**Relaxed Mental Attitude, No. 4 – BD13-01**

We continue with the Word of God this morning in studying the matter of how to be a mature Christian. A mature Christian, we have learned, is a person who has a relaxed mental attitude because his mind is free of mental attitude sins. So the technique that we’ve been talking about is faith rest, resting by God in faith, because this produces an attitude of mind which is relaxed. It’s based on claiming promises of the Word of God, on believing the doctrine of the Word of God, and acting on prophecy. All of these are our unlimited divine operating assets.

Here’s the basis for the faith rest technique. We enter a plan that God has for your life at the point of salvation, and in that plan God has taken into account all of your needs, all of your problems, all of your trials, and He’s made provisions for every one of them.

Now there are certain wonderful things that stem from a relaxed mental attitude—certain vital qualities in our lives. 1) You find that your mind is free of being dominated by mental sins—attitudes of mind that are destructive to our souls. 2) You will find that a relaxed mental attitude give you respect for the volition of other people, for the freedom which God has given other people to make choices, right or wrong, in respect to their personal priesthood. 3) A relaxed mental attitude will give us respect for the privacy of others. You will respect that if a person is his own priest that he can only do that if it is a private exercise.

There was a response from Abram to all of this which was a great encouragement to his heart. In the New Testament we have an insight as to how he responded to this vision of God alone confirming between the pieces of the sacrifice the promises that He had made to Abram. Turn to Romans chapter beginning at verse 16 this morning. We have here the basis of the mental piece which possessed Abram’s being.

Romans 4:16 says, “Therefore it is of faith.” “Of faith,” the faith rest technique believes the promises, the doctrines, and the prophecies that God has given. It’s a faith matter. “That it might be by grace,” meaning it all depends on who and what God is only. “To the end that the promise might be sure to all the seed.” The promise of Abram having his own son. “The seed” referring to the nation of Israel. “Not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abram who is the father of us all.

Abram was not only the racial father of the Jewish people. He was also the spiritual father of all of us who respond to God by faith and who believe God as Abram did. Now verse 17—here’s the pattern of faith rest: “As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations.” “As it is written,” back in Genesis 17:5. “I have made (a thing that God has done in the past, and it’s true up to now) a father of many nations, even God who giveth life to the dead.” Abram believed that God was going to give him a progeny—that He was going to give him a vast descendency who would become not only one but a number of nations.

Now it is this God that Abram believed because Abram had this confidence that God was the one who giveth life to the dead, “and calleth those things which were not as they were.” Now you must remember how old Abram was. “He giveth life to the dead.” By the context here, and the promises to the nation of Israel through Abram, that this context is dealing with, it is evident that what we’re speaking of up here as to who is dead here is Abram. Now how is Abram dead? Well he was sexually dead. Yet God was saying, “Through your own son, from your own body, I will make you a multiplicity of mighty nations. Abram was as good as dead. He was 99 years old before that son was conceived. His wife was 90.

Now verse 18 says, “Who against hope believed in hope that he might become the father of many nations.” What it is saying here is that humanly Abram and Sarah were in a hopeless situation. There was no possibility, humanly speaking, for this 90-year-old woman to bear any children. And the Scriptures say that as far as Abram was concerned at this time, he was incapable of reproducing children—sexually dead. What settled this thing in his mind? How did he look at it?

Verse 18: “Who against hope believed in hope that he might become the father of many nations according that that which was spoken so shall thy seed be.” God had spoken, and that settled it. That’s the simplicity of this principal. When God speaks, there is no further discussion. Now that’s resting by faith in the fullest and ultimate authority that there is in the universe.

The Roman Catholic Church has taught its people that when the pope speaks, ex cathedra, from the throne, then all discussion ceases. Once he speaks from that official position, he is the voice of God on earth, and there is no appeal, there is no debate, there is no recourse from what he has declared. That of course is contrary to the word of God, and that is a fraud imposed upon the catholic people against which increasingly in our day there is rebellion, and discouragement in papal circles, as people are no longer accepting the voice of God through a man on earth, but they’re accepting the voice of God as in the Scriptures of God which He has recorded through men on earth.

So Abram believed what God had told him. You’re going to have your own baby boy. Abram looked at himself and he looked at his crinkled up old wife, and he says, “Let’s paint the cradle again and get things ready once more.” And there was no doubt in his mind that, in time, they were going to need that nursery.

