

## **TENDER LOVE**

### **Romans 12:15**

**Dr. George O. Wood**

This word on how to express love comes to us again. You'll remember as we're going through Romans 12:9–21, we are looking at the way love behaves. One of the ways in which it behaves is seen in verse 15 of Romans 12: “Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn” (NIV).

And a cross-reference in Scripture that I want to note is Psalm 126:6: “He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him” (NIV).

Two admonitions in the Scripture today. Rejoice with those who rejoice. Weep with those who weep. Both of these admonitions assume that somehow we can get out of the encapsulated personalities that sometimes we manifest—that our culture kind of forces us in to, with our momentary way of touching people in our hurrying about.

These verses assume that God has implanted within us, as believers, some resources for showing emotion. I think that a person who is able to rejoice and a person that is able to weep has to, by the very nature of the words, be an emotional person. And God wants us, at moments in our life when emotion is called for, to express that emotion—not to be a repressed or a suppressed person. I'm going to, therefore, look at “rejoice” and “weep” from this standpoint—that Christ has come to set us free on the inside so we can really be authentically ourselves and express His life when we come to the happy and the sad moments of life.

How can we rejoice with those who rejoice? I'd like to come at this from rather an oblique angle, first of all, to suggest that if we tap the sources of our joy, we really understand how it is that we can rejoice. And we'll know how to rejoice. For there are happy moments that occur to people who are not Christians. And there are sad moments that occur to people who are not Christians.

## **TENDER LOVE**

### **Romans 12:15**

But Paul is talking here about something that is distinctively Christian. A Christian joy, and a Christian kind of weeping.

#### **I. So we, as Christians, look at the subject of how we're to tap the resources of joy.**

As I tried to analyze this this week, it seems to me that if I were to isolate the two leading sources of joy in the Christian's life—as they bear witness to the Scripture and as they bear witness to their own experience—these two sources of joy would be as follows.

**A.** First of all, a deep recognition of the triumph of Jesus Christ. There is really no joy if Jesus is not who He has declared himself to be. Remember in Luke 24, as the two disciples were coming back from Jerusalem on the road to Emmaus? They had heard the rumor that something had happened to the body of Jesus. They had reached the foregone conclusion that He was not coming back, that He was dead. As Jesus approached them on the road, the text of Luke so specifically says, "They stood still, looking sad." In their life, one sees what happens to joy if Jesus is not risen. Sadness can only happen to us. I cannot really understand how it is that a person without Jesus Christ could ever get through life. For all of joy, all of laughing, must only be something hollow. For at the end, there can be no joy. And if there's no joy at the end, how can the joy be meaningful that is in the process?

I recall a time when I was eight years of age and was with my family fleeing China to catch a plane to get out. China was going Communist, and we had gotten word to evacuate immediately. With the three children, my mom and dad, and one suitcase, and with my uncle's family and their two children, we got together in a truck and headed for the three-day's journey. There were no planes flying into the capital of the particular province we were in. One of the most memorable experiences of my childhood was about the middle of that journey, as we were going over a mountain road which had been cut into the precipices. Just a dirt road, one lane, hairpin curves all the way on this thing. You had to beep your horn as you were going around. And of

## **TENDER LOVE**

### **Romans 12:15**

course, without pavement and without the kind of roadwork that we have here it so happened that the rains had washed out a slice of this road where there was a gorge and a straight drop down. It looked to me like a thousand feet. I'd probably go back there today and it would be less. It could be more. But there was the Yellow River down below. It looked like a thin ribbon, although it was a very big river. So the truck stopped. And we all got out. Workmen were there trying to repair the road. We knew that we had a very limited time and we couldn't wait a week for the road to be repaired. So we waited a few hours, and it looked like they might be able to do something makeshift to get us through. Finally they were able to say to the driver, "If you want to take the chance, you can." With everybody out of the truck and the goods all unpacked, he got in the truck and, with the door open so that he could get out if the thing began to tip (his door was against the wall of the mountain) he began edging that thing out on some makeshift arrangements they had for the truck to go over the road. At one point, the right rear wheel actually hung out over the gorge. But needless to say, the truck made it and I'm here today. But before that truck got across, I remember the sheer kind of terror I felt as a child hearing my folks discuss would it be possible or not to make it over. Would we have to stop right there and become captives?

