



May 19, 2024



We Are the Church

1 Corinthians 15:26

WE HAVE A MAJOR ENEMY CALLED DEATH. Some people opt for the word passed rather than death. That supposedly makes it sound better, but the cold, ugly reality is that we face DEATH in our lives.

Tim and Gerry have experienced the tragic loss of their daughter Jazelle just 2 days ago. Harriet lost her sister last week. Bill & Steve lost their wives recently, Maggie lost her mom, Charlotte lost her sister and others have lost their loved ones.

Many of us have lost loved ones in all kinds of ways. Many times death comes totally unexpected.

This is a topic we must hear about and be aware of what to do when and if it happens in our life's experience.

✓ **Read Psalm 143**

Prayer

Ill. Airplane safety instructions

- We'll be taking off momentarily, so please make sure your carry on baggage is stowed securely, either in an overhead compartment or under the seat in front of you.
- Mobile phones and other electronic devices should be turned off.
- There are six exits on this plane – 3 doors, on each side. All exits are clearly marked with an exit sign. Please take the time to find the exit nearest you.
- If you're seated in an exit row, please review the responsibilities for emergency exit seating, on the back of the safety information card which is in your seat pocket. If you are unable, or prefer not to do this, please let us know, and we will be happy to find you another seat.
- If there is a loss of cabin pressure, the panels above your seat will open, and oxygen masks will drop down. If this happens, place the mask over your nose and mouth, and adjust it as necessary. Be sure to adjust your own mask before helping others.
- In the event of a water landing, life vests are under your seat.
- Whenever the seat belt sign is on, please make sure your seat belt is fastened.
- Smoking is not allowed on our flights, and federal law prohibits tampering with, disabling, or destroying a smoke detector.

Thank you for your attention. We hope you enjoy your flight!

Many times we deal with life like this. Spend little time considering what to do in a time of tragedy.

➤ **THE TRUTH ABOUT DEATH AND DYING**

- **Death came about because of the fall**

Genesis 3

- **Death passed upon all men**

Romans chapter 5

- **Death will be defeated ultimately forever**

1 Corinthians 15:20-27, 50-58

- **God never changes- his character is always the same-**

Malachi 3:6; Lamentations 3:23; Hebrews 13:8; Psalm 145:9, 17; Psalm 86:15; Ephesians 2:4; Isaiah 40:28; 1 Timothy 1:17; Deuteronomy 32:4; 7:9; Psalm 103:8; Psalm 117:2; 1 Chronicles 29:11

Sometimes, we may wonder where God is in the midst of our pain. I am grateful that the biblical picture of God is not of a cold, distant, abstract God. Rather, the God of the Bible is one who understands human suffering. In Jesus, God became flesh and dwelt among us, experiencing all our human pains and griefs. And Jesus himself was the Suffering Servant, who experienced untold agony as He died on the cross. Our God is a suffering God, and He stands in solidarity with suffering humanity.

But that's not all. God also makes a way through suffering: after the crucifixion comes the resurrection! The Christian story proclaims that death does not have the final word. In the resurrection of Jesus, God has defeated the powers of death and decay, and is making all things new.

Ezekiel 18:32; 33:11

➤ **THE PROCESS OF GRIEF**

Grief is a deep and powerful emotion caused by the loss of someone or something we held dear. Grief is part of loving and engaging with life. Loss is bound to come in this fallen world, and grief with it. Grief is not an emotion to be avoided, but one to acknowledge and walk through.

Shock and disbelief: It's hard to accept death. You may feel numb and question whether the loss really happened — this isn't unusual. Some have noted their initial reluctance even to notify others of a loss in case it turned out to be untrue. This is a normal reaction, as it is still expecting your person to call, write, or show up, even if intellectually you have accepted their death.

III.- Nanny & Pabby

Lady at grave for lunch

Sadness: Profound sadness is a universal experience and can often lead to feeling aloneness or isolation. We sometimes believe that no one can understand the depth of our grief, which drives us deeper into sorrow.

Guilt: You may feel guilt over things you said or did — or those you didn't and thought you should have. In cases of suicide, many people question whether they could have changed the outcome somehow. Yet nothing can stand in the way of death or a final decision made by someone else to die, and over time we have to acknowledge and accept that. Still, it's challenging to do in the early days or months of grieving.

Anger: Regardless of how someone we loved died, anger often comes into play. You may be angry with the person for not being here anymore or with caregivers for not doing more. You may blame God or others. Or you may not be able to direct your anger against a specific source but find that daily, small injustices seem much more significant than they might have in the past. This is normal, and no one should tell you that you must stop or let go of your anger — that will happen eventually as part of your process, on your timeline.

Fear: A loss can trigger anxiety on many levels — fear of your mortality, losing those you love, and facing life without the person who died. It can include fear of the future and the uncertainty you may now feel about your life's plans, knowing that someone close to you has died.

Physical pain: We often think of grief as emotional, but it can also manifest physically. Symptoms can include nausea, fatigue, lowered immunity, weight loss or gain, insomnia, aches and pains, and more. Although it can be pretty difficult, it's essential to do what you can to maintain your health during grief.

It is possible, and normal, to be living in the “acceptance” stage for extended periods of time and when a significant event happens, such as an anniversary, birthday, or wedding, you find yourself back in a previous stage of grief.