Verse 19 says, “And being not weak in faith he considered not his own body now dead.” There it is in so many words. His sexual incapacity when he was about 100 years old, “neither yet the deadness of Sarah’s womb.” He simply ignored all the human viewpoint that was indicated. We know that after Isaac was born that the work of God was a work that was very effective in the body of Abram because he had several other children after Isaac was born.

Verse 20 says, “He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief but was strong in faith giving glory to God.” “He staggered not at the promise” means he didn’t respond with negative volition because God was more real to him than his dead body. Now the same pattern is the one Christians have to face in hopeless situations that seem to have no answers and no way out for we are pressed to the wall. That’s when we have to have greater confidence in the promises of God and in what doctrine tells us about how He operates, and what He has informed us as to where He is moving than we do about the hopeless situation where we find ourselves.

Abram’s faith rest brought glory to God. The only lapse (over the next fifteen years was when) he was about 85 when these promises were being reiterated to him was the bad advice that he took from his wife over marrying Hagar, the Egyptian servant girl in order to help God produce the son. That was a disappointing lapse, and of course it caused a lot of trouble later.

Verse 21 says, “And being fully persuaded that what He had promised He was able to perform.” There was no doubt in Abram’s mind that God was going to be able to keep His promise.

Now the land that was promised was from the Euphrates on the East and the Northeast down to the Nile River in the South. Now I want you to notice that this declaration on the part of Abram and the promise that God had made to this people, which you remember included the fact that they were going to be strangers, slaves, in a foreign country for a period of 400 years and then that they would return. From the faith promise example of Abram sprang the faith promise capacity and character of Joseph, centuries later. Hebrews 11:22 says, “By faith, Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel and gave commandment concerning his bones.” It was centuries later that the fulfillment came of what Joseph was claiming in his day.

Now in the heroes of faith chapter here in Hebrews 11, the stress, you note, is not upon the magnificent life that Joseph lived, the very godly life that Joseph lived, but the emphasis here in this faith chapter is upon his death. So it says, “By faith, Joseph, when he died (or when he was dying), made mention.” That means he recalled the prophecy that we’ve been looking at in Genesis 15: 13-18 about Israel’s destined departure from Palestine to Egypt.

Now the faith rest of Joseph on this prophecy led him to leave instructions concerning his bones when he was dying because he remembered that God had said, “You will be in Egypt,” and that’s where they were—the whole family, all 70 now in Egypt. And He said, “You will furthermore be here for 400 years and then you’re going back.”

Now what did Joseph do? God said, “God has spoken. I believe it. I have to act upon it.” So he gave some instructions as to what the people of Israel, hundreds of years in the future, were to do in reference to his bones when they left Egypt to return to the Promised Land. If you’ll turn to Genesis 50:24: “And Joseph said unto his brethren, ‘I die. And God will surely visit\ you and bring you out of this land unto the land which he swore to give to Abram, to Isaac, and to Jacob.’” Joseph is about to die. He reminds the Jews of their future rescue from the land in which they were now guests. He swore to give this land of Palestine to Abram. He swore later to Isaac, and also to Jacob.

Verse 25 says, “He will surely visit you,” which means that he’s applying the prophecy that they would again return. Now he commands that his bones should be taken with them in the Exodus when they leave. And he dies at 110 years of age. Incidentally, Genesis 50:26 indicates that Joseph died and he was put into a coffin or sarcophagus in Egypt. They didn’t put him underground. They put him into a tomb-like structure above the ground, and it probably was over in Goshen in the midst of the people of Israel so that for 400 years the Jews could walk by and they could look at the sarcophagus containing the bones of Joseph—the reminder that that was to them of what he had commanded that they were someday to do.

So Exodus 13:19 comes to the fulfillment. Joseph has been embalmed. He has been put in this sarcophagus right in the Jews’ camp, and when they leave in the Exodus, they take the bones with them. Exodus 13:19 says, “And Moses took the bones of Joseph with them for he had solemnly sworn to the children of Israel saying, ‘God will surely visit you and ye shall carry up my bones away from here with you.’”

And so all these years, the bones of Joseph in the sarcophagus had been a testimony to the power of the faith rest technique. It was a reminder to the Jews of the release that was coming. It helped them to live normal lives over the hardship years of these centuries. So they expanded from 70 people to two million. And Joseph believed in the resurrection, and he didn’t intend to get up out of his grave in Egypt. When he gets up out of his grave, he was going to see to it that it was in the Promised Land of Palestine where it is going to happen now.

