

-Shepherd of the Mountains

Lutheran Church (LC-MS)

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The Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost
celebrating
All Saints Day
November 5, 2017
“Don’t Cry, Shopgirl”

Text: Revelation 7:17

“For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:2).

Surely no one will shed a tear over *that*.

June 13, 2011, according to Federal News Radio:

“The United States and NATO are stepping up military operations against Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi, hoping to push him out of power to drive him from power — or Reuters says a senior U.S. official is hoping they can kill him. The comments came after some of the heaviest bombing in Tripoli since the campaign to oust Gadhafi began. According to the Reuters report, the official said, “no one would shed a tear” if Gadhafi were to die in one of the many attacks.”(federalnewsradio.com, 6/13/2011)

November 1, 2012 - at althouse.blogspot.com/2012, a post entitled, *“Will no one shed a tear for the paparazzi of Washington, D.C.?”*:

[The] “merry band of Washington paparazzi photographers . . . are downright terrified of what a Mitt Romney presidency would mean to their business. Photographer and autographer collector Mark Wilkins said a Romney administration would “bring back the same old boring celebrities we saw back when Bush was around.” “Trace Adkins, all those country stars that no one really cares about,” said Wilkins. “I hope Romney doesn’t get elected because it will slow things down. Right now, there are celebs visiting the White House, four, five times a week that we don’t even know about until after they leave. Romney? Who wants to visit Romney?”

April 19, 2017 - at Chicago Sports Radio 670 The Score, “No one will shed a tear for [former New England Patriots tight end Aaron Hernandez], Mike Florio says, but what’s behind the investigation into his apparent suicide?” (www.facebook.com).

May 18, , a whole article entitled, *“Don’t Shed A Tear For Mike Pence, Folks. He knew what he was signing up for”* (www.huffingtonpost.com):

/ No one will shed a tear, *my eye!* I dare you to show me that “no one.” The one who’s never shed a tear, I mean!

“The tears of the world are a constant quantity,” Samuel Beckett wrote, “For each one who begins to weep somewhere else another stops” (*Waiting for Godot*).

The tears of the world. All those drippy drops of salty sorrow. *Your* tears, and *my* tears.

You can’t really *explain* them; they just *happen*:

“Something came out from my heart into my throat and then into my eyes” Jean Rhys - clearly no stranger to *tears* - wrote in *Voyage in the Dark*.

Of course, “the dark” is where so many of our tears fall, isn’t it? However, regardless of what too many of us with German and European heritage heard growing up, that’s *not* because we ever need to be ashamed of them. No, heaven knows we never need be ashamed of our tears, Charles

Dickens once wrote. (And if you ask *me*, no one would have shed a tear had it been in *A Tale of Two Cities*, rather than *Great Expectations*, for *that* [the *former*] of course, is the one that begins, “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.”)

“Heaven knows we need never be ashamed of our tears, for they are rain upon the blinding dust of earth, overlying our hard hearts. I was better after I had cried, than before – more sorry, more aware of my own ingratitude, more gentle.”

Better, indeed, . . . for our tears. For just listen to how those who have cried have explained the good that comes from our tears:

“Sometimes we have to soak ourselves in the tears and fears of the past to water our future gardens” (Suzy Kassem, *Rise Up and Salute the Sun: The Writings of Suzy Kassem*).

“Unhappiness can't stick in a person's soul when it's slick with tears” (Shannon Hale, *Princess Academy*).

“When you feel sadness inside, wipe it away by cries and tears!” (Toba Beta).

And that’s true no matter how many tears it takes, right - even when, well, you know, all that crying, er, “just doesn’t seem right”, even when, er, all those tears just keep on comin’, as Janice Galloway describes in *The Trick Is to Keep Breathing*,

“You would think there's a natural limit to tears: only so much the body can give at one sitting before it runs dry.”

But *we know* better, don’t we?

We know those times when we’ve shed tears, I mean. We all know they were the best of times, and they were the worst of times. We all know those times, and because no one will shed a tear if we don’t mention them *all* here, let’s talk about those times. Cry, cry, cry. Tears, tears, tears. Let’s talk about all those things that bring us to tears.

Let’s talk about the heartache. Let’s talk about the

loss.

Let’s talk about the grief. Let’s talk about the pain.

Let’s talk about the rejection. Let’s talk about the injustice.

Let’s talk about the guilt. Let’s talk about the hurt.

In those times, all our tears - all those drops of salty sorrow - are, as someone else has said - “the words the mouth can't say nor can the heart bear” (Joshua Wisenbaker).

Oh, if I could save tears in a bottle, right (“Jim Croce, “If I Could Save Time in a Bottle”)?

