

Mark 7:34 (S. Barr) 167382

The Christian Shepherd: 1998, Fellowship With His Sorrow (7:34)

“And He sighed deeply in His spirit” (Mark 8:12).

It is very touching to distinguish some various sources which caused such sighs (groans) of sorrow from our blessed Lord Jesus. Though we can never fully know the depths of the sorrows that He felt, I have enjoyed another's differentiation of three sources of sorrow that the Lord Jesus felt: (1) the sorrow caused by the unbelief of man, (2) the sorrow caused by sympathy with man, burdened by sin, and (3) the sorrow caused by the anticipation of Calvary.

In Mark 8:12 the Lord Jesus is faced with the unbelief of His people, and it draws forth from Him a deep sigh (“groan”). Compare this with Mark 3:5, where He is “grieved” at the hard hearts of His beloved people, and Luke 19:41, where Jerusalem's unbelief draws forth His tears.

This sequence has application to believers today. As a young believer, I was often moved to anger or grief when confronting open unbelief. As I have grown in my Christian life, I realize that a more appropriate response would be one of sorrow and sympathy. And if I had more of the Saviour's heart, my response would be one of tears. The Apostle Paul spoke of “great heaviness and continual sorrow” when contemplating the continued unbelief of the people he loved. Oh! for more of this lovely attitude of heart!

In Mark 7:34 the Lord's sympathy for the deaf man brings forth a similar sigh. It has been suggested: “It was no lighthearted remedy that the Lord applied: He perfectly felt in His spirit what He took away in His power.” The Lord Jesus truly feels the effects that sin has brought on those He loves. Compare this with John 11:33,35, where the sorrow others are feeling over the death of Lazarus causes His blessed heart to groan, and then He weeps divine tears over the awful effects of sin.

“The whole creation groans together and travails” under the bondage of sin; how much do we feel it? Sometimes I sigh due to my weakness and my bondage to sin. But do I feel its effects deeply enough to draw forth my tears, longing for the day when we shall enter the fullness of the glory for which we now await and all creation with us (the glorious liberty of the sons of God)? Even further, do I sympathize with my brethren who are similarly suffering? “Weep with them that weep” (Rom. 12:15).

We who are believers have the wonderful privilege of sharing in fellowship with our Lord's heart—sharing His grief caused by sin. May we know more of the spirit of “Jesus wept” (John 11:35) and enjoy the admonition, “Rejoice evermore” (1 Thess. 5:16).

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