So he claimed the promise of God, he believed doctrine, and he acted on the prophecy. This is a refreshing example of how a faithful man in Abram acts upon faith and then those who follow him look back and say, “That’s how my forefathers acted,” and they pick up the signal, and they act in faith. And Joseph was a splendid example of a man who operated on the faith rest technique just because God said it was so. He learned it from his ancestor Abram.

But the people didn’t learn it. Now if you’ll turn to Numbers 13, we’re going to look at a failure—the kind of failure that you and I can experience in exercising this confidence and resting by faith in God. Here is the situation: The Exodus has taken place. It is now one year since Pharaoh finally said, “Get out,” after the tenth plague had struck the land. For one year they have been moving through the wilderness area toward the port of entry of Kadesh Barnea, which was the shortest route into the Promised Land.

They are a large group of about two million ex-slaves. During this year they’ve had certain experiences out in the wilderness. These were to teach them that they could trust God. Remember they had the problem of crossing the Red Sea, so God opened it up and let them cross on dry land. They had the problem of needing water, bitter water made sweet, and just a supply of water brought out of the rock. They had the problem of needing food and they were supplied with the manna and the quail. They had these experiences to teach them that they could trust God.

The biggest test of the relaxed mental attitude was before them. They were to see whether they could act upon what they had learned, whether they could act upon the principal of Romans 8:28 that all things, because God is in them, work together for divine good. That they could act upon 1 Peter 5:7 that they can cast their cares upon Him because He cares for us. That they could believe that the battle is the Lord’s. That they could act in confidence that God is faithful (1 Corinthians 10:13), and therefore He is to be trusted. The biggest test of all was now coming.

They’re at the port of entry. God says to Moses, “Before you go in, I want you to send out a reconnaissance patrol. I want you to pick twelve outstanding men, one from each tribe except from the tribe of Levi”—that was the priestly tribe. The tribe of Joseph was made up of two half-tribes which made the twelve.

And so he says in verse 1 of chapter 13, “The Lord spoke unto Moses, ‘Send thou men that they may search the land of Canaan which I give unto the children of Israel. Of every tribe of their father shall ye send a man, every one a ruler among them.’” Now I want you to notice in verse 2 that God says they are to “search out the land which I give unto the children of Israel.” Here again, there is no doubt in God’s mind what He’s going to do. He has already told Abram centuries before what he was going to do. Joseph believed Him and saw that his bones were taken with them at this time.

Now the spies are not being sent out to see whether they can take this land. The spies are being sent out to reconnoiter it for certain pieces of information. They’re simply to determine how they’re going to go about to enter the land, and how they’re best to proceed to deal with the people that are in there. And they’re going to have to have some information. Faith acts on knowledge and not on blindness.

Verse 17 says, “Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan and said unto them, ‘Get you up this way into the Negev (that is, the dry desert area in the South), and go up into the mountains.” He tells them, “As you make the patrol, head out into the desert area and then move up into the high ground on the mountains because that’s the vantage point for patrol to observe from.”

Now they were to bring back certain information. When a patrol is sent out on a military expedition, the commander says, “I want you to go out there into enemy territory, and I want you to conduct the patrol in this way in order to find out this, this, this, and this. You are to avoid contact with the enemy. You are not to get into a firefight. You are simply to observe and bring back the information that we need.”

Now the information that Moses needed was spelled out to these people. He said, “See the land, what it is. I want information about the terrain—what kind of a land we’re going to be passing through; what our situation will be moving this body of people through this territory. And I want you to see also the people who dwell therein, whether they are strong or weak, few or many. I want information concerning the enemy, the distribution of his population and the strength of his forces.

And verse 19: What the land is that they dwell in, whether it is good or bad; and what cities they are that they dwell in, whether in camps or in strongholds. Moses said, “I also want you to bring me back information on their fortifications. I want to know whether they’re in camps, whether they’re in fortified cities—how we’re going to approach the problem of taking the land.

Then he gives them one final word before he sends out this patrol of twelve men for its 40-days recon mission. In verse 20, he says, “What the land is, whether it is fat or lean, whether there is wood therein or not, and be ye of good courage.” One more word: be ye of good “courage,” and bring the fruit of the land. Now the time was the time of the first ripe grapes. A small patrol moving into deep into enemy territory is going to have to maintain its nerve. Moses says, “It’s going to be frightening. Don’t crack up. You have nothing to worry about. Just get out there. Hit the high ground. Keep your eyes open. Get the information, and get back.”

