

When I Grieve A Great Loss

On Sunday we concluded our sermon series on “Managing Our Moods” by considering some spiritual principles that can help us pull through grief.

1. Warm-up Question: March 20 was the first official day of Spring. What are you most looking forward to doing as the weather warms?
2. Grief is a universal human experience. We’ve all lost people who are precious to us. Jeff told how much he misses his Mom and his brother-in-law Bobby.
 - a. Who’s the person you’ve lost that you miss the most?
 - b. When you lost that person, how did it affect you? How did you get through it?
 - c. Share a favorite memory you have about the person you miss most.
3. I Thessalonians 4:13 says, “[We] grieve not as others who have no hope.” Note that the verse doesn’t say, “We grieve not,” period. The implication of the verse is that we do in fact grieve, but that there’s something different about our grieving that has to do with hope. On Sunday, we explored three sources of hope that help us, as people of faith, to process our grief.
 - a. The story of Stella Thornhope illustrated our first point. After her husband died, she felt desperately alone on Christmas. Then an unexpected package arrived with a Yellow Lab puppy. Her husband had arranged the gift before his death as his last Christmas present to his wife. The story is a graphic reminder that: **Even after our loved ones die, they’re not gone; their influence and mystical presence remain with us.** In what ways do you still feel and experience the influence and presence of the loved one you mentioned in Question 2?
 - b. Read Romans 6:1-10. On Sunday we focused on verse 5, “For if we have been united with Christ in a death like his [through baptism], we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.” In other words, the same things Jesus could do in his resurrection body, our deceased loved ones can now do in theirs, including possible occasional special encounters, as God permits, like Jesus had with his disciples in Luke 24 and with Paul in Acts 9. Judy Drummond had that kind of encounter with her deceased mother. When Judy was suffering in the hospital, her mother appeared to her. Have you ever received a sign from a deceased love one or had a mystical encounter with them? Do you know someone who has?
 - c. In Matthew 28:20, Jesus said, “Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” What does that verse mean to you?

- d. Hebrews 12:2 says, “We are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses. . . .” What does that verse mean to you? Who are these witnesses and how might their presence affect us?
4. We also drew a second point from Stella Thornhope’s story: Don’t forget the puppy! The puppy her husband sent her gave Stella a reason to pull through her grief because someone needed her. The same is true for us when we lose someone precious. **There are others – now and in the future – who will still really need you.**
- a. Jeff told how much his sister’s grandson Jackson loves her and constantly wants to talk to her. He wouldn’t have had that blessing in his life if Jeff’s sister had given up after the death of her husband Bobby eleven years ago. Who’s someone who has played that kind of role in your life – someone who despite great loss in their life has hung around to pour love into yours?
- b. Who is someone who needs you – despite the losses you’ve experienced – to be strong, move forward, and pour love into them?
- c. Of course, we don’t know what we don’t know. But there may be someone you’ve not even met yet who will really need your love in the future. Can you imagine who that might possibly be?
5. The third and final principle we covered on Sunday was: **Celebrate the glory your loved one is now experiencing.** In John 14:2, Jesus said, “In my Father’s house are many dwelling places. . . . I go to prepare a place for you [and] will come again to take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also.” II Corinthians 5:8 says, “To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.” And I John 4:8 says, “God is love.”
- a. When you put those verses together, try to imagine what it was like when your departed loved one first experienced the direct presence of God’s infinite love. Using your imagination, describe what you think that experience may have been like for your loved one. What did they see, feel, think, and experience upon arrival in heaven?
- b. When you finally arrive in heaven, what is it you most anticipate? Using your imagination, describe what you envision.
- c. Let’s go back to where we started. I Thessalonians 4:13 says, “[We] grieve not as others who have no hope.” Based on what we’ve discussed, if someone asked you, “How does your faith affect how you grieve?” What would you say?

Next Sunday is Palm Sunday, then Good Friday (April 2), then Easter Sunday (April 4) at 9:00 am and 11:00 am. The children’s Easter Egg Hunt is also happening.

Until these events fill up, reservations are available at: LifeJourney.church/links.