

Help for the Grieving and Helping Others Who Grieve



“Surely he hath
borne our grief
and **carried our**
sorrows.”

Isaiah 53:4

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Introduction

This little booklet has been put together to help you during your time of grieving the loss of a loved one in death. Our prayer is that it will strengthen you spiritually and emotionally as you face one of the most difficult moments in a person's life.

In the back of the booklet you will find many verses taken directly from the word of God, the Bible (NKJ). May you find peace and comfort in the promises of God fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

There are 10 known stages of grief. They may come at any time and in any order and more than once. They are shock, emotional release, denial, depression, anger, guilt, regret, acceptance, bitterness and hope.

Included are statements made by others who have gone through the loss of a husband, wife, child or other loved one. You will recognize in these some of your own pain.

The most important thing to remember now is to keep your eyes, your hopes, your dreams squarely upon the Lord Jesus Christ. Trust him.

May you, the reader, find comfort and peace.



Insights into Grieving

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Immediately after the loss of a loved one it seems that a person is in shock, not able to quite comprehend or to be able to fully face the full truth of what has happened. In a way, this seems to be a blessing in disguise and helps us to get through the next few days.

Grief is powerful...it affects us in many ways. Psychologically, physically and spiritually and yes, it hurts terribly!

Learning to cry can be difficult, especially, it seems, for men.

It can be embarrassing, especially when the tears begin to flow against our will for no obvious or outward reason! This can happen anyplace and at anytime. Remember: Most people do understand the reason for your tears. Don't make the mistake of trying to ignore the pain, or to cover it up with something distracting. It won't work for very long. Eventually your emotions will break out and your grief will DEMAND your complete attention. Better to face your grief and pain head-on as it presents itself.

Expect to cry a lot, as well as to experience insomnia, memory loss, lack of concentration, depression, loneliness and a feeling of utter isolation.

You may even feel that you are 'losing your mind'. You are not.

You may also experience a feeling of panic for the very first time. These are all normal feelings.

Some people have said that they felt like a piece of tempered glass that had cracked but not yet shattered. It would take very little for your emotions to shatter into a million pieces and no one would ever be able to put you back together again. A very scary feeling!

You may feel a sense of guilt. These feelings may be real or imaginary. If you have done something to cause real guilt, speak with your Pastor. He will gently lead you to confess the reason for your guilt and to full repentance.

God is faithful and will forgive your sins and free you from the

devastating effects of guilt. If you feel a sense of guilt for no real reason, as if you should have done more or should have done something to keep your loved one from dying, be aware that the devil can inflict much pain with this weapon and can knock you to your knees in a matter of seconds.

When a loved one dies, that 'old life is gone' never to be experienced again. This is a very hurtful and painful thought and can be very disorienting. Slowly, something new will begin to grow. This is a hope in a future with God's help.

You will have to fight just to make it day after day for awhile; fight just to face a new day; fight to eat; fight to sleep; fight to be with people and NOT isolate yourself.

Some of the most frightening times come when you feel like you are going backwards in the healing process. This happens to most everyone and seems to be a part of the healing process. Expect these setbacks and be prepared for them.

One of the greatest gifts that God sends to us are friends who are willing, able, available and comfortable to listen quietly to our pain. They are few and far between. Most people want to hear you say you are doing well, they are upset if you are not. You will find that a lot of people simply don't care, but some do. Remember that some do.

A Christian can feel so 'alone' even when he is surrounded by family, friends, and yes, even in church. Try to remember Christ's promise that he will be with us always. **WE REALLY ARE NEVER ALONE!** This feeling can come to us anytime and anywhere. Evenings and weekends may be difficult times for you as they seem to be for many people. Keeping your eyes on Christ's promises to us in the Gospels and other Scripture will especially help us during these times.

You may find it especially difficult to attend services at church and it can be one of the most difficult things you will have to face without your loved one at your side. Everything seems unreal and very wrong and you may feel life has cheated you somehow. God may feel very far away and distant from you. He has not moved. Forcing yourself to attend services and being with your Christian family, receiving absolution and Holy Communion will strengthen you. It is a healthy thing to do. The easy choice is the most dangerous one - isolating your self. The devil is at his strongest when people are all alone. You need the strength and prayers of your Christian family at this time. Let them know if you are in spiritual need.

Holy Communion is a feast with Christ, fellow believers, the angels, archangels, and all the company of heaven. Even a feast with your loved ones who have entered into glory. The devil knows this and is unable to assault such comfort.