So they did. They moved out and they executed the mission. Ten of these men proved cowardly. Two of them proved courageous. The difference was due the fact that in Joshua and Caleb was found the faith rest technique, and the other ten (noble men, religious men, godly men perhaps, but not functioning on this technique). And what they found in the land was giants. And the giants were such as to cause great fear in their hearts. They didn’t realize that the giants, once God had spoken, were nothing. And as a matter of fact, the giants were a test and a preparation for their confidence in God. Just like the giants have in our lives—the people who bug us, the circumstances that tear us up, the irritations because we lack some detail of life. But the giants teach us that God is greater than all of them.

So they moved out. Verse 21 says, “They searched the land from the wilderness of Zin unto Rehob, as men come to Hamath.” And verse 23 says, “And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from there a branch of one cluster of grapes, and they bore it between two upon a staff; and they brought of the pomegranates, and of the figs.” And verse 25 says, “And they returned from searching the land after 40 days.”

Now verse 26: What kind of report are they going to make? Here’s the report. Moses’ headquarters is at Kadesh. The two million people are spread out over the wilderness of Paran, in their campground. The spies come back and they make their report to Moses and to the people. They displayed the fruit that they brought back, and they’re excitedly telling about the things that they had found. They’re making their report.

Verse 26 says, “And they and came to Moses and to Aaron and to all the congregation of the children of Israel unto the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh, and brought back word unto them and to all the congregation, to show them the fruit of the land.”

Verse 27 says, “And we came unto the land to which thou senteth us, and surely it flows with milk and honey, and this is the fruit of it.” They said that everything God had told us about this land was confirmed. It was exactly the way God said it would be.

But, in verse 28: “Nevertheless…” Now what do you think is the problem? All agreed that God told it like it is. There was a problem. They found some facts as a result of their reconnaissance mission, and now these facts affected their thinking. They saw some facts that contradicted the faith that they could have in the promise of God. Strong people, fortified cities, the people of Anak—these people were giants. Every man was ten to thirteen feet tall. You can imagine that if you were just going to play a game of football, and you walked out on the field and everybody on the side was ten to thirteen feet tall, it might give you pause to consider. Now when you find hundreds and hundreds of them like that facing you, that does stagger faith. Those ten-to-thirteen feet tall warriors are nothing to scoff at.

Furthermore, they took a look at the people. Now this is 1441 B.C. And here were some impressive warriors of that time. The Amalekites in verse 29—these were people who lived in Negev, and they were very crafty people. They Hittites—they used chariots in battle. The Jebusites were a fierce warrior people that for almost four hundred fifty years, Israel was not able to conquer them and take the city of Jerusalem, which was their headquarters. It wasn’t until 1000 B.C. under David that they finally took Jerusalem from the Jebusites. The Amorites who lived in the mountains, and the Canaanites along the sea—these were the people that confronted them when they came in.

So verse 30: Caleb steps up. He sees what this report from the majority has done. He sees the people are shaken. So Caleb steps up and he stilled the people (in verse 30) before Moses and said, “Let us go up and possess it for we are well able to overcome it.” Caleb is saying, “Forget the facts. Remember what God has said.” And that’s very important if you’re going to learn how to build a relaxed mental attitude. You’re going to have to forget the facts sometimes. It is sad when Christians are so preoccupied with the facts over against what God is leading you to do, that you’re sure you can’t do it because the facts indicate otherwise, and you go down in defeat.

If God said it’s their land, then Caleb says, “Let’s go up. We are well able to overcome it no matter what the facts say.” And the majority reacted and called the people to unbelief. Verse 31 says, “But the men that went up with him said, ‘We’re not able to go up against the people for they are stronger than we.’ And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, ‘The land which we have gone to search, it is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof, and all the people which we saw in it are men of great stature. And there we saw the giants, the son of Anak, who come of the giants, and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.’”

After all, the facts speak for themselves. They rejected doctrine, they rejected promise, and they rejected prophecy. They were not going to go up to face people against whom they were as grasshoppers, no matter what God said.

