

O' Jerusalem

By Cindy Powell

Luke 19:41 *As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it.*

Looking out over the city tonight, His tears fill my eyes. Sitting on my hotel balcony in the newer part of Jerusalem, my physical eyes are taking in a sight that would seem commonplace in any one of thousands of cities around the globe. But this isn't just any city. This is His city. This is Jerusalem. Jerusalem, the apple of His eye. Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those sent to her. Jerusalem, the city whose children Jesus longs to gather as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings. Jerusalem, the one and only place God Almighty has chosen to establish His eternal throne. Jerusalem, the holy city of God.

I can't make sense of it. I refuse to even try. Trying to understand the heart of God with human reasoning is about as absurd as a two-year-old trying to fully comprehend the cosmos. You don't comprehend the heart of God, you feel the heart of God. As I sit with Him tonight, I have an overwhelming sense that He doesn't want me to dissect His emotions so that I might be able to rationalize them in some nice tidy way—He simply wants me to share them. So together we watch the city. And together we cry.

Yes, He still weeps. He still waits. He still watches. Like a forsaken Lover, like a forgiving Father—He weeps, He waits, He watches. He continues to extend His arm in compassion and mercy. He continues to reach out with His offer of love, forgiveness, and true peace. And, thus far, she continues to rebel against Him and reject His love. His heart breaks—so He weeps, He waits, He watches.

It's tempting to make some analogy about how He weeps, waits, and watches for us, too. It's tempting to say that we are not so different from Jerusalem in how we often rebel against Him and reject His love. It's tempting...but it's not entirely true. While He most certainly does watch and wait for all of His wayward children, and while many of His children around the world most certainly do rebel against Him and reject His love—Jerusalem is different. Only Jerusalem is Jerusalem. Like it or not, understand it or not—only Jerusalem is Jerusalem. The church is not Israel. Israel is Israel.

And Israel—even more specifically Jerusalem—holds an eternal place in the heart of God reserved for no other. So He weeps. He waits. And He watches.

I don't fully understand it. I don't need to. Tonight I'm content to simply weep, wait, and watch with Him. As I do, for just a moment, I see Him smile through His tears.

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

–Matthew 23:37-39