Search out and speak with others who have also suffered the loss of a loved one. They have a certain insight you may not have gained yet and can be a source of real comfort for you in your grief.

The **reality** of death will face off against the **belief** of eternal life. The battle may be long and hard. You are not the first or only person to experience this at this time of grieving. It is the same battle the disciples faced when they saw Christ nailed to the cross. The devil uses time of greatest weakness to attack us and our faith. Call upon the Lord at these times. *John 11:35* - Jesus wept.

You will become very tired of being asked “How are you doing?” What do they expect you to say? You have just lost a spouse, child, or other loved one. Try being honest with them. Tell them you’re not doing very well, or that you are doing about as well as can be expected under the circumstances. Try to remind yourself that this saying is more of a habit than anything else. People are genuinely concerned about you. Even good friends simply don’t know what to say to you. They do love you though, remember that.

It may seem that you will never be truly happy again. This can be especially discouraging. Others who have gone through a death of a loved one assure us that someday we will. Right now, though, that seems like an impossibility but until that day, the healing process is long and painful. Sadly, there are no shortcuts.

You may find an inability to renew normal activities. Everything seems like a hassle, even the simple things. The sad thing is, after a couple of months it seems friends and family feel we should be back to normal and **NOTHING COULD BE FARTHER FROM THE TRUTH!** After a couple of months the full realization of our loss seems to hit us with full force. This is when we need our friends, but they have gone back to leading their own lives. Call them for luncheon dates, or just to talk or share thoughts of your loved one. They won’t be calling you as often anymore and you need them.

One gets so tired of being told how we should ‘feel’ or how we should be ‘doing’. Sadly, some of the worst offenders are those of our Christian family! People don’t know what to say but feel they should say something. Many times it is a very hurtful thing they say. It is better to say simply “I am so sorry.” Share with them the good memories you have

of their loved one. It helps to hear other people remember your loved one with affection.

Pictures and memories will bring a blessing and a curse. These things hurt but someday they will be a blessing for you.

Praising and thanking God for your wife, husband, child or other loved one closes many doors the devil attempts to enter through. (Practical tip for spouses: If the bed seems terribly empty right now, pull your loved one's pillow down lengthwise alongside you. Some people have taken a shirt or blouse of their spouse and wrapped the pillow in it. This gives a sense of comfort. You may have to do this for months.)

During times of insomnia, the devil will be there trying to destroy your faith. Remember the promises of Christ and glory in them despite the doubts the devil throws at you. Also praise and thank God for that loved one and for drawing you both unto himself.

Go to your Bible. Meditation on the word of God offers more comfort and gives a person strength and respite from thoughts that hurt. Try not to ask 'why?' or 'if only' as they can give the devil a great opportunity to do harm.

It is more difficult to ask for and receive help than it is to give help for some reason. Why this is so, is a great mystery. The Holy Spirit will call upon many people and draw from many sources to try and help those who are hurting the most. This is a wonderful gift from God.

The first battle is one against other people's perceptions of how they think you should be doing in this battle. EVERYONE wants you to 'get over it' but no one would love that more than you would. But how to do it?

Good intentioned people say many stupid things when you lose a loved one, but they usually mean no harm. They really do love you.

A pastor and a layperson both had the same experience following the death of a loved one. Two different couples, hundreds of miles apart, compared the death of their pets of many years to that of the pastor losing his son and the layperson losing her husband. These statements are almost unbelievable, yet they obviously do happen to people so be forewarned. A person doesn't know whether to laugh or cry at such times. It is better to laugh it off.

The words of the old hymns about Jesus can keep faith and hope alive even during this time of severe emotional pain, but they can also be very

painful right now. The same can be said of the words of the liturgy. Now, these words come alive and take on a deeper meaning for us, pain and blessing coming together.

Laughing heartily with friends and family even with this almost unbearable pain is the Holy Spirit's way to help us heal. It is a release of some of the pain.

Be gentle with your self, don't berate yourself because you had a real 'pity party' or because you have been crying so often, or seem unable to get your head and emotions together, let alone getting on with your life. God isn't condemning you. God shares the hurt in your heart and grieves with you. Remember that Jesus himself wept at the death of his friend Lazarus. He wants to lead you to a new and stronger hope and peace in him.

The truth of the resurrection does not remove the pain that follows the death of a loved one.

You may find yourself having to go before the throne of God over and over again because of sinful thoughts or unbelief that assails you from time to time. Go to God in full repentance or go to your pastor for private confession and absolution. This is a fortress that the devil is unable to overpower. God is faithful and will forgive you your sins.

