



Death

Text: 1 Corinthians 15
Bible Teacher Ben Stuart

1. As a society, we've distanced ourselves from death. We don't see it, talk about it, or possibly even think about it. Yet, it is one of a few things in life that is 100% guaranteed. We're all going to experience death. Depending on your stage in life, reflecting on death may not something you spend much time doing. Take a moment and consider these two questions: Why do you think it is that we, as human beings, fear death? What about death scares you?
2. Do you have a tendency to turn towards or away from God in the face of hard circumstances, such as death? Why? Was your perspective of God's role in your pain and suffering changed through Ben's message?
3. We all rage against pain and sickness and death because something deep down inside of us knows that this is not the way it is supposed to be. Ben encouraged us to be ok with grieving over death, such as when a loved one passes away, and he used Jesus' example as support. (See Isaiah 53:3 and John 11:35.)
 - a. How might this truth impact the way we handle grief personally?
 - b. How might it affect the way we counsel and minister to others who are grieving?
4. Read Psalm 90.
 - a. Death sets a limit to our lives and stimulates reflection on the context of life, which is not death, but God. In verses 1-2 how does the psalmist set death within his view of God?
 - b. Luther commented on verse 12: "Lord, teach us all to be such arithmeticians!" What does it mean to number our days aright?
 - c. Study the verbs in verses 14-17. What emerges as most important for you—what you do for the rest of your life or what God will do in your life? Explain.
5. Read 1 Corinthians 15.

- a. Paul opens this chapter with a creed that summarizes the core of the gospel. (vv. 1-11) Restate these core truths of the gospel in your own words.
- b. Some claim that Christianity (or even religion in general) is just people naively grasping at anything that offers hope. However, what evidence does Paul give to support believing that the gospel is true?
- c. What hope does this passage offer the believer in the face of death?
- d. Paul begins v. 58 with “therefore”. V. 58 is the practical implication and exhortation that flows from the truths that precede it. What is it that Paul challenges the Corinthian church, and by extension us today, to do? In other words, how should a believer live differently because of the hope that the gospel brings?

Challenge: Is someone in your small group or in your life mourning? Or facing the death of a loved one and friend? How can you pray for them? How can you share the comfort and hope that we as believers have?

Prayer: Our Father in heaven, may Your Name be honored. There is none greater than You. You are our refuge and strength. You are always ready to help in times of trouble. We praise You, Lord. We lift our hearts with praise. It is good to sing praises to You, our God; how delightful and how right! Lord, You are great and mighty in power. Your understanding is infinite. We thank You, Father, for the life of our loved one(s) who have gone on to be with You. Thank You for their time on earth and the impact they had on our lives. We are thankful to You and we bless Your Name.

Father, You can count the stars and call them all by name. Your power is absolute. Your understanding is beyond comprehension. You support the humble and bring the wicked down into the dust. You comfort those who mourn. We declare that those grieving the death of a loved one; mourning will turn into dancing. We confess that You are their rock, fortress, and Savior in whom they will find protection. You are their shield, and the strength of their salvation. Father, You are their stronghold. As they call on You, You have promised to answer. We believe that You will be with them during this period of bereavement, rescue them from grief, honor them, and give them Your salvation.

Father, we ask You to send Your peace to those persons who are mourning. Continue to surround them with family, friends and loved ones who will offer words of comfort. Give them sweet and restful sleep. Father, remove the spirit of heaviness, and give them garments of praise. In due time, bless their lives to overflow with laughter and joy again. As they take refuge in You, please help them to put their trust in You. Thank you for your son Jesus that in Him we have an eternal hope. Amen.

STUDY DEEPER

Understanding the Grieving Process

"Grief is a journey, often perilous and without clear direction," writes author Molly Fumia. "The experience of grieving cannot be ordered or categorized, hurried or controlled, pushed aside or ignored indefinitely. It is inevitable as breathing, as change, as love. It may be postponed, but it will not be denied."

Fumia says it well. When it comes to grieving the death of a loved one, there are no linear patterns, no "normal" reactions, no formulas to follow. The word "grief" is derived from the French word "grève," meaning a heavy burden. Indeed, the physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual implications can be overwhelming.

While grief is an expected response to a significant loss, the unfamiliar emotions that arise can lead to feelings of helplessness, fear, and isolation.

Following a death, everyone works through these stresses differently. Some are instantly devastated; others feel numb and disconnected. Some withdraw socially, while others reach out for support. What's more, just when the initial shock begins to subside, a deeper sense of reality and despair sets in. Those who grieve may need to learn new skills, adopt different habits and adjust to daily life without the physical presence of the person who died.

Although grieving is an individual experience, there are symptoms many people share after suffering personal loss:

Feels physically drained

Can't sleep at night

Forgetful and unable to think clearly

Noticeable change in appetite

Physical distress such as chest pains, headaches or nausea

Stays extremely busy to avoid thinking about his or her grief

Eats, drinks watches television, etc. excessively

Participates in harmful activities

Senses or dreams about the deceased

Becomes withdrawn, lonely and apathetic

Frequent sighing and crying

Each person sets his or her own pace when grieving. There will be ups and downs, moments of relief followed by moments of anguish. The first few days after someone dies are generally the most intense, marked by chaos, strong emotions and a "dreamlike" sensation.

Over time, a host of emotions may emerge. From guilt to remorse to anger, reactions vary from person to person. It's not uncommon for grieving loved ones to ask questions like Why did this happen? Where was God? or Why didn't the doctors find the cancer sooner?

Among those mourning a death, some find the pain diminishes within weeks or months. They arrive at a place of acceptance, peace, and hope for the future. They reminisce about their deceased loved one instead of feeling consumed by memories.

For others, the healing process persists and it is difficult to enjoy a reasonable quality of life. Everyday events and significant life markers are painful reminders of what could have been.

If debilitating symptoms continue longer than six months, we suggest seeking professional help. A Christian counselor or therapist can help you release the emotions you may have stored up inside.

The intensity of grief may relate to the following factors:

- Whether the death was sudden or expected
- Your feelings about the person who died
- Your personality, family background, coping style and life experience
- Your belief system and view on death
- How those around you react and support you

The grieving process can be long and isolating, yet it's crucial to accept support rather than grieve alone. Talking about grief is an essential part of healing. Receiving reassurance and feeling understood will help make the recovery process more complete during one of life's most challenging times.

For full article [visit http://www.focusonthefamily.com/lifechallenges/emotional-health/coping-with-death-and-grief/understanding-the-grieving-process](http://www.focusonthefamily.com/lifechallenges/emotional-health/coping-with-death-and-grief/understanding-the-grieving-process)

Faithbridge resources for those that are grieving are found at:

<http://faithbridge.org/care-prayer/care-groups/>