I thought of that little illustration in reflecting on the resurrection of Christ. What if the road were washed out from us to God? What if the road were washed out from us to eternal life? If that road were washed out, we're like the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. All we can do is stand still, looking sad.

Paul admitted this. He said that if the resurrection of Jesus Christ is not true, then our faith is in vain. We who declare the message of God have misrepresented Him. Those who have died believing in Christ have fallen asleep and are dead to terrible disillusionment. We are still in our sins.

## **TENDER LOVE**

### **Romans 12:15**

But the gospel of Jesus Christ, because it speaks to us of His triumph, tells us that while there is between us and God a great gulf fixed, Jesus is the bridge over the waters. He is the way we walk to God. And that's why the gospel is good news. That's why whenever it comes, the gospel always comes with the utterance of joy. Whether it be the angels who break into the shepherds' reverie at Bethlehem and say to them, "Behold, I bring you good news of great joy which shall be to all people" (Luke 2:10). From the outset, it's the good news.

We have that as individuals when we experience Jesus Christ. Once, when the seventy were returning from a mission that Jesus had sent them on, they came back rejoicing that miracles had happened. Jesus told them, "Rejoice not for this, but rejoice rather that your names are written down. That they're recorded in the Book of Life" (Luke 10:20). That is a source of joy which no circumstances can take away. If we have that, we can go on to other joys. But if we don't have that, we'd have to begin right there.

They announced at the beginning of Jesus' advent, "We bring you good news of great joy."

When Jesus had been taken up into heaven, the Gospel of Luke, in closing, says, "They returned to Jerusalem with great joy" (Luke 24:52).

If the circumstances of life break against us, we can rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that Jesus is risen. The Lord is my strength. The joy of the Lord is my strength. Rejoice in the Lord.

Rejoice always.

So we begin with the bedrock of joy, the triumph of Christ. That's one key to joy. If you haven't yet begun, that's the place to begin.

**B.** A second source of joy in the Scriptures, and a key element for tapping joy in the emotional life, is the presence of the Holy Spirit. The early disciples were clearly intoxicated with the Spirit's presence. In fact, Paul was compelled to give the admonition, "Don't be drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18). Striking, isn't it, that he would compare the

## **TENDER LOVE**

### **Romans 12:15**

filling of the Spirit to an inebriated condition? The Spirit gives us an ability to go through life with some sense of hilarity and joy.

We find in the Book of Acts how the disciples expressed joy. We find that their joy reigns.

Sometimes, like in Acts 2 on the Day of Pentecost, the critics of the disciples found the disciples so filled with joy that they accused them of being filled with new wine. Later on in Acts 2, the notation that Luke the historian makes is that the disciples partook of food with glad and generous hearts. That's quite a wide range of joy, isn't it? One, so clearly intoxicated with the joy of praising the Lord that other people mistake it for a drunken condition. And on the other hand, the quiet kind of joy that takes place at mealtime when people are just sitting down, breaking bread together. And their mealtime is noted. The characteristic notation of their mealtime is that they had glad and generous hearts. Quite an indicator, by the way, to our own mealtimes—glad and generous hearts.

I wonder at times, after the disciples were filled with the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, did they suddenly start eating better? They had steak instead of hamburgers? They had real chicken instead of the Colonel's chicken? A few things like that. What happened? Or did their attitude toward their food become different? I think it was the latter. Suddenly their whole attitude toward life had changed because the triumph of Christ had been achieved, and now indwelling them was the presence of the Holy Spirit. They were able to receive the Holy Spirit and joy.