You may long to run away—run a way from everything and everyone making demands on you, but where could you run to? There is no place to run to or hide even though a remote desert island would sound wonderful. Run to God. He is waiting to hold you and comfort you.

When you feel that your loss has drained your life of all direction and you are filled with nothingness, turn to God. He is closer than you realize.

Do allow yourself to feel good again, or to laugh with friends or to have fun. You aren't betraying your loved one when doing something enjoyable. Besides, your loved one would want the best for you. As a Christian, remember, your loved one is with the Lord in Glory. They are alive for eternity. You will see them again!

In some ways you never get over a death of someone dear to you. They will always leave a hollow place deep inside you. You wouldn't ever want to forget them. Pray that God will fill that hollow place with more of himself.

You will eventually reach a point when you won't think of your loved one every waking moment, but will be able to go for longer stretches of time without painful reminders of their absence or the emptiness they left.

You will gain a wisdom now, use it to know what NOT to say to people that may be hurtful or painful to them. Remember the things people said or did that were a great comfort to you during your period of grief.

The Bible says that everything happens for good to those who love God. What possible good could come from the death of your loved one? When something this heartbreaking happens we may wonder whether God has given our lives a wrong turn somehow.

We can't always see the good that God will bring out of this situation but it is there for God tells us it is. Even if we never see it for ourselves, it is there. Nowhere does this seem more evident than at the cross when even God's only begotten Son hung dying. How can anything good come from such a horrible event? But it did! Because of His love for us in Jesus, God promises always to work for our good. We have been bought with Christ's own precious blood and we belong to Him. Some people who have gone through the death of a loved one can attest to good that came to someone else because of that loved one's death. They may have been brought to the Lord by the witness that was made.

Emotional well-being will return eventually, little by little, almost like the healing of a flesh wound, only not so quickly and with much more pain. The rate of recovery varies with each individual. For some it is a matter of a few months, for others it may be years.

You will never be your 'old self' again. That is impossible. Too much has happened to you. Readjustment to the new reality will take place and you will find yourself stronger, deeper, better for having faced and overcome an emotional disaster with God's help. Your faith will be stronger because it has been tried.

Learning to feel good again, at least for small moments, is a big step on the road to healing. Give yourself permission to enjoy a lunch or dinner with friends, to enjoy a pleasant drive, a great piece of music, the laughter of children, the smell of rain, the song of birds. To enjoy life, once again as a gift of God. It is easy to feel guilty if we begin to enjoy these things even if we find ourselves sharing a moment of laughter with friends.

Allow yourself these moments.

Insights granted to me in the face of many painful deaths...

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Learning to cry is difficult and often embarrassing, but a great source of healing given by the Holy Spirit.

The devil wants men, especially, to forget that Jesus Himself wept at the death of His friend, Lazarus.

A person can laugh heartily but still have an almost unbearable inner pain. I wonder if this is being dishonest or just wanting to feel like I used to feel.

Tragedy and death often come quickly but healing is a long and painful process.

To avoid the pain is to create future problems, more dangerous problems. There are no easy paths to healing.

It is frightening to wonder if one will ever laugh or experience joy again. Bitterness is an option. Anger is an option. Running away is an option. Denial is an option. Drinking is an option. Taking drugs is an option. Quitting is an option. Suicide is an option. Isolation is an option. Healing is also an option. Can healing be a choice?

When your son dies suddenly you know for certain that you are no different than the rest of the sinners.

The “reality” of death will face off against the “belief” of eternal life. The battle will be long and hard. It is the same battle the disciples faced when they “saw” Christ nailed to the cross.

To begin speaking of a son in the past tense is a difficult task, and is a challenge that was totally unknown to me.

In the first few months/years(?) following a child’s death one must “fight to stay alive.” This takes much energy and is very frightening.

To stop “believing” in the resurrection and heaven doesn’t end their reality. Some things are real and true even when we are sleeping.

Why are people so uncomfortable talking about my son? I wish I could find more people willing to talk about him.

After one receives his son's death certificate in the mail, getting the mail is never the same again.

The devil uses times of greatest weakness to attack. The death of a child is perhaps his greatest opportunity.

Years without death and suffering are the exceptions in life, not the norm. Friends who are willing, comfortable, and able to listen to such pain are few and far between...but when found are precious gifts.

A couple of months ago a good friend asked me, "How are you doing?" I said, "Well, it has been kind of a tough week. I have been missing Jason so much..." I was interrupted in mid-sentence. "No, I don't mean that," he said. "I mean how are things at church, on the farm, things like that." "Things are fine," I said. "Things are just fine." He liked that answer.

