

HOW TO DEAL WITH LOSS

Ecclesiastes 3:1 To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under the heavens: 2 a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pull up what is planted; 3 a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; 4 a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

This portion of scripture is telling you and I that life is made up of seasons and cycles. You cannot stop a season from coming but you can decide how to respond to a season.

This morning, I want to talk to you on the subject matter **HOW TO DEAL WITH LOSS**. The preacher says, there is a time to die, there is a time to pull up what is planted, there is a time to kill and so forth. He says a time for every purpose – in other words, there is a timeframe that has been allocated for certain things to happen in your life.

Allow me to say that our losses come in different shapes and sizes and usually when we talk about loss and grief, we usually think in terms of losing a loved one. But this morning, I want you know that there are many people who need grief counselling because they have just lost a job, a car or a divorce has occurred.

- We see Jesus grieving over three distinct situations:

John 11:35 Jesus wept. 36 Then the Jews said, Behold how He loved him!

- Jesus grieved over the death of His friend Lazarus, He was overcome by grief such that all He could do was just to shed tears.
- The Greek word used for “wept” in John is “dakruo,” which means “to cry silently” – Strong’s.

Luke 19:41 And as He drew near, He beheld the city and wept over it,

- The Greek word used for “wept” in Luke is “klaio,” which means to “wail aloud,”
- On this occasion, He grieved over the lack of understanding by Jerusalem which would result in their eternal damnation. He wept aloud over this city.

Hebrews 5:7 For Jesus, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong cryings and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared,

- In the garden of Gethsemane, it was the pending loss of His own life, the suffering that awaited Him and He was not quite ready to face it. He cried out in pain and suffering to be saved by the Father.

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- In other words, Jesus can comfort you and I in our moment of great loss, no matter what type of loss you might have faced or are about to face right now.
- **The big question is, how does one deal with loss in life?**

The reality is the grief is both personal and universal and we deal with loss in different ways. In one way or another, when you have experienced loss, you will go through:

- *moments of denial* – you find it difficult to accept the loss. Your mind can't comprehend the new reality of your life.
- *anger* - trying to adjust to the new reality and you experience extreme emotional discomfort. The response is then anger as it allows us to express emotion with less fear.
- *bargaining* – you start thinking of what you could have done different to avoid the loss
- *depression* – Reality strikes and you realise how helpless you are and this makes you extremely sad.
- *acceptance* – you no longer resist the reality but you have received the loss graciously and ready to work with what you have.

The question is this, how do we ensure that you go through that process in a healthy and productive way.

Lets start off with what Jesus said to His disciples just before He was crucified:

John 16:33 I have spoken these things to you so that you might have peace in Me. In the world you shall have tribulation (sorrows, pain, trouble), but be of good cheer. I have overcome the world.

In order to deal with grief, you need to do the following:

- 1. See your loss through the words of Jesus – in other words, be true to the truth of the bible and not your own truth.**
 - The truth of the Bible withstands the blows of life whereas your own truths will crumble in the face of pressure.
 - Your truth is shattered in the face of adversity – the truth of the Bible does not take away our pain but gives us perspective to what we are facing right now – what is the truth of the Bible *“In the world you shall have tribulation (sorrows, pain, trouble).*
- 2. Respond to your loss appropriately – there are two ways of responding to loss**
 - a) You are too quick to move on as if nothing has happened.**

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- This person refuses to accept the reality of his situation and want to keep appearances. This is a phenomenon you will find among leaders.
- They put themselves under pressure to keep performing and to live up to the expectations they have created around them.
- These people get back to their way of life too early
- They get fixated with managing perception and forget to manage their pain
- This response is rooted in pride that wants to maintain status quo. This person will carry the negative effects of grief for a prolonged period of time, resulting in a negative impact to his life.

b) You withdraw and isolate yourself.

- This person pulls back because they are afraid to face the reality.
- This response is rooted in fear and in trying to hide away from what has happened
- This response is only concerned about himself and not the rest of the community
- The act of isolation is dangerous because you start closing out the love that you need.
- This person is prone to depression and emotional breakdown.

You overreact to loss the moment you hold Jesus to something He never promised. When you do not hold Jesus to His truth and you approach grief with your own truth, you are forced to find a way of dealing with what does not make sense to your truth.

- When we continue to live up to our weak truths, our souls will start breaking down, leading to emotional failure.
- That is why the bible says you shall know the truth and the truth will set you free.
- The writer says, we are not of those who go backwards, people who shy away from their realities but we are of those who persevere by building up our faith.
- Your faith is built on a certain premise – that is why we need to align our truth with Jesus' truth. Jesus' truth says, in the world losses are bound to happen.
- Jesus overcame and therefore we will overcome

3. No one gets healed in a crowd and no one gets healed in isolation

- The leader joins the party and life goes on with life.

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- The other person goes into hiding – both of these people will not experience healing in the way they are responding to their loss.
- Healing is not negotiated from your preferences but by engaging the promises of God
- The middle ground that will bring healing in your time of loss is laying hold of the promises of God.
- We don't get healed by our actions only but by leaning on the promises of God. You don't get healed because of your activities but because of His promises.
- If people go into isolation, they become worse and when they go into a crowd, they get worse.
- God does not necessarily respond to how we feel but to what He said in His word – He honours His word.
- After a moment of sorrow, we need to hold onto the promise of peace

4. Find a broader purpose in your time of grieving.

Luke 9:59 And He said to another, Follow Me! But he said, Lord, first allow me to go and bury my father. 60 Jesus said to him, Let the dead bury their dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God.

- This is probably one of the most insensitive scriptures – this conversation was a difficult one. Someone had lost his dad and yet Jesus told him to leave the dead to bury the dead.
- Jesus was teaching this generation that we need to find a purpose that is bigger than your possessions and relationships we share with people.
- In the absence of purpose outside of people, when people die, our purpose dies with them.
- Your purpose and outlook to life must be bigger than this occurrence.
- You have to find a purpose that is deeper than the person you are about to bury, the job you have lost – if it is not deeper than them, when you bury them, your purpose is buried as well.
- Your assignment has to outlive the things you possess or the people who have gone ahead of you.
- That statement of let the dead bury the dead can be translated as “the ones who are no more cannot do anything for those who are still alive”.

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- King David experienced loss when his son died – the day that his son died, he got up, cleaned himself up and continued with the pursuit of leading the people of God.
- Because David was able to rise up, the next son that was born was Solomon and this was the son who built the house of God.
- If you stay too long in your mourning, you might lose the opportunity to build a legacy and a greater future.
- Invest the life and energy you have in what is next in your life.
- Look at what Jesus did when He was at the verge of dying:

John 19:25 And His mother stood by the cross of Jesus, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 Then when Jesus saw His mother and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, Woman, behold your son!

27 Then He said to the disciple, Behold your mother! And from that hour that disciple took her into his own home.

- Jesus was telling them that life has to go on – though he was no longer going to be with them, He draws their attention to existing relationships.
- When we go through grief, it is important that you open your eyes to what you still have – the strength for your recovery is tied up with the existing relationships and what remains in place.
- Jesus drew their attention to who was still with them – in plain language, Jesus was saying though He was going, but they still had each other.
- Don't lose what is still alive.
- Be careful of killing the relationships you currently have in the process of grieving. Relationships minister life to you.