How do we go about doing this? There is a statement which Jesus makes in John 7 where He cries out on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink." Then, "'For out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.' And this Jesus spoke about the Spirit, who had not yet been given." Rivers of living water—not a small trickle here and there, but a substantial quantity of the Holy Spirit. And the Water is living. It's not

## **TENDER LOVE**

### **Romans 12:15**

stagnant. It indicates a flowing kind of quality. How does this relate to the Spirit and the joy in our lives?

If you'll allow me to go way afield for a moment and reach for an historical illustration, I think I can develop this. In John 7, when Jesus said, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink," the occasion that He speaks that on is the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles. There were three significant feasts in each Jewish year. The Feast of Tabernacles, or Booths, was the last significant feast. It came in the fall. It signified the ingathering of the harvest. But it also commemorated the wandering of the children of Israel in the wilderness. For a whole week's period of time, families got out and lived in lean-to shelters. We'd call them brush arbors. Even the rabbi said there were to be spaces in the makeshift thatching of the roofs so the young generation could look through and see the stars and remind themselves that their forefathers had traveled in the wilderness and had dwelt under the open skies. Of course, it was a great time for the kids. You can imagine getting out of the house and living in a brush arbor for a week. In this way every year, Israel recreated its history. This was the Feast of Tabernacles. On the eighth day, which was the second Sabbath, the last day, there was a concluding ceremony in the temple area. The people were allowed at that point to bring in palm branches and all kinds of greenery to symbolize what they had been commanded: that they commemorate this by taking bows and branches. Then, at a precise moment as the ceremony of the Feast of Tabernacles was coming to a close, the priests would lift up on the altar a pitcher of water which he had drawn from the Pool of Siloam. That pitcher of water commemorated the fact that when Israel was in the wilderness the first time, they had run out of water. Moses had tapped the rock, and out of it had flowed water. Because of that, there was now a commemoration. God had supplied water in the desert. And the water from the Pool of Siloam was then poured on the altar. With that ceremony, the Feast of Tabernacles came to its conclusion. It was in that moment, I think the precise moment

## **TENDER LOVE**

### **Romans 12:15**

when the high priests lifted that pitcher of water, that Jesus' voice rings out in the temple: "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink." And what is He saying? "If he comes to Me and drinks, then I'll put something in him. And if there's something in him, then out of him will flow rivers of living water."

Let me take this allusion just a little bit further. In the wandering in the wilderness, when Moses tapped that rock as ordered by God, there are records of the fact that underground streams flow through the Sinai wilderness. Sometimes people who are adept at water finding can locate these, and by a heavy sledge blow on a rock, can tap the rock. And there's really fissures underneath the surface of the rock, that once the crust of the rock is broken, out will flow the water. It appears that God did a miracle on top of a natural process through Moses. As he tapped the rock, the outer crust was broken and out of it came the living water, the water that had been flowing in the underground streams. It's this kind of thing that I think Jesus is referring to when He said, "If you'll come to me and drink, then out of your innermost being will flow rivers of living water." Because in our lives there is often a kind of outer crust, if you will. A crust of hardness and lack of tenderness which makes it impossible for us to really radiate emotion as we want to do. To really be rejoicing or really be weeping. Sometimes the outer crust is put there because the family background that we grew up in happened to be very cold and austere and people didn't relate to one another warmly. Sometimes the crust is there because of sin. When there is sin in our lives, it's very difficult to enter in to a real spiritual, emotional, sympathetic, empathetic relationship with someone else because the crust is there. Sometimes it's just plain, old selfishness in our life, which keeps looking out for our own affairs and not the affairs of other people, that creates the crust. And the resources of life that can flow from our personality are just encased in this. And Jesus says, "If you'll come to Me and drink, then I'm going to do an additional thing. As that water is put in the reservoir of your life and you drink of Christ by

## **TENDER LOVE**

### **Romans 12:15**

taking His Word, hearing His gospel, praying to Him, then I'm going to come and I'm going to tap you, and out of the inner resources is going to be that presence of the Holy Spirit that I've put into your life. And it's going to flow."