To be able to see, with my own eyes, a pastor who has lost his own son and is still in the ministry offers great hope, more than one can describe.

In times of death the devil will try to draw one into the painful and failed past and attempt, with all his power, to steal the future, a future which he does not own. It is to your advantage to be aware of this trick.

Living in the past, even with all its wonderful memories, is a narcotic that can allure, cripple, and even destroy.

Several years ago Jason helped me pour cement for the dog kennel floor. He placed the imprint of his hand in the wet cement. A while ago, in a moment of strength, I placed my own hand in his imprint. It was an exact fit. I still have not recovered from that sensation.

One quickly tires of others telling him how he "should feel."

All those grieving people walking out of church...hundreds of times I asked, "How are you doing?" I have asked for forgiveness for such questions. What were they supposed to say?

The truth of the resurrection does not remove the pain that follows the tragic death of a child.

"I envy those who can retain their faith through the loss of a son...I cannot." Gordon Livingston M.D., psychiatrist and father who has lost two sons.

“This is a hard, hard thing.” Abraham Lincoln, sitting next to his son’s deathbed in the Whitehouse.

Private confession and absolution is a fortress that the devil is unable to overpower. He is very happy that the practice has fallen into disuse.

I would like to kill the person who coined the word “closure.” Do you know who it is?

The death of a son has the ability to humble, devastate, and even to destroy a father. To be aware of this can be helpful but also frightening.

One of the devil’s great tools is the ability to confuse. One is overwhelmed with confusion when a son dies.

“Even the responsible, serious, and faithful pastor may be driven to external and internal perplexity...the load is too heavy to bear alone.”
Bonhoeffer

“I can’t get it out of my mind.” To know what this means personally is to know fear and frustration.

Pictures of a child who is gone bring a blessing and a curse.

A father can often forgive himself for not helping his son in his time of death and greatest need, but not always.

Jesus said, “My heart is filled with sorrow to the point of death.” That is a very bad feeling and can frighten even the strongest of people.

Thankfulness for a child, even following his death, closes many doors the devil attempts to enter through.

Loving this world too much hinders a person’s longing for that which is better.

Loving this world too much is dangerous but it is also dangerous to love the next world too much. Where is the balance?

People die, even your own children, no one can stop it.

The more one tries to outsmart and overpower the devil, the stronger he becomes.

Prayers can be twisted with faithless thoughts...meditation on the pure Word of God offers more comfort and allows a person strength and some opportunities not to think.

The devil can be struck down only with the power of the Word of God. This must be done often, with willful intent, and by force.

Thinking can become a dangerous tool in the devil's arsenal. Is it a gift of the Holy Spirit to learn to be able to "not think?"

When one is unable to laugh, healing is delayed. Along with the future the devil most likes to rob our ability to laugh.

Pain ends only when we die. To think otherwise is foolishness and a heavy burden.

It is a risk to get close to people again...they too will die.

"It is what it is." "The way I feel is the way I feel." Living in the present offers some relief.

Spiritual growth can be a special blessing when a child dies, but only a fool would wish for such blessings. "My thoughts are not your thoughts" is best left alone.

The death of a child can be a time of rare Apocalypse in a person's spiritual life. An Apocalypse – when you hear for the first time something you have heard all your life. The words of Jesus? The psalms? The hymns you have sung all your life? It is an odd sort of blessing but very good.

When the pain is most severe one is tempted to run, run away from everything, everyone, but where should one run to?

When one discovers there is no place to run, one wants to run away even more. This is a dangerous cycle.

One can feel bad, then feel bad for feeling bad. One can also begin to feel good but why should you be allowed to feel good when your son is gone, that too makes a person feel bad. Another mental loop, a trap.

Learning to feel good again, at least for moments, is a big step on the road to healing.

"Your mind will begin to give you 'little vacations' from the pain after a few months." A friend told me about this and he was correct. Such vacations are wonderful gifts.

“Getting away” has its own set of pains.

There is a pain which grows in my chest. I can not force it out but crying will relieve the pain, for a time.

When I think about how beautiful my son was, his blue eyes, his smile, his wit...I can easily make myself sick.

Severe pain isolates people. The devil is at his strongest when people are alone. This can be a deadly combination.

“Woe to the man who finds himself alone when he falls, for there will be no one there to help him get up.” *Ecclesiastes*.