Now what would you do in a situation like this? What do you think you would do if this was your mental attitude that you couldn’t really believe God, or you had a doubt that maybe you understood God right. You don’t want to say, “Well, I guess God’s not telling the truth.” You say, “Well maybe I didn’t understand God when He made that promise.” And you look at the facts: “Well, I don’t know. The facts don’t seem to confirm what God said. I don’t think I really understand Him.” So what do you think you would do?

Well, you put yourself in their position. You’ve been a year out of Egypt. You’re quite a ways from Egyptian territory now. You’re at the port of entry to this land that has these frightful in it. God has said, “Just walk in. I’m going to give it to you.” And you can’t get yourself to do it. What do you think you would do?

If you don’t have a relaxed state of mind, you’ll do what they did in Numbers 14:1: “And all the congregation lifted up their voice and cried. And the people wept that night.” They sat down and they cried all night long. When was the last time you cried all night long? That’s pretty exhausting to cry all night long. It’s pretty exhausting to cry just for a little bit. And it’s exhausting to be around somebody else who is weeping and wailing. So here are all these people who are weeping and wailing at each other all night long. Can you imagine what a campground that was? We have enough trouble on our trip camp when the kids want to talk all night long after we try to put them to bed, let along if they were to cry all night long. I realize now that it’s not so bad that they’re talking all night long. It would be worse if they cried all night long. The exhaustion of this!

Well, this is their response. Why are they crying? A night of tears. Excessive weeping because they have gone negative toward doctrine, promises, and prophecy. The result is a loss of a relaxed mental attitude because weeping is triggered by something that is in your mind. Any time you cry, it is showing something about your mind. These people were so totally disoriented in their thinking that their human viewpoint led them to tears and to bemoaning the facts that they saw. So here you have the scene: two million crybabies.

**Weeping**

Now this brings us to a certain doctrine that we ought to pause and look at a little bit. The doctrine of weeping. Is it alright for a Christian to cry? Crying stems from what’s going on in the mentality of your soul. As we look at the life of the Lord Jesus, we find that on three occasions the Lord Jesus Christ wept. Since He if the perfect God-man, any time that He cries is an indication to us that whether you’re a man or a woman, there’s a legitimate time that you may weep. He lived for thirty-three years, and He was not only perfect but he was impeccable. The word “impeccable” is used in theology to indicate that He couldn’t be anything but perfect. He wasn’t able to do wrong.

Alright, He cried three times. Once at the tomb of Lazarus in John 11:35. He came to the tomb of Lazarus and He wept. He wept why? He wept because a man he loved as a personal friend had died. This is apart from the fact that He loved him as God as He loves humanity, but just for the fact that he was a personal friend, and a personal friend had died, and Jesus wept over it. Now this is a normal and a right expression of grief to express a sadness in our souls. Here a loved one dies. We realize that in this world there is a permanent separation. You’ll not see this person again. There is a sadness that enters the soul, and it is legitimate to express it outwardly with tears. This weeping is not wrong. It is not effeminate, nor is it abnormal.

Secondly, the Lord Jesus wept over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41). He saw this privileged and great city but in His mind’s eye, as He looked at this city which had rejected Him, He saw this city as it would be in August of 70 A.D. when the Roman legions would come in and tear the city apart, block from block, brick from brick. And he saw the totally destroyed rubble heap that would be Jerusalem and its temple. He was saddened by the discipline, the tragedy of discipline that His people had brought on themselves by their negative volition. This is true and legitimate for us that when we see those that we love that are dear to us and we see them acting in negative volition, it is legitimate that we express our sadness with tears.

This is what Paul did in Philippians 3:18: “For many walk of whom I’ve told you often and now tell you even weeping that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ.” And in Acts 20:31, Paul there for even those who are outside wept for those who were not Christians. In Acts 20:31 he weeps for those who are believers: “Therefore watch and remember that for the space of three years I ceased not to warn everyone night and day with tears.” So the apostle wept for those who brought discipline upon themselves by their negative volition. He was weeping for the nation.

You and I may weep for our nation because our magnificent national heritage is being destroyed before our eyes today. Under communist influence in this country we’re accepting the idea that socialism is the solution for human problems. This liberal madness is permitting the erosion of every kind of freedom that is among us. If you’re a knowledgeable American and you have some idea of the Word of God and where history is moving, you have cause to sit down and weep for a magnificent nation that will come to a place where it is eventually nothing on the scene of the world’s history.

