

I. Weeping & Mourning

- A. Why do we weep and mourn?
- B. What weeping and mourning give: loneliness; a sense of irreparable loss (Proverbs 14:10); and regret
- C. God's promises to those weeping and mourning: forgiveness; the Lord knows your grief; what is wrong will be made right (Revelation 21-22; Isaiah 25)

II. Persecution & Exclusion

- A. What persecution and exclusion give
  - i. human community is broken; we feel something less than human
  - ii. irreparable loss
- B. God's promises to the persecuted and excluded (1 Peter 4:1)

III. How to mourn and suffer persecution

- A. How Christians mourn
  - i. we don't deny or make peace with death and misery
  - ii. we weep – it hurts!
  - iii. we weep with each other
  - iv. we take action in word and in deed and in prayer
- B. How Christians deal with persecution
  - i. first: we aren't often persecuted in the USA
  - ii. second: we don't become persecutors!
  - iii. we suffer willingly (1 Peter 4:12-16)
  - iv. we love – in deed and prayer (Luke 6:27-28)
  - v. we are ready to answer (1 Peter 3:15)
  - vi. we rejoice (Luke 6:23)
  - vii. we do what we can to help those who are persecuted

IV. How do we know that these things are true?

- A. Mourning and persecution share intense loneliness.
- B. Mourning and persecution both feel like we are being punished.
- C. We are not being punished, and we are not alone. God's wrath fell on Jesus Christ. Our suffering is to change us and shape us and transform us.
- D. Jesus was the "man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; like one from whom men hide their face," (Isaiah 53:3)
- E. All of Jesus' followers, co-workers, and friends left him in his time of agony and death – they avoided him. (Mark 14:27)