“Everyone who cares for the soul needs a person who will care for his own soul.” Bonhoeffer

The Holy Spirit will call upon many people and draw from many sources to try and help those who are hurting the most. To experience this is a special gift.

Often the willingness to receive help is more difficult than offering help, especially for men.

When a child of God is pushed to the edge of darkness...the Lord Jesus, by force, will cast away the power of the devil and his presence, at least for a time. “I will not leave you helpless – I will come to you.”

Meditation upon the simple and clear Word of God has the power to drive away those thoughts that can destroy.

Two battles occur at the same time. The first battle is one against loss and pain. The second is the battle against other’s perceptions of how they think you should be doing in this battle.

When the devil is defeated on one front he will soon outflank you and begin the same battle in another location. He is tireless.

People who have lost children don’t like to be asked “how are you doing?” How do you think I am doing? My son is dead.

The devil is much smarter than any person, even me! To acknowledge the fact is to begin to fight him in earnest.

It is dangerous to conclude that God is gracious and good based upon the physical gifts He has given...these gifts can be taken away.

“Devils all the world will fill all eager to devour us,” especially in times of death.

Everyone wants you to “get over it” but no one would love that more than I would.

To meditate upon the moment of your Baptism is a fortification that the devil is unable to penetrate.

When a good friend told me I could rely upon “my faith” after my son’s death...I laughed.

When another friend, two weeks after my son’s death said, “That must have been difficult.” I had another laugh. Two weeks?

Good intentioned people say many stupid things when your child is killed, but they usually mean no harm.

One person told me, “It sure was painful when my pet died. I’ll bet it is even more painful when your son is killed.” Really? It is a blessing to laugh at such comments.

Don’t ask me “What happened?” If I wanted you to know I would have told you already.

Even the best of friends don’t know what to say. Nothing can change the facts.

I wish I could be more helpful to other fathers who have lost their sons but I don’t know, myself, what to do or say. Perhaps it is a battle that one is forced to fight alone.

Those who still have their own children are often very uncomfortable around those who have lost children. Will they be next? By association? One must keep going...this is easy to say but difficult to do and takes a huge amount of energy.

I am often amazed that I am still alive. Perhaps it is evidence of grace, or something worse.

God, how could you let my son die? Why didn’t you help him? So many questions and so few answers.

The words of the “Old Hymns” about Jesus can keep faith and hope alive, even during severe emotional pain. For some reason the devil does not like good music.

This has become one of my favorite verses...”Oh, let Thy holy wounds for me, clefts in the rock forever be, where as a dove my soul can hide, and safe from Satan’s rage abide.”

The word “Why” can cause great destruction.

The word “If” is equally dangerous to ponder in too much depth.

“Why” and “If” are the fields of battle upon which the devil likes to fight. Engage him in these locations only with great caution, fear, and trepidation!

“Naturally, the devil is a great theologian.” Bonhoeffer

Rev. Dan Simundson wrote, “Some questions will never be answered. Let God take care of what is beyond your capacity to do or know. It is no simple matter to come to that position – to have such a strong relationship with God that you can live with ambiguity, mystery, limits, an unknown future.” I like that but it takes extreme work to even approach such a faith.

The Theology of the Cross teaches us that we grow through pain and suffering. I guess we aren’t allowed to choose the ways in which God molds us.

The New Testament calls upon us to have “The Mind of Christ.” At times that frightens me. Would that be a pleasant journey?

Being among God’s people following a tragic death is healthy but difficult. The easy choice is the most dangerous one, isolation.

A Christian can feel alone, but he is never alone.

I get afraid when I think, “This is all a dream,” but then realize it isn’t a dream. It is real.

When your son dies, suddenly, time slows down. That was a year? Or was it last week?

Lots of people don’t care, but some do. It is healthier to remember the some that do.

A father can never do enough with a child: love a child enough, be close enough to a child, hug a child enough, and when that child is taken away...the devil will bring it to the surface very often. The devil can inflict much pain with this weapon. I have found that this weapon can knock me to my knees in a matter of seconds.

Holy Communion is a feast with Christ, fellow believers, the angels, archangels, and all the heavenly host...even a feast with our loved ones who have entered into glory...the devil knows this and is unable to assault such comfort.

When a child dies that “old life is gone,” never to be experienced again, but something new will begin to grow. Is this living with hope?

The historic liturgy of the Christian church offers great healing in times of death. I wonder who is the most glad that many churches are doing away with it? Another powerful weapon against the devil is tucked away.

