

A Time to Mourn – Lesson 1

Hope in Darkness

*“To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: ...
A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; ...”*
Ecclesiastes 3:1,4

Sureness of Suffering

- The Bible is candidly honest about the troubles we will face in our life.
- The Bible gives us example after example of those who faced great suffering in their lives: Job, Joseph, David, Paul, and more.
- The Bible does not teach us that suffering will be avoided by Christians or absent in their lives., instead it clearly states that heartaches will come.
 - Job summarizes our lives in Job 14:1 as being “full of trouble”.
 - Jesus said that in John 16:33 the world we would have tribulations and troubles.
 - Paul wrote in I Corinthians 4:7-18 that we as earthly vessels carry the Gospel amidst continued troubles.
- Weeping, grief, and mourning are presented as natural and fitting responses so suffering in their proper time and context – Ecclesiastes 3:1,4
- While suffering can come in many forms, our focus in this series will be the death and loss of loved ones.

God at Work in Suffering

- The Bible does teach is that God is actively working to aid the believer in enduring and overcoming our grief.
 - He does not abandon us in our grief – Psalm 23:4, 34:18
- According to the Online Etymological Dictionary, the word *suffer* is based on roots that mean "allow to occur or continue, permit, tolerate, fail to prevent or suppress," or "to be made to undergo, endure, be subjected to" (as pain, death, punishment, judgment, grief, etc.)
 - This is an important note – not only is suffering a burden we must carry but it is also something God has allowed us to endure.
 - God sees, knows, understands, and allows whatever heartaches we endure.
- God is active working on us and through us in suffering
 - Example – Though Joseph suffered many things, God was working for the overall benefit of his family - Genesis 50:20
 - We have the promise that, although not all things are good, all things are working together for good – Romans 8:28

- “In suffering, God is not getting back at you; He is getting you back to Himself.”
– Robert Kellemen
- Never forget that our Savior Himself stood outside the grave of a loved one and wept – John 11:35

Hope in Grief

- Paul wrote that we as Christians grieve differently than the world around us because we have hope – I Thessalonians 4:13
- This is not a promise that we will never grieve or critical of those who will mourn. It simply says that in that terrible time we have hope to cling to.
 - We have hope in salvation!
 - We have hope in a loving Savior!
 - We have hope of life beyond the grave!
 - We have hope in Heaven!
 - We have hope in God’s wisdom and care!
- It is important that we are not ignorant of God’s promises and instructions He has given us help guide us and strengthen us in our grief.

Looking Ahead...

- Psychiatrist Elizabeth Kubler-Ross observed terminally ill patients and created the model of grieving in five stages: *Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, Acceptance*.
- Models like this are what has been *observed* and common, but it does not deal with how grief *should be* handled.
- We will look at these and more as we develop a model for how a Christian *should* grieve based on the teachings of the Bible.