

San Juan Church of Christ

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What Does God's Word Say About... Overcoming Grief

Grief is an emotion common to all humans and there are many examples of grief throughout the Bible that individuals experienced. Job, Naomi, Hannah, and David are just a few who suffered deep loss and sadness. Even Jesus mourned after Lazarus died (John 11:35). When Jesus saw Martha and the other mourners weeping, He was moved by their grief and by Lazarus' death. Even though Jesus knew He was going to raise Lazarus from the dead, He chose to partake of grief due to the situation.

One way we can overcome grief is to have the right perspective on it. First, we recognize that grief is a natural response to pain and loss. There is nothing wrong with grieving. Second, we know that times of grief serve a purpose. "It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting, because that is the end of every man, and the living takes it to heart," (Eccl. 7:2). This verse implies that grief can be good, because it can refresh our perspective on life. Third, we recognize that feelings of grief are temporary. "Weeping may last for the night, but a shout of joy comes in the morning," (Psm. 30:5). This verse points out that there is an end to mourning and grief has its purpose, but it also has its limit.

Through it all, God is faithful. Scripture tells us that He is with us even in the "valley of the shadow of death," (Psm. 23:4). When David sorrowed, he prayed, "You have taken account of my wondering and my tears in Your bottle. Are they not in Your book?" (Psm. 56:8). The image of God catching our tears is full of meaning. He sees our grief and does not condemn it. Like Jesus entered into the mourners in Bethany, God enters into our grief. At the same time, He reassures us that all is not lost. God's word reminds us to "be still" and rest in the knowledge that He is God and our refuge (Psm. 46:10, 91:1-2).

An important part of overcoming grief is expressing it in prayer to God. The Psalms contain numerous examples of pouring out one's heart to God. It is interesting that the psalmist may start a psalm with expressions of grief and will end it with praise (Psm. 131-6, 30:11-12, 56:1-13).

Another important step in overcoming grief is sharing it with others. The body of Christ [church] is instructed to "encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called today," (Heb. 3:13). Paul wrote, "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep," (Romans 13:15) and "Bear one another's burdens, and therefore fulfill the law of Christ," (Gal. 6:2).

Through our grief and loss we have the hope of Christ and that He will carry our burdens, (Matt. 11:30). We can give our hurt to Him because He cares for us (1 Peter 5:7).

Please send any comments, questions, or requests for a Bible study to:
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