Several people have told me during the last year that they admire me for being able to continue to preach. The people who have told me this have also lost their own children. These compliments are the best I have ever received in my life. I greatly treasure them.

I am afraid to ask my wife how she is doing. I am afraid of two things, that I might find out that she is hurting even more than I am, and that I won't know how to help her if I make such a discovery.

Jesus speaks to His child...“This is the way of the cross. You cannot find it yourself, so you must let me lead you as though you were a blind man. Wherefore it is not you, no man, no living creature, but I myself, who instruct you by my word and Spirit in the way you should go. Not the work which you choose, not the suffering you devise, but the road which is clean contrary to all that you choose or contrive or desire – that is the road you must take. To that I call you and in that you must be my disciple. If you do that, there is the acceptable time and there your master is come.” Martin Luther

Over the last year I have listened closely to fathers who have lost their sons. This is what they have said:

“There will be many dark days ahead for you. I will keep you in my prayers.”

“Your life will never be the same again. You will want it but you won't be able to have it back.”

“You have been through a lot of pain this first month, but there is a lot more in store for you. I don't want to scare you, just be honest with you.”

“I wish I could have helped my son but there was nothing I could do.”

“You are going to have to fight to stay alive that first month.”

“Most of the time coping is the best I can do right now.”

“I don’t think about my son every day. I think about him every hour.”

“I wish I could say that good things have happened as a result of my son’s death. But I don’t think anything good has happened. I just don’t see it. When he died my future died.”

“Some of the most frightening times will come when you feel like you are going backwards in the healing process...expect those setbacks and prepare for them.”

“I can forgive myself some of the time but not all of the time.”



Comforting Verses From Scripture

John 11:25-26 - Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

Ephesians 6:10-18 - Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints--

Matthew 28:20 - "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 - But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.

1 Timothy 1:15 - This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.

Titus 1:2 - in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began,

Hebrews 4:16 - Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

1 John 5:11-13 - And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.

Revelation 21:4 - "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

John 3:16 - "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

John 14:1-2 - "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

John 14:6 - Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

John 5:24-25 - "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. "Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live.

1 Corinthians 15:51-56 - Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed--in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.

2 Corinthians 5:8 - We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

A Message of Hope from Rev. Donald Jordan

“In the very midst of life
Death has us surrounded.
When shall we a helper find,
Hear his coming sounded?
For you, our Lord we’re waiting.
We sorrow that we left your path,
Doing what deserves your wrath.
Holy, most righteous God!
Holy, most mighty God!
Holy and most merciful Savior!
Forever our Lord!
Keep us from despairing
In the bitter pain of death.
Have mercy, O Lord”
(Lutheran Worship, Hymn 265)

We can challenge death all we want but we cannot avoid it. You will die. You will experience the death of your husband or wife, your parents and grandparents, good friends, and possibly your children. We hate death because it takes away from us permanently those we like very much and deeply love. We cannot get used to it and we hate it when people say things like, “God willed it, God only takes the good, He’s in a better place, or ‘I understand what you are going through.’” Martin Luther, the writer of the above hymn, experienced the pain of death in his life, losing two children, including one as a little infant.

Helping people who are grieving is very difficult, indeed, and many feel awkward about how to go about helping the mourners. As Christians, who help and reach out to others in time of need we can serve best by simply listening and expressing our own grief.

Yes, we struggle in this earthly life in the midst of death. In this life we learn from our Savior, Jesus Christ, who also, as true man, grieved and mourned many times over death. He is the one who suffered and died. He is the one who rose from the dead. But this is not simply for the sake of doing it. He did all this for you. He did this so those who die in Christ might have eternal life. Facing death and dealing with it is bad, even for Christians. Yet, our comfort and hope is in the reality that Christ is our life and He will wipe away our tears one day in the glory of heaven. In this life, we are strengthened by His Word of the Gospel.

We cry, we mourn, and we hurt over our losses in death. Yet, we also rejoice and give thanks to Jesus, who lived, died, and rose again. Now,

because of Him, we may live, die, and rise again, all given to us in our Baptism into Christ. So, go ahead. Grieve, mourn, and cry. This is normal and it is a Christian thing to do. Also, go ahead and rejoice, give thanks, and praise our great God. This is also normal and a Christian thing to do.

I wish to thank Mrs. Sharon Schaffert, a member of this congregation, and Pastor Kevin Hoogland, a friend and colleague, for their valued contributions to this little booklet. May Jesus help all of us as we deal with life and death, and may all the glory be to God alone!

Rev. Donald Jordan



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