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|  | By **Martha Rodman** on October 31, 2024 |

(I started this post last week, but came down with a bug, so couldn't finish it. It's given me more time to ponder some things about grief),*“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Matthew 5:4* ESV.Putting faith and grief together is often a challenge. Often, we only think of grief as something that happens when someone dies. But there are a variety of life's experiences that can trigger grief. Even in scripture, we discovered a myriad of circumstances that caused God's people (and even God himself) to mourn. Hannah grieved for what she didn't have (a child). Rebekah and Isaac struggled because their son Esau married a pagan woman. Jesus wept over the hard heartedness of the synagogue leaders. This was when He went there to heal the man with the withered hand. When a family, friend, or leader passes, grief comes into our lives. Grief doesn't come alone, but it arrives with it's own individualized emotions and thoughts.I recently lost another friend. I hesitate to use the word "lost" because I know where she is. I know she is in a better place, her ultimate home. But like anything "lost", there is a hole. It takes faith to walk through grief. It isn't easy and it isn't for the faint of heart. The closer the friend or family member, the bigger the hole and the more grace and faith it takes to fill it.The good news is found in this scripture: *Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Matthew 5:4* ESV. It takes faith to trust that blessing can come from mourning. As we keep trusting and walking through the grief, we discover those blessings. David wrote, *even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. For you are with me. Psalm 23: 4. ESV.*This is so difficult. When someone leaves our life permanently, as in death, it does not feel like a shadow. It feels very real, very solid and very hard. The realities of doing life without your personal someone is sooo hard to adjust to. But amazingly, life goes on and we find our footing. The Comforter comes, and with one step at a time, we trust Him. We start to walk through that valley and out into the sunshine. Walking through the valley of the shadow of death changes us. If we walk in faith, it changes us for the better.I am not a grief expert, but one thing I have learned is that grief is personal. Whether it is caused by death, divorce, or diagnosis, it hurts. It is painful and it is life-changing. We can become bitter, walled off, and hard. Alternatively, we can allow it to soften us and help us become better. It usually is accompanied by some form of regret. The shoulda, coulda, woulda thoughts that, if not kept in check, can morph into even greater pain. Every grief point comes with its own story. Unpacking those stories with family or friends can be very helpful. It is also helpful to share them with the Lord. Our precious Holy Spirit has helped me reset my own emotions and thoughts more times that I can count. There is no judgment from Him, just help and hope. The personal side of our story can make us feel misunderstood or isolated. When we remember that others also have their grief stories, it breaks the feelings of isolation. As we share our story, we can feel heard and seen.*Blessed are those that mourn, for they shall be comforted.* Mourning is useful. When done with faith (even shaky faith), it causes to lean into and onto our Savior even more. After the first season of mourning, life on the outside usually returns to some kind of "normal". But for those whose loss is deep, it doesn't ever go away. We learn to carry it differently, that is all. My mom passed away in 1990. I live in the home she designed and planned. But it is not the physical home that reminds me of her. As I age, I get closer to her age at her death (82). I long to talk with her. I am asking questions that never were answered, and won't be. This motivates me to ask those questions of those that are still here. To take the time to get to know them while I can. We take our "normal" life here for granted, don't we? Aunt Susie will always be here, won't she, then she isn't.Please know that those who have lost a child, always feel loss. They cope, not necessarily because they want to--but because they have to. Widows or widowers must do the same. Be patient with them. Feel free to ask about their loved one. They miss them. I have a friend who son died at 19. It happened a "long" time ago. We talked about him a few weeks ago. You could tell his memory was so real to her. It felt as if he was still here on earth. It is hard to comprehend the depth of her loss. The mourning for what was and what would never be, here on earth.The word grief comes from the Latin word *gravare.* It means to make heavy. Grief does feel heavy, like a shroud. When things are heavy, we have to move slower and take our time. It gives us time to think and ponder questions we often ignore or shove deep down into our souls. Don't ignore those questions, but bring them to the Lord. Grief, not only takes faith to walk through, but also courage. Hannah kept seeking God in her childlessness. Jesus continued on His journey. This journey led Him to the cross for the very hardhearted ones that caused Him to weep. When our grief leads us to Him, it is always a good thing. The simple knowledge that He understands brings comfort. Psalm 34:18: *The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed.**Psalm 147:3, He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.*with *him those who have fallen asleep.**Revelation 21:4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.*There will come a time when grief shall pass away. We will truly comprehend then what the trying of our faith has meant, and how fleeting this life really is. But until then, my friends, no matter what sort of grief you are experiencing, please know He understands. Let it work good His good will in and through it. Let it soften your hearts towards others and their pain. Jesus bore our pain and our sorrow on the cross, and for that I am so grateful.*Father, grief is hard. You know that, but we are so grateful we do not grieve alone. Please send Your Comforter to those who are struggling with grief right now. Remind them of You loving care. Help us to carry each others burdens, even the burden of grief. In Jesus' Name, amen.* |

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