teacher says in Ecclesiastes, "Sorrow is better than laughter, for sadness has a refining influence on us. A wise person thinks much about death, while the fool thinks only about having a good time now." (Ecc 7:3-4)

We feel like we have to put on a happy face, it's like hiding a shattered self underneath a mask.

Tears. Tears can comfort, can release stress, clear our sight and fortify us. They are a form of prayer. So, this is my life and I'll cry if I want to. Jesus cried. God says our tears are precious, He even saves them.

Why is it we avoid mourning? At times of loss and trauma, we may be in shock, we may become too busy, we may just want to hide from the truth and so we put aside our grief – ignore it, pretend it doesn't exist.

We have to stop and grieve. Tears are natural when we are sad. It's not healthy to hide our grief. Bottling up our sorrow is not good for the spirit or the body. Be honest with your emotions. Take them to God. We don't have to pretend we are OK when life hurts, nor do we have to try and hide our sorrow, pretend we don't have to deal with it.

Tears are not shameful. Bring them to God. Grab ahold of faith, the faith God gifts to us. God's faith helps us to know God's got this, it helps us to believe we can do it. Go ahead cry, ask God to help you believe, with God's help, you can do it, you will pass through this storm, you will accomplish the goal, live through the presentation, live with the pain, make your payment, live through your loss, make it through this episode. God's got this and God's has got you.

God understands fear and sorrow and tears. Jesus wept for His friend, Lazarus – even though He knew He was going to raise him from the dead. Jesus wept for Jerusalem, knowing those who rejected Him would perish.

Sorrow is an authentic feeling. No shame. No regrets. God validates our emotions. So bring your tears to God. Share your sorrows. Talk with someone. Go to God in prayer.

We're told we are not to dwell on sadness, but we can't ignore it, either. These are true feelings, they're normal, they're natural, be honest with God, with others, with yourself. Don't hide your sorrow.

Some sorrow is passing. Some we carry for a lifetime. Let God help you find joy in the midst of your sorrow.

Please pray with me. God of compassion, You promised to rescue those with a crunched spirit. You bring compassion and peace to the broken hearted. You keep track of our sorrows and record our tears. Lord, give us Your faith when all is a blurr. We give You thanks for Your unconditional love, for holding us when we cry, and for drying our tears. **Amen.**