Then there was a third time when Jesus cried, and this was at the cross. Hebrews 5:7 says, “Who in the days of His flesh when He had offered up prayers and supplication with strong crying in tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death and was heard in that He feared.” This weeping on the part of the Lord Jesus was in response to physical pain which He was bearing to a degree that nobody ever has experienced before or since, where He actually bore in His own body our sins. Psalm 22 describes the cries of His agony. He experienced the pain of judgment of the Father as He was placed under our sins. He experienced the pain of separation of spiritual death. It is legitimate to cry under the pressures of life in physical pain. And Jesus Christ was under maximum pressure at this time and He wept.

Now there are legitimate times for the Christian (to cry). One, there is a time for tears that’s compatible with the spiritual life when it’s an expression of sorrow for loved ones who have died (1 Thessalonians 4:13). There is a legitimate time of weeping for your country. These are in the pattern of what Jesus did (Jeremiah 9:1, Lamentations 1:16). Then there is a time of tears for physical pain on the part of the Christian. It’s legitimate to cry then as per the Lord’s example. In Revelation 21:4 we’re told that God “shall wipe away all tears from their eyes and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow or crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away.” There’s coming a time when God will remove all those tears.

Now there is a time of expression of compassion. John 11:35-36 says, “Jesus wept,” this concerning Lazarus. “Then said the Jews, ‘Behold how He loved him.’” It was an expression of compassion as well as sorrow over the loss of a friend.

Then there are tears that are an expression of appreciation of joy in the soul. Appreciation. We speak about this as tears of joy. Weeping for joy. There is a legitimate expression on our part then. There’s one thing about legitimate weeping. You might find perhaps other categories in time in Scripture, but here are some basic ones that the Bible indicates are legitimate times for Christians to cry. But the thing that always guides legitimate crying is the fact that it stops. Psalm 30:5 says, “For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favor is life; weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.”

So the Christian has to remember that there is a time to stop crying. Any time you go beyond the point of legitimate weeping, you have now entered a condition of sin. Sinful weeping, excessive prolonged weeping. We have the incident in 2 Samuel 18:33 where David is weeping over the death of his son Absalom. Absalom has been killed in battle, “and the King was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept. And as he went thus he said, ‘Oh, my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom. Would God I had died for thee. Oh, Absalom, my son, my son.’”

Now you remember that Absalom was the son who had tried to remove his father David from the throne. He had created a rebellion against his father and had sought to win the favor and the loyalty of the people. Every now and then in the local church you have some leader who rises up and gathers around him a few malcontents in the congregation and proceeds to try to create a following in order to create a division among the believers. This is exactly what Absalom did. It’s a Benedict Arnold trick and it’s as dishonorable as can be, and it was a permanent stamp of dishonor upon Absalom and led actually to his death.

Now this is the son that David is grieving over. But here was the problem. When the soldiers returned who had done battle with Absalom and his soldiers, in the process of which Absalom had been killed: When these soldiers had returned from this victory over Absalom, they felt guilty when they heard about the king’s sorrow. So the Bible says they came back in the town stealthfully as if they had come from a defeat instead of a victory.

Now Joab didn’t like this one bit. He was in charge and he went to David and he rebuked David for allowing his personal grief to become so abnormal and so excessive that he thought more of the life of the rebel Absalom than he did of the men who had died and who had hazarded their lives in defending David. 2 Samuel 19:5 says that Joab came into the house to the king and said, “Thou hast covered with shame this day the faces of all thy servants who this day have saved thy life and the lives of thy sons and of thy daughters, the lives of thy wives, the lives of thy concubines, in that thou lovest thine enemies and hatest thy friends. For thou hast declared this day that thou shouldst regard neither princes nor servants, for this day I perceive that if Absalom had lived and all we had died this day then it had pleased thee well. Now therefore rise. Go and speak kindly unto thy servants, for I swear by the Lord, if thou go not forth, there shall not tarry one with thee this night, and that will be worse unto thee than all the evil that befell thee from thy youth until now.”

