

THE BROADLANDS BROADCAST

He heals the brokenhearted And binds up their wounds.

Psalm 147:3

It's Memorial Day and my thoughts went back to a conversation I had with a retired military man regarding the various military holidays our country celebrates. From that conversation I gained a special appreciation for those who lost their loved ones for the sake of our country and its freedom which is the reason we honor them on this day. My prayer for the families of the fallen is that they find comfort through the peace of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

In the past few months, several loved ones both inside and outside the church have gone to their eternal home leaving their families here to continue life without them. Oh yes, we know that the Lord is in control, but there is still sadness and grief. Rest assured, I pray for you frequently. This issue is dedicated to you! I pray that this might help you on your journey to comfort and joy amidst sadness and grief.

Tim Bergen

Hope Beyond the Hurt

Chuck Swindoll

I got the call one cold February afternoon. My father said, "Son, I think your mother is gone." The news took me completely by surprise. "Gone? Do you mean dead?" I asked. "Yes, I think she's dead."

I hurried over to my parents' apartment in Dallas. My sister had arrived before me and was talking with my father when I came in. My mother lay motionless on the sofa where she had stretched out for a nap and, somewhere in her dreams, breathed her last.

That was back in 1971. She was only 63. I'm not sure which was harder though; losing my mother so suddenly or watching my father die slowly over the next nine years. I believe it was the latter. He came to live with us during that time, so I learned a lot about grief—how necessary it is for healing, yet how easily it can become its own kind of slow death.

I'm convinced that no one can fully recover from loss without allowing himself or herself to feel and express sorrow completely. Yet one person's grieving is not

another's. I've seen some people move beyond a significant loss in a matter of weeks, while others took many, many months. The length of a person's recovery says nothing about his or her spirituality. The mourning process is just as individual and unique as a fingerprint. I want to be clear on that before you read further.

While grief is part of our built-in healing process, it's also possible for a person to so nurture and nourish grief that he or she keeps it alive like a cherished pet. In time, that individual can lose perspective, lose heart, and in many ways, die before dying.

My mother was the spark of my father's life. She inspired the fun, the creativity, and the laughter in our home. She introduced us to great music and encouraged us to play instruments and sing. If my father had any joy or delight in life, most of it came from her. So when my mother died first, it was like the light clicked off in his life. He had no hobbies, very few friends, and no interests other than watching television. He never read much. His world was reduced to the tight radius of rooms in our house, preferably with the blinds drawn and his door closed. However, we didn't let it stay that way. As a family, we did our best to help him find life after my mother's death, but nothing seemed to replace her spark.

Embracing sorrow is necessary for healing to take place. Equally important is the decision to put an end to the grief. No one can rush the grieving process, but it's vital we enter it with the determination to stop it one day. That's why we must seek specific ways to ensure that the healing process lingers no longer than necessary.

Having faced my own share of tragedy and sorrow over the years, I have found two perspectives to be very helpful. One is looking back at the past, and the other is looking forward to the future—in other words, healthy reflection on the hurt and deliberate expectation of the hope that certainly will come. I find that keeping a journal is the best place to do that. In fact, it's so effective that many grief counselors prescribe journaling to their clients.

I look *back* by reading through the journals that I have kept over the years. This often helps me see a consistent pattern of God's faithfulness through old trials, which gives

me confidence that any new struggle I face may be just as difficult *and* just as temporary. As a result, I find myself enduring hurt with a lot less fear. Journaling has equipped me to grieve the inevitable heartbreaks that come, large and small, without re-opening the wounds.

I look *forward* by making some decisions—resolutions, if you will—as to how I’m going to use my current trial in future ministry. Viktor Frankl did this during his struggle to survive the horrors of a Nazi death camp. He imagined how his ordeal might be useful in his practice and teaching of psychology after the war, even though he had no reason to expect that he would survive.

I became disgusted with the state of affairs which compelled me, daily and hourly, to think of only such trivial things. I forced my thoughts to turn to another subject. Suddenly I saw myself standing on the platform of a well-lit, warm and pleasant lecture room. In front of me sat an attentive audience on comfortable upholstered seats. I was giving a lecture on the psychology of the concentration camp! All that oppressed me at that moment became objective, seen and described from the remote viewpoint of science. By this method I succeeded somehow in rising above the situation, above the sufferings of the moment, and I observed them as if they were already of the past. . . . The prisoner who had lost faith in the future—his future—was doomed.¹

Resolving to use current struggles in a better future gives me a sense of mastery over the circumstances that would otherwise feel oppressive. Paul drew heavily on personal experience in affirming that, because of the Holy Spirit, no trial would ever dominate him.

And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. (Romans 5:3-5)

I have found that resolving to take action in today’s darkness helps me claim the hope that Scripture promises as I press toward a brighter tomorrow.

