

Lord, Teach Us to Pray – Part 6

Praying for the Grieving

Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – June 5th, 2022

Intro:

- We have all lost someone we love. From a spouse, to a child, to a sibling, to a parent, to a grandparent, to a friend, to a relative. Because of the curse of sin, death has come into life, and grief, pain, and loss with it.
- Sometimes it is hard to know what to do during times of grieving, and it is hard to know what to pray. Today, we will again turn towards the words of Scripture to be equipped to know what to pray and to be encouraged through and in our grieving. I am going to point us to a few scripture passages that guide us as we pray for those who are grieving.

Pray they will grieve well

Eccl 3:1,4 ESV

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven . . . 4 a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance.

- There are appropriate times for everything, including times of weeping and times of mourning. Jesus, Himself, was a “man of sorrows and acquainted with grief” (Isa 53:3). To pretend you are not in grief or to gloss it over with a veneer of strength or a “stiff upper lip” is not appropriate or healthy during times of loss. It is appropriate and healthy to grieve because grief will express itself one way or another, and it is better to choose to process and express it in a healthy manner.
- Grieving means allowing yourself to feel and to cry and to express your loss. Allowing yourself to remember, reflect, and process. You and I can help others by encouraging them to grieve, allowing space for this, and praying that they will do so well. There will be other seasons of laughter and dancing, but don’t force one season upon another. Take them as they come and respond to them while living through them.
- When we grieve, never lose sight of hope, the hope that comes through the promise of Christ.

Pray they will have hope

1 Thess 4:13-14 ESV

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. 14 For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

- Paul uses the analogy of comparing sleep to death to illustrate that those we have lost are not gone forever or for good, but they are like someone who is sleeping. They are still alive but in another state. God is able to resurrect them like we are able to wake people up. They are not lost forever. Because Jesus died and rose again for those who believe in Him and are found in Him, God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep when Jesus returns.
- Our great hope in our grief comes from the fact that Jesus resurrected from the dead, and He promises to give us eternal life. Jesus, Himself, told us to:

John 14:1-3 ESV

“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. 2 In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

- So in our grief, we hold onto the great promise of Jesus and the hope we have in Him. Our grief is real; it doesn’t have to be crushing because it is only for a season. The darkness of grief stands as a stark contrast to the brilliance of the eternal light that will shine.
- Pray that people will pray well and also pray that they will have hope as an anchor for their soul when the storms blow against their lives. Pray they can see hope through the tears of sorrow.

Pray they will receive comfort

Ps 23:4 ESV

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

- The greatest comfort that we can receive is to know that God, the great shepherd of our lives, is with us. His presence is a comfort, even in the darkest and most fearful times. He carries both the rod to ward off enemies, both spiritual and physical, and also the staff to guide me in the way that I should go. His presence and His power are a great comfort. We can pray that we will see the great shepherd with us in the valley of our grief. This provides comfort.

2 Cor 1:3-4 ESV

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

- God is the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort—these are some of his titles. And your Father and your God will comfort us in all our afflictions, which tells us there is purpose in our pain and promise in our process, and God will help in through them all and provide comfort in them all.
- When we have received the comfort that God supplies, we are equipped to comfort those going through the same valleys. So often what God brings us through, God brings us to. We return to help those who are going through the same things. The person who is best equipped to comfort one going through something is someone who has gone through it himself. God brings comfort to us, and then God brings comfort through us. Pray that people will receive comfort from the God of all comfort.

Pray they will finish well

- Paul the Apostle was one who was familiar with grief and loss. He had lost people as we all have, and even some very dear, dear friends in the faith. Even in the midst of the suffering and loss, while in chains in prison, near the end of his life, he wrote:

Phil 3:14 NIV

I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

- If we continue to have the breath of this earth in our lungs, we still have purpose on this planet. It may seem like life stops when people die, but the reality is your life and your purpose continue. Our pain and our sorrows shape us, but they do not have to destroy us. They may refine us, or define us, but never let them confine us. We can choose to grow through them and continue to fulfill our purpose on this planet.

Eph 2:10 ESV

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

- You still have good to do and good things to experience. Continue moving onward and upward, pressing on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called you heavenward in Christ Jesus. Never give up, but choose to get up and live loving God and loving others. And see the goodness and mercy of the Lord follow you all the days of your life until you dwell in the house of the Lord forever. (Ps 23:6)

Conclusion

- Reach out to comfort people who are grieving and pray for them. Prayer matters, and prayer makes a difference. Keep these things handy for a time of grief and pray them for others as we look forward to the day when Christ will make everything new, and there will be no more pain or grief of trials or tears.
- Prayer