If you take that analogy on the Day of Pentecost, you see exactly what happens. For in Acts 2, although the disciples still had—even after the resurrection of Christ—that one additional thing. They needed to be tapped. And as soon as they were tapped by the presence of the Holy Spirit, what flows? An immediate stream of praise just erupts from their life and flows up to the throne of God. And the people say, "These people are drunk with new wine. They're praising God with these various language groups that are presented." Because what happens when the Holy Spirit taps into the inner resources and potential of our life is, first, we begin to radiate an emotion toward God. It's one thing to know God intellectually. But it's quite another thing to know God emotionally. Jesus says to get a hold of the resources of joy in your life through the presence of the Holy Spirit. Let Him tap your life. Let, out of that innermost being, flow the rivers of living water. The Lord wants to release from the rock of your personality rivers, rivers of joy.

Sometimes, rivers of weeping.

We really get this through living in the presence of the Spirit. Sometimes it is that we come to this in a very crisis moment, where the Spirit touches us in a way that He did the disciples on the Day of Pentecost. There is a release of the Spirit. There is meant to be a continued release of the Spirit. As Ephesians 5 says, that Spirit is released as we address one another in songs and hymns and spiritual songs. Giving praise to God always, and in everything giving thanks. Those are the kinds of emotional qualities of being in right relationship with others, through singing to them and giving thanks to God and rejoicing. Those are the kinds of qualities that make possible the release of the Spirit in our lives.

## **TENDER LOVE**

### **Romans 12:15**

So I really believe that in order to experience joy as a Christian, we look to sources that are outside the availability of someone who doesn't know the Lord. We look to the fact that Christ has triumphed. We look to the fact that the Spirit is present, and we are able to rejoice. While non-Christians can rejoice, they can never rejoice to the depths of believers.

Therefore, as you look at your life, is there an exterior there that needs to be penetrated so that out of that crust can flow some rivers of living water? Ask the Holy Spirit to do it in your life. Have the laying on of hands. Spend some time just in prayer and fasting until that hunger for God so wells up within you that God is able to create pools of water in your life in the midst of that hunger.

But Jesus knows that life is not all rejoicing. The Apostle Paul knows that, too. So the admonition is not only to rejoice with those who rejoice. What I'm saying is we're really not able to rejoice unless we understand deeply this triumph of the Lord and the presence of the Spirit. If we have that, we're able to really empathize with those who are rejoicing and to share in their joys.

### **II. But also we're to weep with those who weep.**

I would suggest that if we're to weep with those who weep, then we get a feeling for what it was that motivated the Lord to weep. Because we're allowed to weep with Him and like Him. He is called the man of sorrows. He brought joy, but He understood our times of weeping. As I look at the Gospels, I find that there are two occasions in the Gospels where Jesus cries. I realize that the word "weeping" often conveys the idea of tears. Jesus was a man of sorrows, but it was not noted all the time that He was weeping tears. But there are two specific times where He used tears. So when you use that word "weep," don't always think that means tears—any more than when you use the word "rejoice," it always mean laughing. It can mean just an attitude. But in the Lord's life, two specific moments in which He wept.

## **TENDER LOVE**

### **Romans 12:15**

A. One is in John 11, which shows us that Jesus wept for an individual person. It was the raising of Lazarus. As Jesus came to the tomb and saw the grief of His friends, Mary and Martha, and the grief of those who were nearby, the Scripture says, “Jesus wept” (John 11:35, the shortest verse in the Bible). It is the verse that, when I was a kid, if you were given a chance in the Sunday School class to quote a verse in the Bible, there was always a race for that verse.