People enduring a tragedy often need help getting beyond the pain. They may not have the ability to see the hope beyond the hurt. They often need the healthy perspective of loved ones. They may need someone to recount to them past times when God demonstrated His faithfulness. Furthermore, they may have to depend upon the imagination of others in order to envision a future beyond their pain. Many who hurt may not consider processing

their thoughts in a journal during the healing process without someone prompting them to start.

Ask yourself:

- Is there someone I know who may be carrying a giant load of sorrow on his or her shoulders?
- Is there one coming upon a milestone or a significant transition in life who could use my help in gaining a healthy perspective?
- Who might be standing on the threshold of a very challenging future?

Perhaps this friend or loved one hasn’t thought to pause and mark the moment. With a glance at the past and a realistic look at the future, maybe you can help him or her see the hope beyond this present hurt. It could be the best gift he or she receives all year.

1. Viktor Frankl, *Man’s Search for Meaning: An Introduction to Logotherapy*, rev. ed. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1962), 73-74. Used by permission of Beacon Press.

Adapted from Charles R. Swindoll, “Hope Beyond the Hurt,” *Insights* (November 2004): 2, 5. Copyright © 2004 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights reserved worldwide.

<https://bit.ly/3uzV7jl>

4 Ways to Love Someone Blindsided By Loss

Clarissa Moll

A few days before my husband’s funeral, I asked my friend to drive my four children and me to the cemetery. Rob’s death had come as a tragic surprise. As I groped for security in the darkness of acute grief, I determined how to walk through the events of his burial day. I would visit the cemetery and walk to the plot where he would be buried. I would sit in the sanctuary for the worship service. I’d even wear my new shoes around the house to assure myself I could walk in them without stumbling.

As the car pulled up to the cemetery entrance, I asked my friend to kill the engine. I couldn’t help remembering all the times we’d driven by as a family on the way to a Saturday hike in the mountains. I’d never even thought about this cemetery on the hill. We sat in silence, looking through the gate to the quiet, green field beyond. It was absolutely beautiful, so tranquil, a perfect resting place for my beloved. I breathed in deeply, relaxed my body on the exhale, and closed my eyes for a moment. As the engine roared to life again and the car pulled forward, I thought to

myself, *I'm glad I'm here. At least now this won't be a surprise.*

There are many times in the last year and a half when I've wished I could be so intentional and preemptive in my interaction with grief. But grief isn't like planning a road trip—you can't map your route in advance. Instead, the path of sorrow runs helter-skelter through a new landscape shaped by sorrow. Grief is full of surprises.

For Christians, these surprises often prove particularly jarring to our spiritual lives. We've accepted the gospel's warning that to take up our cross is to follow Christ into suffering. We've claimed our willingness to share in his death that we might also enjoy the fullness of his life.

As C. S. Lewis writes in *A Grief Observed*, "We were promised sufferings. They were part of the program. We were even told, 'Blessed are they that mourn,' and I accept it. I've got nothing that I hadn't bargained for. Of course it is different when the thing happens to oneself, not to others, and in reality, not imagination."

Regardless of this knowledge, when death arrives and grief follows, most of us are surprised. If you serve the church in any capacity, you rub shoulders regularly with people experiencing the confounding nature of loss. Beyond the call to "count it all joy," how can we help those whose lives are marked by the painful trial of grief?

Your congregation can walk well beside those who mourn, accompanying them through grief's surprises. Consider these four ways:

1. Acknowledge how much grief hurts.

To lose a loved one is to be blindsided by the depth and breadth of the curse. Death and grief bring us face to face with our frailty, our lack of control, our lineage as children of Adam and Eve. Like our ancient ancestors standing at the edge of Eden, we stand in the cemetery and lament what is past. *Dust you are and to dust you will return.*

At the grave, past wrongs cannot be righted. Even words of love now fall on silent ears. Death's finality inflicts searing pain. Just as Adam and Eve gazed at the guarding cherubim and flaming sword, we stand astonished. We never could have imagined the pain of separation could hurt so much.

As we minister to those in pain, our congregations can offer them deep comfort by acknowledging just how deeply the curse cuts into our lives. We live in resurrection reality, but our bodies suffer decay, tragedy befalls, and death wreaks havoc. This world can be a painful place in which to live (Rom. 8:1–23). We offer grace to those who grieve when

we lament beside them, when we sit with the pain of their loss and let it hurt as much as it needs to.

2. Accept how long grief lasts.

I'm always struck by the obituaries of elderly women that mention children lost in infancy. I don't know why it surprises me; I know that grief lasts a lifetime. However long it has been since the last shovelful of dirt covered the casket, grief lingers long. Even if you have other children. Even if you remarry. Even as your life grows around your loss. Grief remembers the love and life that used to be.

We're often surprised how long grief lasts, and we mistakenly attribute its continuing presence to a lack of faith. Jesus promises believers life in all its fullness; how could sorrow be a part of that? But if the curse remains until redemption day, so too can we expect grief to last.