But while *I can't*, I can at least remember all the *times*. And all the *people*, as Mya Robarts has written: “You usually can't recall all the people you've shared laughs with, but you rarely forget the people you've shared your tears with” (*The V Girl*).

Yes, but while *I can't* [save tears in a bottle] - while the very best *I* could do just might be to remember all those tears, but I couldn't *possibly collect* them all - *He can!*

Even better, I say, while *I can't*, *He does!*

Well, not *I* say, *He* says. He has the *Psalmist* say! Do you remember?

“*You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book*” (Psalm 56:8b (NLT)).

Clearly, precious are the tears - let’s just say it today - of God’s “*saints*.”

And “*precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints,*” the Psalmist assures us (Psalm 116:15).

So precious that all those who have “fallen asleep” in the Lord, although they have *died*, yet they *live*. Although they are separated from *us*, yet they are with *Jesus*. Right now! Today! This *All Saints* day!

Surely no one will shed a tear over *that*, of course!

And yet this world *we're* trapped in is a vale of tears, a valley of tears. We weep. We cry. We shed those tears.

This world we're trapped in *now*.

But this world is temporary. This vale of tears is temporary. Its *tears* are temporary. One day - *you* heard it - "God will wipe away every tear from their eyes." Our eyes!

How many of those sappy Hallmark Hall of Fame movies that Dean enjoys so much have that in them? That tender scene like the one in what might be your all-time-favorite tear-jerker *You've Got Mail*, where Tom Hanks pulls his handkerchief out of his pocket - you know it! - and gently dabs at the tear that has fallen from Meg Ryan's eye, while he reveals that he is indeed the mystery man she's fallen in love with online simply by quietly referring to her email name, "Don't cry, Shopgirl."

Now if *that* doesn't bring you to tears, right? And it's the same deal in all Dean's Hallmark movies, too - where either the guy or the girl reaches out to wipe away that crumb or splash in one of those "You've got a little _____ right there" deals.

That first touch is *electric*, isn't it? For wiping away someone's else's tears is one of the most intimate of all personal interactions (so, Egger, in *Concordia Pulpit Resources*, Vol. 27, Pt. 4, Series A, p. 50). It *says* something!

So what does it say when the Lord of Heaven and Earth says - to you - and to all those you love, and to all those *He* loves - that He will wipe away every tear from their/your eyes? For you've got "mail," all right. You've got a "letter." You've got a "special delivery," sent from on high.

It says, "Don't cry, Shopgirl." It says, "Let me dry your tears." It says, "Everything is going to be okay. I'm going to take care of it. I promise."

And this from one who always keeps His promises. For God is not blind to our tears, as you heard. In the same way that he lovingly numbers all the hairs of our heads, He lovingly collects all our tears in a bottle. But God has done

more than just take note of our tears. In Jesus, His Son, He has entered into our valley of tears. Jesus' life was bathed in tears; it was book ended in tears. There were tears at His birth - giant crocodile tears accompanied by the brokenhearted wailing of the mothers who little baby boys were slaughtered by a ruthless ruler who didn't so much as shed a tear over killing everyone he though might grow up to be a political threat to him. There were tears - like great drops of blood, as it were - as He Himself contemplated his imminent death in Gethsemane's garden.

The Son of God from all eternity cried with those who cried while He was here on earth. But Jesus didn't just come to weep with the weeping. He came to take away their tears. He came to carry their sorrows. He came to cleanse them by His blood. He came to die their death. He came to take away their sins. He came to ensure that day would come when "God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Therefore, "Don't cry, Shopgirl" Or *Shopboy!*. Those you loved who loved the Lord - who died in Christ and now rest from their labors - are alive with Him. They live!

Don't cry, Shopgirl, for not only that, but on the Last Day, He will raise their bodies from the grave so with body and soul united they might live with Him in endless joy in the new heaven and the new earth.

Don't cry, Shopgirl, for not only will He raise those you love but He will raise *you*, as well! Yes, unless the Lord Jesus returns *before* your last day on earth, you will die. It's the inevitable "common experience of all the children of Adam. The wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). All sinners must die. But the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ. This gift is for you, just as it is for your love one who have gone before" (Rev. Jonathon Krenz, *Lutheran Witness*, June/July 2017, p. 27).

Now surely no one will shed a tear over *that*. Unless, of course, it's a tear of joy!

Thanks be to God. And may that thanksgiving show itself in thanksgiving, as we look for opportunities to dry the tears of others, as we bring them the grace that has been brought to us - the good news that Jesus, who saw their tears, carried their sorrows, and saved them by His life and death will one day wipe every tear from *their* eyes.

For Christ is risen. He is risen indeed.

We are risen. We are risen indeed.

Thanks be to God.

Amen.