

Templates of Truth with Rick Smith  
Audio Script – October 16, 2009

Bottles of something often symbolize special memories in our life, such as a bottle of perfume or cologne to celebrate a special occasion, or a house-warming gift of potpourri oil to fill the air with one's favorite scent. In this week's Templates of Truth, David introduces us to an unusual bottle – a bottle of tears.

People in the ancient Middle East, Greece, Egypt and Rome showed respect and grief for their deceased loved ones by placing lachrymatories in their burial containers. A lachrymatory was a small bottle used for capturing tears. People would weep into handkerchiefs then squeeze their tears into these small glass or ceramic bottles. The bottle was then sealed and carefully preserved, so that it could be placed in the coffin or burial chamber with their loved one. It was just such a bottle that David had in mind when he wrote, *Thou hast taken account of my wanderings; put my tears in Thy bottle; are they not in Thy book?* (Psalm 56:8). David's expression shows the deep, intimate relationship of love God has with each of us personally.

In this Psalm, David affirms, first of all, God's constant awareness and attention to our life experiences – *Thou hast taken account of my wanderings*. The word *wanderings*, comes from a root word meaning to flee or be driven away. The heading to this Psalm tells us it was written when the Philistines seized David at Gath. Although victorious, David's military campaigns often found him running for cover, and Saul's relentless pursuit of David to take his life drove into caves for seclusion and protection. As fearful and lonely as these times must have been for David, he was never alone. God took *account*, or God measured and numbered each occasion. The *wanderings* of our life are items in God's vast *book* of inventory.

The old saying, "big boys don't cry," certainly didn't apply to David. I Samuel 16:18 describes David as a *mighty man of valor (and) a warrior*. For a person who single-handedly fought off lions, bears and nine-foot giants, it is hard to imagine David huddled in the corner of some cold, dark cave crying. But not only was David a man of steel, he was also a very passionate and sensitive man. Like all of us, these threatening times in life shook him to the core and paralyzed his faith in fear, trembling and weeping. The intimate truth David affirms for us in this Psalm is that God wipes every tear, captures them into His bottle, and preserves them in His divine memory as a reference for each fear, hurt and suffering experience we go through.

Think for moment what that means. When you held your sick child in the middle of the night, weeping as you prayed for the frightening fever to break, God captured every tear. When you stood by the casket of your best friend, life's companion, precious parent or grandparent, God wiped each teardrop with His compassionate finger. When the words and actions of someone you loved broke your heart and you cried yourself to sleep in those darkest, loneliest moments; when you were gripped with so much fear that your whole body just collapsed in weeping; when guilt, shame, humiliation and rejection caused you to sob in isolation; when you were treated unfairly and harshly by those you served and respected; when you lost while others won; when you didn't think you could go another moment and trembling was all the motion you could muster, God saw every heartache and lovingly brushed every tear, whisking it away into His

bottle. When no one else could understand the depths to which you were hurting, your tears were the special language of your heart and soul that God compassionately understood.

While David doesn't say it here, we learn through the life of Jesus, our heavenly Father incarnate in His only Son, that when His friend Lazarus had died, *Jesus wept* (John 11:35). The suffering grief of the family members moved the heart of Jesus with such compassion, that with them, He cried. With sympathy and understanding, He shared their tears. Can you wrap your heart around that reality? When the next challenge in life comes that causes you to break down and weep in fear, pain, anxiety, betrayal, rejection or loneliness, can you imagine God's arms of love compassionately embracing you into His bosom, and feeling His warm tears mingling with yours as He is moved by your hurt? There in His bottle is the special mixture of both your tears and His, preserving forever those intimate moments in life when you know with faithful confidence that He is there with you and He understands.

The lyrics to a popular Gordon Jenson song seem fitting to conclude our thoughts: "God sees the tears of a broken-hearted soul; He sees your tears and hears them when they fall. God weeps along with man, and He takes him by the hand; tears are a language God understands."

That's today's Templates of Truth. This is your Bible teacher, Rick Smith, reminding you to attend church this Sunday for Bible study and worship, pray for one another, and always strive to abide. Until next time, have a blessed and glorious day in Christ Jesus.