In the Gospels, we find that there are three instances in which Jesus raised someone from death. Jairus’ daughter, twelve years of age, was raised from death by the Lord. And a widow from the city of Nain had a son who was being carried out of the city, dead, and Jesus raised him. In both of those instances, it is not noted that Jesus wept. It is noted that the relatives, the close family, were weeping. In fact, Jairus’ household was weeping so badly that Jesus had to put them out of the room in order that He could go in and have a moment of aloneness. But nothing is said about His weeping. When He came to the widow of Nain, He said to her, “Don’t cry” (Luke 7:13). She was weeping. Nothing is said about His weeping. But when He comes to Lazarus, it says He weeps.

As I look at this, I wonder what is the difference. Since in all parts Jesus was made human like us, there must be something going on in His personality to explain something that goes on in mine. I think it is clear. Jairus He only met as He was going down the road. It appears that He had no previous acquaintance with him. The widow at Nain, the first time He met her was when she was coming out of the city. There had been no personal contact established. So in the presence of death, I’m sure inwardly He grieved. But it was quite a different substance of emotion that He expressed when He stood at the grave of His friend Lazarus, with whom He had eaten, in whose home He had been time after time. And the grief came full flush into His face. That explains to me why, when I hear of a loss of someone that I don’t know, I may be inwardly grieved, but it is not quite the same emotion and feeling as when someone who is very close to

## **TENDER LOVE**

### **Romans 12:15**

me experiences loss. It is a pattern which the Lord himself expressed. In a moment of sorrow, Jesus wept. He knew when to weep. He didn't hold it in. And He wasn't clinical. He didn't say, "I've handled these cases before, and I think I can handle this one as well." He became tender in every respect of life. He didn't try to explain away or to comfort through words. In this moment, He is simply comforting with His presence and with His tears.

If Jesus wept because a web of relationship had been created with a family and He was in that web of relationship, how different it strikes us when, from the pulpit, prayer requests are made. We all become concerned as we hear members of our body who are in need. But when the people in the body whom we really know well have a need, it strikes us all the more deeply. If no need strikes us, if no need motivates us to become concerned and compassionate, to weep, then it would be a sure indication that we are living too much in aloneness. We are not with people, and with persons specifically, as much as we ought to be. The capacity to be touched deep within us is one of the things that God wants to happen within a church, within a Body, where He puts people close to one another in order that they might feel for one another in joy or in sorrow.

Jesus wept for persons.

Sometimes this weeping, this need to feel empathetically for someone, is the same thing that is a kind of principle that is applied to family life. What if (for those of you parents with young children) your little tyke goes off and bruises his knee and comes, and you offer no sympathy to him? A kiss does so much to heal a bruise. I can't believe the medicinal power that is in a kiss. Everything is made right. Someone is extending a sympathetic weeping with those who weep, even on a very elementary level.

I was beginning a book by James Dobson, *Hide or Seek*, and found what happens in a family when we do not weep with one another. Some things, if you come from a normal, healthy family background, you're shocked at what you see that's present in the world. Things that you take for

## **TENDER LOVE**

### **Romans 12:15**

granted and don't even think about, other people are doing. As a result, bad things are happening. James Dobson tells about the story of a young man who began his life with all the classic handicaps and disadvantages. His mother was a powerfully-built, dominating woman who found it difficult to love anyone. She had been married three times, and her second husband divorced her because she beat him up regularly. Dobson said that the father of the child he's describing was her third husband. He died of a heart attack a few months before the child's birth. As a consequence, the mother had to work long hours from the earliest childhood. She gave him no affection, no love, no discipline, and no training during those early years. She even forbade him to call her at work. Other children had little to do with him, so he was alone most of the time. He was absolutely rejected from his earliest childhood. He was ugly and poor and untrained and unlovable. When he was thirteen years old, the school psychologist commented that he probably didn't even know the meaning of the word "love." During adolescence, the girls would have nothing to do with him, and he fought with the boys. Despite a high IQ, he failed academically and finally dropped out during his third year of high school. He thought he might find a new acceptance in the Marine Corps. They reportedly built men, and he wanted to be one. But his problems went with him. The other Marines laughed at him and ridiculed him. He fought back, resisted authority, and was court-martialed and thrown out of the Marines with an undesirable discharge. So there he was, a young man in his early twenties, absolutely friendless and shipwrecked. He was small and scrawny in stature. He had an adolescent squeak in his voice. He was balding. He had no talent, no skill, no sense of worthfulness. He didn't even have a driver's license. Once again he thought he would run from his problems, so he went to live in a foreign country. But he was rejected there, too. Nothing had changed. While there, he married a girl who was herself an illegitimate child and brought her back to America with him. Soon she began to develop the same contempt for him that everyone else displayed. She bore him two children, but

