

Grief and Hope I Thessalonians 4:13-18

I. Grief is part of who we are as human beings living in a fallen world.

- A. Paul is not saying, "we don't want you to grieve."
 - 1. He is saying, "we don't want you to grieve like people who have no hope."
 - 2. So, yes, grieve.
 - (a) Acts 8:2: "Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him."
 - 3. At Lazarus' grave, "Jesus wept."
 - (a) Jesus is "the exact representation of the Father's being."
 - (b) That means God weeps.
 - 4. The Holy Spirit experiences grief (Ephesians 4:30-32).
 - (a) He is grieved when we don't (vs. 31).
 - (b) He is grieved when we aren't (vs.32).
- B. So, grief is part of who we are as people made in God's image.
 - 1. Grieving is healthy, necessary.
 - 2. It is the pathway toward healing.
 - (a) It is cathartic (that means to purge, emotionally).
 - (b) From the Greek, katharos, for pure, clean.
 - (c) Something that is cathartic purifies by cleaning out.
 - (d) Getting feelings out is an important step in healing.
 - 3. Identify feelings, what do you feel right now?
 - (a) Sadness, anger, loss, regret.
 - 4. Talk to one another. "Weep with those who weep."

II. Don't grieve like people who have no hope.

- A. Many people have no real hope.
 - 1. To them, death is like a mysterious black hole.
 - (a) They don't know God. They haven't experienced salvation.
 - (b) They really don't know what happens to people who die.
 - (c) So, death is just a mystery, and a scary one at that.
 - 2. When a loved one is lost there is no hope for these people.
 - (a) Not in the sense of how the Bible uses the word, hope
 - (b) Biblical hope is the assurance that something promised will happen.
 - (c) Paul Tripp's definition of biblical hope: "a confident expectation of a guaranteed result that changes the way you live" (New Morning Mercies, September 3rd).
 - 3. Because they have no hope, grieving is very different.
 - (a) Death is meaningless and empty, a cruel dead end.
 - (b) This can lead to despair.
 - 4. The problem is that people without God try to find hope in things that are temporary, like someone else's love.
 - (a) Temporary sources of hope eventually go away leaving us with nothing
- B. But, we have hope that is based upon trust in the promises of God.

- C. "We believe..." We trust in these truths.
 - 1. That Jesus died for our sins.
 - 2. That he rose from the dead.
 - 3. That those who have trusted in Christ will also be raised.
- D. Hebrews 6 tells us that "we have this hope, as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure."
 - 1. An anchor gives stability in a storm.
 - 2. Death can be a big storm that can send our lives crashing on the rocks.
 - (a) So, we need that anchor.
 - (b) The Gospel and the character of our God are our anchor.
 - (c) They are the same. The Gospel is only as good as the character of the one who promises. It is solid as a Rock!
 - (d) God's got us!

III. As people of hope, we grieve, and we believe.

- A. We have suffered a significant loss.
 - 1. I was going to speak about the power of the Holy Spirit, today.
 - (a) Jesus also called the Holy Spirit, the Comforter.
 - (b) We need his comfort today, and in the coming days!
 - 2. It is the love of God that heals broken hearts (Romans 5:5).
 - (a) If you are hurting set aside some extra time to be with Jesus.
 - (b) Pour out your heart to him, pour out your grief.
 - (c) Ask him to be your comfort and your strength.
- B. Because Jesus has given us hope, we carry on in his Name.
 - 1. He is our motivation. We respond to his love.
- C. We seek to be faithful to our calling as people of hope.
 - 1. To bring Good News to those around us.
 - 2. They are desperately in need of hope!
 - 3. God's got us! He will lead us forward!