

10 Soothing Scriptures for Your Journey Through Grief

Death hurts. A lot! The testimony of Scripture and of Christians during the last 2000+ years is that believing in Jesus does not eliminate grief. Death is an enemy.

Whether it's the death of a loved one or some other serious loss, the Bible has a lot to say about death and grief.

This week my new book, *The Christian's Journey Through Grief*, is officially released. I'd like to share some Scriptures for the journey through grief, and a few brief thoughts that are woven throughout this book. I think you'll find them encouraging and helpful if you're wrestling with loss and grief right now.

1. "But I would not have you ignorant, brothers, concerning those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others who have no hope" (1 Thess. 4:13).

Grief may be especially painful for the believer. God's love has softened our hearts to the point that we care and love more, so the pain of death is especially excruciating. Deep grief is the price of great love.

Yes, we grieve. But we grieve differently.

As Christians, we experience excruciating pain and irrepressible hope at the same time.

It's OK to hurt. And it's OK to hope.

2. "Like a father who shows compassion to his children, so the Lord gives compassion to those who fear Him. For He knows how we are formed; He remembers that we are dust" (Ps. 103:14-14).

God sees you with compassion as you are grieving. Jesus

understands your human limitations.

Give yourself the kind of grace God extends to you as you journey through grief. You are a human being, with physical, emotional and mental limitations.

When others are busy or preoccupied, He's always available. When it seems you're all alone in your grief, remember that He is there, whether or not you can see and feel Him.

3. "For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who was in every sense tempted like we are, yet without sin. Let us then come with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:15-16).

Jesus is not simply up in heaven doing other important business in the universe; *you* are His business. And through His Holy Spirit, He is right there with you this very minute.

You may not always feel Him with you. Grief can cloud your ability to sense His presence, just as the clouds obscure the sun. But He is still there.

In your darkest moments, simply pause and invite Him to be with you right then.

4. "When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met Him, but Mary remained in the house. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. ... When Mary came to where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died'" (John 11:20-21, 32).

The death of a loved one usually brings up questions about God, faith, life, death, heaven, hell, eternity and more. Whatever your previous relationship with God, walking through grief may challenge aspects of your faith.

In 21st-century English, Mary and Martha were asking Jesus

why?

Asking *why* doesn't mean you've lost your faith. Bring your questions to God. You won't make Him mad at you. Doing so can often lead to an even deeper relationship with Him going forward.

5. "So then, as the children share in flesh and blood, He likewise took part in these, so that through death He might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver those who through fear of death were throughout their lives subject to bondage. For surely He does not help the angels, but He helps the seed of Abraham" (Heb. 2:14-16).

After the death of his wife, C.S. Lewis wrote, "No one ever told me that grief felt so like fear" (*A Grief Observed*).

Human beings naturally fear death. That's part of the power the enemy attempts to wield over us. And grief itself often brings fear.

Remember that Jesus voluntarily entered the open jaws of death, walked up to the keeper of the prison house of the grave and wrested the keys of death from his hands. And then He walked out of His own grave, leading a train of freed captives behind Him.

Yes, friend, death is a defeated foe. While your feelings of fear are understandable, you don't have to remain bound by that fear.

6. "Therefore we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. Instead, I say that we are confident and willing to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:6-8).

For the one who believes in Jesus, this is a very precious truth. The essence of your loved one, the real *him* or *her*, is

safe in the presence of the Lord.

Because death is the entrance into eternity, we should not be surprised that we cannot understand everything about this. But we can accept that one day it will all be clear.

And until then, you can be certain that your loved one is safe in His hands.

7. "But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor to me. Yet I do not know what I shall choose. I am in a difficult position between the two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless, to remain in the flesh is more needful for your sake. Having this confidence, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your joyful advancement of the faith" (Phil. 1:22-25).

Paul preferred to go home and be "with the Lord." But as long as God needed Him for a purpose on earth, he was content to stay.

In your pain, you too may feel you would rather go home to be "with the Lord." But if you're still breathing, God has something here for you to do, even if you cannot see it right now.

Make the decision that you'll stick around as long as God has something for you to do, and trust that He'll make that clear to you.

8. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us (Rom. 8:18). " Our light affliction, which lasts but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4:17).

Often, especially during grief, it feels as though our troubles are anything but "light" or "momentary."

If this life were as good as it gets, we would be right to give up. But this is not the end. There is something beyond what we can see and experience right now.

And for those of us who are walking with Jesus, what is to come will be glorious. So glorious that we will consider our present pain to be so small in comparison that it won't be worth mentioning.

For that to be so, that glory will have to be pretty awesome!

9. "For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and 'He will lead them to springs of living water.' 'And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes'" (Rev. 7:17). "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. There shall be no more death.' Neither shall there be any more sorrow nor crying nor pain, for the former things have passed away" (Rev. 21:4).

Imagine the scene. You are standing in the new Jerusalem with others who have also believed in Jesus. Then comes this wonderful moment; God Himself makes His way toward you, puts His arm around you and with His heavenly golden handkerchief wipes your tears away with a touch so gentle and healing that you will never need to cry again.

And the sense of this is that not only will He wipe the tears from your eyes, but He will wipe them from your heart as well.

Don't quit now. Don't give up short of being able to experience that moment. Your tears will be wiped away!

10. "When this corruptible will have put on incorruption, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then the saying that is written shall come to pass: 'Death is swallowed up in victory.' O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?'" (1 Cor. 15:54-55).

Knowing Jesus makes a difference here and now.

And yet this life, even with Jesus, is not enough. God has somehow encoded eternity in our hearts. And Jesus' resurrection assures us of that.

This grief journey is temporary. Your tears and pain, your loved one's resting place, your grief—it will all be over one day. Death will die!

Keep looking forward to the day when death will be swallowed up in victory.

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

For more about grief from Dr. Carol, listen to the podcast included with this article.

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This article originally appeared at .