Counsellors describe suicide loss as “complicated grief” or “complicated bereavement”, because two things take place simultaneously. On one level, we experience the grief that naturally arises from losing a loved one in any circumstances.

But we also experience trauma, an additional blow that can overwhelm our nervous systems and psyches. It’s similar to the experience of soldiers in combat or survivors of a terrorism attack.

The toll of trauma lingers long after our loved one’s death, compromising our capacity to rest, heal, and adapt. After the initial shock wears off, some will relive the moments when they first learnt the horrible news.

When I ask suicide survivors what they want other survivors to know, they will always say: “You need to know that this is not your fault.”

We may never know what contributed to a loved one’s suicide. Depression is a primary factor in the majority of cases, and there are often other biological, psychological, sociological, or economic forces at work.

Ultimately, however, our loved one arrived at a point where it seemed like the only solution was to end their life. We may grieve that and lament the feeling that we were not able to prevent it. But don’t carry the burden of responsibility. That responsibility is not ours to bear.

Scripture gives us models for grieving in the book of Psalms. The psalms of lament, for example, often begin with a cry to God: “How long, LORD? Will you forget me forever?” ([Psalm 13:1](#)). “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” ([Psalm 22:1](#)). “Out of the depths I cry to you, LORD” ([Psalm 130:1](#)).

These psalms express our pain and the raw emotions of our grief. And they direct them to God—the right place to direct our grief, because He can bear the crushing weight and is the one we need to go to most.

We can petition God for His help: “Do not be far from me. You are my strength; come quickly to help me” ([Psalm 22:19](#)). We can be honest with Him about our devastation, and lament over how this calamity has crushed us and our families, and share with Him our desire for rescue.

Despite the resolve that the psalms of lament offer, we will often continue to ask “why?” questions. *Why didn’t I see this coming? Why did he do this? Why didn’t she seek help?*

Unfortunately, many of these questions are ultimately unanswerable. Why is there suffering? Why is there death? And even if such questions can be answered, much is still left to mystery. Consider answers like: It's a fallen world. The world is broken. Bad things happen that God never intended. People die. If we really want answers to the why questions, that's where they take us.

[Psalm 46:10](#) [Romans 8:38-39](#)

Struggles with the why questions. Why didn't He intervene? Why did He allow this? What have I done to deserve this?

III. - my family trauma

As you grieve, I hope you will take considerable time to express your feelings about your loss in your own way. Remember: grieving is unpredictable; there is no set schedule. People don't simply "get over" the loss or "move on." By God's grace, the loss may eventually be assimilated into day-to-day life and a context of loving and caring for one another. But, even after many years, a memory may trigger feelings as if the death has just happened.

➤ **THE PLACE OF THE LIVING CHURCH**

It is so obvious that the church is alive here at EBC!! I am so thankful for all of you and the way you demonstrate Christlikeness.

- **We should be prepared to help others who are going through their grief.**

([Romans 12:15](#)). The family of God is vital in our lives and a key means by which God ministers to us (and uses us to minister to others). Of course, the first place we should take our grief is directly to God, both in prayer and in studying His Word. God can use grief to help us know Him more, both as we receive His comfort and as our grief prompts us to more fully appreciate the gift of life and more deeply understand the reality of sin's effects on our world. Grief can connect us to the heart of God.

[Psalm 34:18](#) says that "the LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." God understands our grief and offers to be with us and comfort us with promises from His Word and with the "peace that passes all understanding" ([Philippians 4:6-7](#)). Jesus Himself was "a [man of sorrows](#), acquainted with deepest grief" ([Isaiah 53:3](#)).

✓ **Prayer**

✓ Love

Whatever you do, do not travel this path of healing alone. It is truly the hardest road imaginable. There is no consolation, no silver lining, to find in the circumstance—so many things have been left unsaid, so many questions left unanswered. Spiritually, comfort may initially be impossible. The comfort of Bible promises may one day be profoundly meaningful to you, but for some time, they may be bitter to hear. Ultimately it is through those promises and the powerful reassurance of the gospel that we strengthen one another. We determine not to give in to despair, and we likewise encourage our loved ones to recommit to the gift of life God has given each of us.

✓ Support

We find ourselves many times in the midst of being in a situation where we don't know what to say. It is better to say nothing than to say the wrong thing. What a grieving person needs is love and support period.

- Imitate Christ's tangible care by weeping, listening, providing, being present, and meeting practical needs.

Churches can be crucial in supporting grieving individuals and families by offering a compassionate and understanding environment, emotional and spiritual support, and resources to help them navigate this challenging time. In addition, churches can contribute to the well-being and resilience of those experiencing grief by fostering connections and community support.

✓ Understanding

We should be understanding and not judgmental or overly opinionated. Showing care is much more important than condemnation.

We should understand the process before it happens and have a strong foundation in Jesus.

The disciples on the Emmaeus Road- As they journeyed through their grief, they felt God's absence. But Jesus was still present with them, even though they hadn't recognised Him yet. That's the way it is in grief sometimes. It's one of the paradoxes of Christian faith; when God seems most absent, He is actually most present with us. In our suffering and pain, our suffering Saviour draws near to us.

In this earthly life, our questions may never be answered, but we can ask the Lord to help us through our grief. Although He may not provide the answers we long for, He will strengthen us to bear our terrible load with grace. He is a Shepherd who understands even the sadness of death and lives to bear it alongside all who grieve.