The apostle Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 15 that the last enemy to be defeated will be death. According to this timetable, our congregations might need to adjust some expectations. Our ministry to the bereaved won't be seasonal but lifelong, and not niche programs but whole-church ministry. As you walk beside the bereaved in your church, expect to commit for as long as it takes. Finding flourishing after loss may take a lifetime.

3. Admit how hard it can be to find companions.

When you've lost a loved one, casseroles and frozen meals show up in stacks. But good, lasting companions can be hard to find. Folks offer platitudes or silence—or, worse, critique; and grieving people discover to their painful surprise how lonely grief can be. Job, that great picture of righteous suffering, calls his companions, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar "miserable comforters," and for most of my life I agreed (Job 16:2). These three offered consolation like a one-two punch, encouraging Job to cough up the truth about his sinfulness when his life lay around him in shambles.

Who needs friends like that? I thought—until I became a widow. Then, I discovered: I do. I didn't need perfection. I just needed committed, invested friends.

Grief has a painful way of shifting relationships; we call these changes "secondary losses." It is hard to befriend and support a grieving person, especially for the long haul. Many people find they don't have the fortitude or interest for the task. The church is often good at disaster response—meal trains, prayer chains, and niche support groups. But we often struggle to befriend grieving people for the many years beyond their loss.

While they wouldn't win awards for their compassionate discourse, Job's friends did one thing right: they stuck

around. As you minister to grieving people in your congregation, commit to befriending lovingly and imperfectly. Like Job's friends, you won't say everything right. You may put your foot in your mouth more than once. But as the depth of your friendship grows, your church's intentions will shine through. Saying the right thing will become less of a concern. Your congregation's continued presence will offer a welcome surprise to those who find other relationships grow thin after the death of their loved one.

4. Adore Jesus together.

Grief cuts to the core of our human brokenness. Whether we've been faithfully following Jesus for many years or have recently turned in trust toward him, grief exposes the darkness of this world and can shake the bedrock of even the firmest faith. Sometimes we shake our fists in anger at God; other times we sense only his silence. For many, this comes as the most painful surprise of all.

I often hear this refrain in the new podcast I co-host: grieving people cling to the crucified Christ. When the sorrows of this life threaten to overwhelm, his resurrection offers hope. But, perhaps even more powerfully, Jesus's death reminds us of his intimate understanding and presence with us in suffering. Grieving people see their sorrows when they look at the cross.

As you walk beside grieving people in your congregation, adore Jesus together. Point your church not only to the empty tomb but to the nail-scarred hands. Like the friends on the road to Emmaus, grieve and glorify. Grief hurts deeply and lasts long. It can make us feel isolated from God and from our communities. But grief can also be the tie that binds us to one another and anchors us more closely to the gospel. As together your church looks through tears to Jesus, none of this will come as a surprise.

<https://bit.ly/2SMjf55>

The God of All Comfort

Alyson Kieda

[God] comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble.

2 Corinthians 1:4

Radamenes was just a kitten when his owner dropped him off at an animal shelter, thinking he was too ill to recover. The kitten was nursed back to health and adopted by the vet. He then became a fulltime resident at the shelter and now spends his days "comforting" cats and dogs—just out of surgery or recovering from an illness—through his warm presence and gentle purr.

That story is a small picture of what our loving God does for us—and what we can do for others in return. He cares for us in our sickness and struggles, and He soothes us with His presence. The apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians calls our God, "the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort" (1:3). When we are discouraged, depressed, or mistreated, He's there for us. When we turn to Him in prayer, He "comforts us in all our troubles" (v. 4).

But verse 4 doesn't end there. Paul, who had experienced intense suffering, continues, "so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God." Our Father comforts us, and when we've experienced His comfort, we're enabled to comfort others.

Our compassionate Savior, who suffered for us, is more than able to comfort us in our suffering and distress (v. 5). He helps us through our pain and equips us to do the same for others.

<https://bit.ly/2RQJgQY>

June Birthdays & Anniversaries

Shannon Jantz 2nd
Robert and Margaret Hines 4th
Hannah Cates 4th
Justin and Jessica Fontenot 5th
Jerry and Glenna Cooley 5th
Hunter Chimene 8th
Vi and Al Kochell 10th
Tim Bergen 13th
June Reeves 14th
Geoff and Tam Lee 20th
Grant Gregory 21st
Austin Arabie 26th
Ethel Moses 27th

Nursery Worker Schedule

06/06 & 06/13 Caryn Simmons & Kayley Dykes
06/20 & 06/27 Cathy & Avery Gregory

Elder/Deacon Schedule

06/06 Austin Arabie
06/13 Tim Bergen
06/20 Geoff Lee
06/27 Derrall Cronce

Activities

COMMUNION—06/13, AM Worship Service
LEADERSHIP MEETING—Friday, 06/18 @ 6 pm
FATHER'S DAY—Sunday, 06/20
VBS—July 19-23