

Why Funerals Are Precious to God

Recently while attending a funeral for a friend's mother, I received a revelation. No, the sky didn't split open, nor did lightning and thunder flash, nor did I hear the audible voice of G-D.

The truth is that I was sitting quietly, listening to the words of comfort being brought forth by the person officiating the funeral, when I thought to myself, *I am so glad I didn't have to officiate this funeral.*

Over the years, I have officiated many funerals; each one was heartbreakingly difficult. I left each one hoping that something I said or did would bring comfort to those who were suffering loss and grief, those whose lives had been changed completely when their loved one left this world.

At that moment when, for just a second, I thought, *I am so glad I didn't have to officiate this funeral*, a second thought came to my heart and mind: *Funerals have great value.* Now, I've always known the value funerals have in providing "closure" and support of family and friends during this most difficult of times. I've known that funerals provide moments to share memories and share the life and legacy of those who have passed from this world to the world to come.

However, I had never realized that there is something of great value that you and I as believers in Yeshua (Jesus) can experience only when we encounter a loved one dying. Until that moment during that funeral, I had never realized that funerals were not only to comfort those who were experiencing the loss of a loved one, but funerals also allow us to experience something that provides a window into a spiritual truth that can only be understood when someone we love passes.

It is only when we are in the middle of those moments of sorrow, loss, grief and pain that we can get a glimpse of what our heavenly Father felt when Yeshua was on the cross. But that glimpse isn't the complete revelation; it is only half of the revelation.

Our heavenly Father at that moment when Yeshua said "It is finished" didn't only feel sorrow, loss, grief and pain. He also felt victory, jubilation and excitement because, while the pain and sorrow of the death of His only begotten Son was real and powerful, so was His understanding that Yeshua's death brought joy, victory and the promised redemption of mankind.

It is the mix of emotions, the blend of sorrow and joy, loss and victory, grief and elation that G-D felt at the moment of Yeshua's death that we as believers can partially understand when someone we love, who has been born again, dies. This mixture of emotions is a gift from G-D designed from the foundation of the world, a moment in time when we share an experience with our heavenly Father.

We are not alone when we are hurting deeply because our loved one has passed. At the same time, we are also joyful that they are in the presence of the King. Nor are we alone during those moments of deepest loss, as we also recognize and rejoice at their victory.

We also aren't alone when our grief is the strongest because we will miss them, while simultaneously our elation is also the strongest because we know they are where they longed to be.

No, we are not alone in these feelings because our heavenly Father didn't only experience those feelings when Yeshua was on the cross; He experiences those same feelings along with each and every one of us each time one of His other children dies. {eoa}

Eric Tokajer *is author of* With Me in Paradise, Transient Singularity, OY! How Did I Get Here?: Thirty-One Things I Wish Someone Had Told Me Before Entering Ministry, #ManWisdom: With Eric Tokajer, Jesus Is to Christianity as Pasta Is to Italians *and* Galatians in Context.