



First tears flow out of love

By Stephanie Kardía

Last fall, I dropped my daughter off in front of her high school and watched her hurry with the other students through the doors. I drew in my breath, pulled the car away from the drop off area to a more secluded parking spot, shut off the engine, and cried. Between sobs I thought, “This is ridiculous. She’s in high school, for crying out loud! I’ve bawled like this at the beginning of every school year since she first attended preschool. When will this end?”

Now what my head tells me is ridiculous, my heart assures me is natural and expected. My mom agrees with my heart. She says the firsts in life almost always come with tears. She knows. She had her string of tear-filled firsts last year after dad died. These are *first tears* — the tears shed when something wonderful, strange, or sad happens for the very first time.

First tears flow out of love. Jesus shed *first tears* at the death of Lazarus (John 11:1–35). When I read that passage of Scripture, I wonder why did Jesus cry? Was it for Lazarus, his friend who had died, or for Mary, His friend whose brother had died? My heart tells me Jesus cried for Mary, because she was crying for Lazarus.

I’ve begun to notice and appreciate *first tears* in the people around me. Passing by the preschool on the way home from my daughter’s high school, I see the parents sitting in their cars. I’m moved to pray for them. When I see tears in the eyes of those who have left a church or joined a church, lost a job or won a prize, lost a love, held a child, broken a toy, or spilt milk — my heart goes out to them also.

Sometimes those tears seem ridiculous, I know. But I also know the love plus pain or the love plus joy equals real first tears while we are here on earth; and first tears do end — and all tears will end — when the “First and the Last” will return again: Jesus, the first-born of all creation, who will wipe away every tear from every eye. Then, minus the tears and pain, all that will be left will be the love plus joy plus love plus joy, forever and ever. Amen.