

Northminster Presbyterian Church
Weekly Devotional
Week of November 23rd – November 29th, 2008

Scripture Readings

- Isaiah 64:1-9
- Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
- 1 Corinthians 1:3-9
- Mark 13:24-37

O Lord God Almighty, how long will your anger
Smolder against the prayers of your people?
You have fed them with the bread of tears;
You have made them drink tears by the bowlful.
You have made us a source of contention to our neighbors,
And our enemies mock us.
Restore us, O God Almighty;
Make your face shine upon us,
That we may be saved.
Psalm 80:4-7

The emotional openness of this verse overwhelms me. In so much of life we are taught to control our emotions. "Don't let em see ya cry!" I was even counseled by the first pastor I ever worked with to not cry at funerals I was leading. Toughing it out with the aid of denial and pretense is dishonest and self-defeating. Beyond that, it's not biblical.

Here, in stunning hyperbole, the psalmist portrays the response of Israel to the disciplining hand of God. Tears are often therapeutic. They give emotional release. They also cleanse and lubricate the ducts of the eye, and they can even dislodge foreign objects. Perhaps the faithless children of Israel are dislodging the foreign object of sin from their hearts as they weep tears of repentance. As a result of their penitent state, God will not be angry forever, but will restore them to full favor (v. 7).

When I recall that even "Jesus wept" (John 11:35), I am encouraged to allow the healing tears to flow!

Pastor Stacey