## **TENDER LOVE**

### **Romans 12:15**

he never enjoyed the status and respect that a father should have. His marriage continued to crumble. His wife demanded more and more things that he could not provide. Instead of being his ally against the bitter world as he hoped, she became his most vicious opponent. She could outfight him, and she learned to bully him. On one occasion, she locked him in the bathroom as punishment. Finally, she forced him to leave. He tried to make it on his own, but he was terribly lonely. After days of solitude, he went home and literally begged her to take him back. He surrendered all pride. He crawled. He accepted humiliation. He came on her terms. Despite his meager salary, he brought her \$78 as a gift, asking her to take it and spend it any way she wished. But she laughed at him. She belittled his feeble efforts to supply the family's needs. She ridiculed his failure. She made fun of his impotency in front of a friend who was there. At one point, he fell on his knees and wept bitterly as the great darkness of his private nightmare enveloped him. Finally, in silence, he pleaded no more. No one wanted him. No one had ever wanted him. He was, perhaps, the most rejected man of our time. He pulled the trigger on November 22, 1963. Lee Harvey Oswald.

As much as no excuse can ever take away the responsibility he had for that crime, one can see what happens in a life carried to its ultimate conclusion for whom no one has ever wept. It is a quality which God wants to be present in us as people. To weep with those who weep. Starting in family, all the way from little tykes right through the family of God. To have that sensibility to others, that closeness when people are hurting and need a hug rather than a shove. They need to be stood up and helped rather than sat down in silence. They need a shoulder to cry on, not a hand to reprove them.

Jesus wept for the person, wept for an individual. His weeping is meant to be a part of our experience in the body of Christ. Weeping with those who weep. Sometimes it is at tragedy. Sometimes it is a loss relating to death or illness. Sometimes it's just a feeling of aloneness and

## **TENDER LOVE**

### **Romans 12:15**

not being worthwhile, or inferior. It's a feeling of not being able to get a grasp on life. God wants us to be as aware of one another. No one person can be aware of the whole church, but among us we can be close enough to one or two or three or four people, at a minimum, that we can share their sorrows in life. Jesus wept for the individual.

**B.** There's a more sophisticated kind of weeping in the Lord's life. The second time the Gospels show Him weeping, He is weeping over a city. I think that's a more advanced state. We don't really weep over a city until we can weep over an individual. But Jesus' last time coming into Jerusalem on holy week, Luke 19:41 says as He came over the Mount of Olives and He saw the city of Jerusalem down before Him, when He drew near the city He wept over it. He was weeping for people who were not weeping for themselves—sensitive because He saw, in the days ahead, the destruction of life that was going to occur in the city because of its willful rebellion against God.

I would suggest that the weeping of Jesus is for those who do not themselves weep. Because ahead, we see the disaster that takes place in human life when the Lord Jesus Christ is kept out of life and kept out of the city. So the Lord wants His Church and His people in the Church to be a weeping Church for the city and the world in which they're in.

