

Mission Festival 2007
Sunday Evening Message to Chapelgate – Scotty Smith

**EXTENDING THE TEAR WIPING HAND OF GOD:
CPC's Place in God's Story of Redemption and Restoration**

Revelation 21:3-4 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

Revelation 7:15-17 “Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence. ¹⁶ They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. ¹⁷ For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

Isaiah 25:4-8 ⁴ For you have been a stronghold to the poor, a stronghold to the needy in his distress, a shelter from the storm and a shade from the heat; for the breath of the ruthless is like a storm against a wall, ⁵ like heat in a dry place. You subdue the noise of the foreigners; as heat by the shade of a cloud, so the song of the ruthless is put down. ⁶ On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined. ⁷ And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. ⁸ He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken.

Isaiah 51:11 The ransomed of the LORD will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, ⁴ who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

THE STEWARDSHIP OF TEARS

1. God takes tears very seriously, so much so that the completion of our salvation is described in terms of our tears being wiped away. Those who sow tears in this life are promised a harvest of everlasting joy in the next (Psalm 126:5). God's compassionate tear-wiping hand will validate our wounds, and we will celebrate our wholeness on the Day Jesus returns to make all things new. Why would any of us resist knowing, loving and serving such a glorious and gracious God?

2. As the people of God, we are called to be a “tear wiping community”... that is, an extension of the tear wiping hand of God... and a preview of the Day when all tears will be wiped away.

3. This presupposes several things:

- We are learning to be good stewards of our own tears
- We are learning to be good stewards of one another's tears
- We are showing up in the broken places of our culture and our world with sacrificial compassion.

SOME IMPORTANT QUESTIONS TO PONDER

- What have you done with your tears? How can we expect to experience the compassion and comfort of God if we remain detached from your heart?
- What do you feel in the presence of the tears of others? – Irritation, fear, contempt, compassion, incompetent? Have you ever explored why this is so?
- Have you ever wept for yourself... not tears of self-pity, but over the elements of your story that deserve, even demand tears?
- Do members of your family and your closest friends feel the freedom to weep in your presence?
- If God were to wipe tears from your eyes today, what hurt, pain, confusion, or regret would those tears most likely be related to?

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls... for my yoke is easy, and my burden light. Matt. 11:28-30