Now those are pretty strong words from an assistant to the commander-in-chief. Joab was simply put out with this treating of a rebel, a Benedict Arnold, with greater respect. Of course people in a local church do it. You can think of your Benedict Arnolds and your rebels within your circle of acquaintance, but the next time you meet them, how will you meet them? You will meet them with open arms. You will meet them with cordiality. You will meet them with smiles. You will meet with them with comradery. You will socialize, and you will forget that the Absalom and the Benedict Arnold is still there. It has simply moved on to more bold adventures elsewhere, walking across the heads and the bodies in a professional sphere, to higher achievements; but walking over the heads and the bodies and the shoulders and the backs of people who are innocent enough not to realize that they’re just another tool in the progress of somebody’s personal success who doesn’t mind being an Absalom or a Benedict Arnold.

This is one of the things that Benedict Arnold discovered after his treachery. He thought he would be welcomed in England, but nobody would have anything to do with him. A traitor is a traitor. David, because of his excessive grief, and you know why he grieved: He realized that he had failed in the rearing of his son in a very dramatic way. You can read about it in 2 Samuel 14:24, 28, that he forgave Absalom for one of his adventures, but he said, “You’re never to come into my presence.” So he really didn’t forgive the boy. For two years Absalom sat around and he never could see his father. He never could get to him, and it propelled Absalom to play the role of a full rebel and a full traitor.

Now if you’ve got any spiritual sensitivities, you’ll never get over the fact that a traitor turns a certain nauseous feeling within your being, and you never say, “Well it happened so long ago. Now we can pretend that it never happened. Now we can forget that it ever existed.” Joab came up to David and said, “You’re acting as if it had been alright if all of us had been killed and the rebel had survived.”

Now there is another illegitimate kind of weeping on the part of a Christian, and that is hysterical weeping in catastrophe. You have this in 1 Samuel 30:4. Here’s another occasion in which David and his soldiers experience a disaster in that they were off on a campaign. The Amalekites invaded Ziklag where they had left their families and taken their families captive and taken them off with them. So when they came back and the soldiers discovered what had happened, they turned to hysteria. 1 Samuel 30:4 says, “And David and the people who were with him lifted up their voice and they wept until there was no more power to weep.”

Now when you get to the point where you’re just gasping for breath and you can’t even bring tears, you have gone to hysteria. And that’s what these men, the military personnel, when they discovered their families had been taken, were sitting there in complete hysteria, and even David was joining in with them. They were so disoriented that they wanted to kill David, to stone him for the matter. And the weeping was wrong because it didn’t solve their present problem. What it did was switched off their mentality and turned them into self-pity which was wrong. Finally David pulls himself together and he begins to pray. God tells him what to do and they rescue their families.

So hysterical weeping is wrong. Weeping at the wrong time in an excessive way as David did is wrong. Weeping for the past is wrong. In Ezra 3:12-13 you have the story of the second temple going up. And the old-timers we’re told are disappointed and they’re in tears because the second temple is smaller than the first one. They’re weeping against what God has given because they’re looking at the externals. Their spiritual viewpoint says the thing that is important is not how big the temple is, but the spiritual caliber of the people who came back from captivity and are rebuilding this temple, and they were a magnificent lot. They should have rejoiced over that.

Or to cry for what is gone forever as Esau did in Hebrews 12:17. There are a few more places. The weeping of a drunk in Joel 1:5. That’s illegitimate weeping. What a drunk does is he begins with a psychological substitute with the booze, and then this gets out of hand and disrupts him emotionally. Studies recently have shown that alcohol robs your blood cells of oxygen, and it is that lack of oxygen in blood cells that makes you silly. When people get a reduction of oxygen in the blood cells, it makes you act ridiculous, just silly—silly is the word. If you take anything in your system that substitutes for the oxygen, like maybe breathing a bad exhaust out of your car, it’ll make you silly. The recent study indicated that this is what makes people get old—not having oxygen in adequate quantities with each blood cell. So some of you need to start breathing deeply. I noticed some of you did just then. But that’s what makes you grow old—the lack of oxygen.

Now there’s another crying from human viewpoint in Numbers 14:1. This is what we’ve been looking at. The giants are there, and we can’t whip them, and so we’re going to weep. That was illegitimate.

There is a weeping of unbelievers in judgment in Matthew 8:12, 25, 30, the gnashing of teeth. That’s illegitimate. There comes a time for no more weeping (Revelation 21:4). None of the things that go with weeping will be there—sorrow, pain, and death. There may be tears in heaven but they’re not going to be tears for adverse reasons. They’re going to be tears of joy. Isaiah 65:19 says that for Israel in the millennium there will be no more tears.

So there is a time to weep and a time to refrain from weeping.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1971