Psalms 126:6 says, "He that goes forth weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him." That's a striking illustration. I think it relates to this text here in Romans 12:15. It's an agricultural story. It refers to those poor farmers who, as the wintertime came and it was the moment to put the seed in the ground and spring was months away, as they looked at that grain, if they could keep that grain, it would supply handsomely the needs of the family for the coming months. But to take that grain away and put it into the ground was to possibly deprive the family of enough to eat through the winter. It was all such a risk anyway. Because the rain might not come. Or too much floods might come. Or the

## **TENDER LOVE**

### **Romans 12:15**

sun might shine too much, or it might not shine at all. But unless the seed was put into the ground, there was no hope at all for a harvest, and one would starve eventually. So the farmer would go forth with his seed—the poor farmer with that seed which could be made into bread to feed his family. He would go forth weeping and put it into the ground—weeping because he doesn't know for sure what is going to happen to it. But when the seed was put into the ground, the psalmist goes on to reflect that he would come home again later bringing his sheaves. Instead of seed, he would have a product—sheaves. And what he invested would come back to him a hundred times.

It seems to me the non-Christian is one who goes through life bearing his seeds, weeping. But never with a chance of seeing them harvested. They've all been sown. Loved ones are laid into the ground. Misfortunes are suffered. Illnesses are encountered. Tragedies happen. Interpersonal relationships fragment and break apart. And the person goes forth weeping. There's no hope that anything that's being sown is going to come back. But the Lord says of His people, "They that go forth weeping, bearing seed for sowing..." And every time you see a person weeping in life or you weep yourself, if you think about it analytically, you realize that something precious to you has been lost. You're having to put it into the ground. That's why you're weeping. It's not coming back to you. It's been invested. It's there. But the Lord says, "Stay with Me, and you'll come again rejoicing, bringing sheaves with you."

Jesus said in John 12: "Unless a grain of wheat fall to the ground and die, it abides alone. But if it dies, it bears much fruit." And this He speaks about the losses in our life. We're to go out as we see the tears of the sower, losing what is precious to him or to her. We're to join in that weeping. But there is a consolation, a bedrock of faith which undergirds every act of weeping. It is the bedrock that Jesus is triumphant and the Spirit is present. So we can rejoice with those who rejoice, and we can weep with those who weep.

## **TENDER LOVE**

**Romans 12:15**

### **Closing Prayer**

Lord, in this prayer we come back to causes in life—why it is, as people, we cannot be more free to really express emotion as we ought. That, often, it is a result of family background or persons within family who never sat on a mom or dad's lap, nor were ever hugged or kissed. Growing up with that kind of physical estrangement, it's difficult to feel the strong river of joy when it needs to be expressed. Or the river of weeping. But Lord, You have said if anyone is in You, he is a new creation. The old has passed away and the new has come. Lord, we pray that You would tap the potentiality of our lives to bring forth the rivers of emotional response that are required in moments when those near to us are rejoicing. We can enter into their joy. And we can enter into weeping when that is required of us as well.

Sins often act as layers of grime upon our soul and keep us from enjoying the pure emotional health and well-being of a right relatedness to You and a right relatedness to others. As we bring those sins to You and to the foot of the Cross with confession, we know, Lord, that You heal us from all of our sins. You create a right spirit within us. So we bring these sins to You. We even bring our selfishness to You.

Lord, we just pray for individuals. We pray for ourselves in this moment. That You would bring to our consciousness now persons that are about us who are rejoicing and weeping and You would help us to go out of ourselves to be into them, to be a river of water springing up.

Lord Jesus, for our church family as well. In regard to one another, and in regard to our responsibility in this community and this city in which You've placed us, we pray, Lord, that we will go forth with tears of sowing—coming again, rejoicing, with sheaves. We know that any profound work that Your Spirit does always has behind it the intercessions of your people, their crying unto You. You hear our cries. Lord, we know that there will come a day in which every tear will be wiped away and there will be no crying or pain any more. Knowing that that moment

## **TENDER LOVE**

### **Romans 12:15**

is coming, therefore, we take these days when we are weeping and crying as special days for us that will never come again throughout all eternity. We want to see them not simply as tears of selfishness, but as tears that bring redemption and healing which release the vital and potent forces of our life. We ask this, Lord, in Your Name, knowing You want us to walk as You have walked. In Jesus' Name. Amen.