

Read: Acts 20:28-38

Real Tears

Acts 20:28-38 (selected verses)

I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. . . So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears. Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I have not coveted anyone's silver or gold or clothing. . . When Paul had finished speaking, he knelt down with all of them and prayed. They all wept as they embraced him and kissed him.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

David is a wonderful Christian husband, father, and pastor. He faithfully serves his Lord in each area of his life. When David is happy, he smiles broadly and genuinely. When something is funny, he has a great chuckle to share. When he is angry or sad, the emotion shows on his face. However, for as long as people can remember—David never cried.

One day, David and his family were out to eat at a Mexican restaurant. Somehow, a tortilla chip went down the wrong way and got caught in his throat. Don't worry; he was fine, but the coughing that followed caused a single tear to appear in the corner of his eye. His teenage daughter pulled out her phone and said, "I need to get a picture of this! Dad never cries!"

In Acts chapter twenty, the apostle Paul cried or wept three times (vv. 19,31,36). What in the world could cause a man like the apostle Paul to cry so much?

Like a parent giving a child advice before driving off to college, Paul warned his dearly loved friends about the dangers they would face without him. The parent knows what temptations and pitfalls their child might experience during those first years away from them. They are so concerned for their child—not just in a casual, "BTW" kind of way—but with a tear in their eye, a firm shoulder pat, perhaps with a shaky voice filled with emotion. Paul is feeling the same when he says, "I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock...so be on your guard" (Acts 20:29)!

A parent isn't trying to frighten their child with scary pictures of life away from home. It comes from a loving heart that but that wants to guard and protect. It's the kind of love expressed through teardrops. Jesus loves you so much that he expressed it through drops of blood he shed on the cross.

Dear child, love leads every parent, guardian, and supporter of you to say, "I commit you, [name of child], to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified" (vs. 32)!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- Have you ever seen your mom or dad cry?
- Why did the apostle Paul cry in our reading?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- When was the last time you cried? What did you cry about?
- What made you feel better after you cried?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Think of a time when you had to say, “Goodbye” to someone. How does Acts 20:32 give you something to say to someone who you won’t see in a long time?
- What advice might a parent give to a child going away to school? How does Paul’s advice parallel that?

Closing Prayer:

Dear Father, thank you for my parents and everyone you use to warn me about the evils of life . Keep me connected to you so that someday, we will all be reunited in heaven, where there will be no more tears! Amen.