

HOW I OVERCAME MY GRIEF

Part 4 of HOW I ... Lamentations 3:16-24.

Peter Foxwell. Cornerstone Church. August 27, 2023.

THE POWER OF GRIEF

I experienced the power of grief when I moved here at age 22.

- Grief is a powerful emotion.

“Grief is a natural response to loss. It’s the emotional suffering you feel when something or someone you love is taken away. Often, the pain of loss can feel overwhelming. You may experience all kinds of difficult and unexpected emotions, from shock or anger to disbelief, guilt, and profound sadness. The pain of grief can also disrupt your physical health, making it difficult to sleep, eat, or even think straight. These are normal reactions to loss—and the more significant the loss, the more intense your grief will be.” www.helpguide.org/articles/grief/coping-with-grief-and-loss.htm

My goal today is to prepare you to handle loss in a way that honors the Lord and ends in healing.

- We all experience loss in many ways.

“Death is often the impetus for grief, but we can grieve over loss of any kind. That may include loss of a dream, loss of a relationship, loss of health, a pet’s death, or even the sale of a childhood home. Sometimes grief feels more private when it is related to things like infertility, miscarriage, abortion, betrayal by a spouse, or even our own sinfulness.” www.gotquestions.org/Bible-grief.html

- We can walk through the dark valley of loss and come out the other side whole and healthy.

This is my story ...

SECTION ONE: I DID NOT OVERCOME GRIEF, IT OVERCAME ME

I felt like I was hit by a truck.

- I felt deep, intense, physical and emotional pain.

The prophet Jeremiah wrote about his grief when Jerusalem - where he lived - was destroyed.

Lamentations 3:16-18 (ESV) (God) has made my teeth grind on gravel, and made me cower in ashes; 17 my soul is bereft of peace; I have forgotten what happiness is; 18 so I say, “My endurance (goal, strength, victory) has perished; so has my hope from the LORD.”

I did not overcome my grief, it overcame me.

- I experienced overwhelming emotional and physical reactions.
- I could not control it.

SECTION TWO: I RELIED ON WHAT I ALREADY KNEW

I leaned on the truths and habits I learned over decades of following Jesus.

- I couldn't focus, read, learn, study, but I had “muscle memory.”

The prophet Jeremiah held on to what he knew.

Lamentations 3:19-21 (ESV) (I) remember my affliction (depression, suffering) and my wanderings (homeless, cast out, refugee), the wormwood (feeling cursed) and the gall! 20 My soul continually remembers it and is bowed down within me. 21 But this I call to mind (return to things stored in my heart - core truths), and therefore I have hope ...

SECTION THREE: I RESTED IN GOD'S LOVE

I didn't blame God. I wasn't mad at him.

- Because I've experienced God's powerful love.

Ephesians 3:18-19 (NLT) And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. 19 May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully.

The experience of God's love carried Jeremiah from grief to hope.

Lamentations 3:22-24 (ESV) The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; 23 they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. 24 "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him."

- God's love is steadfast: It never changes. It's guaranteed by covenant.
- God's mercies are renewed daily: His compassion for hurting people is protective and nurturing like a mother's womb.

God's love and mercy came to me in many forms.

- A deep assurance, remembering the Christ and his cross, family and friends, the church family, other pastors, music, time off work.

CONCLUSION: THE STORMS ALWAYS COME

Loss and grief are "normal" in a fallen world.

- I hope my story helps you walk through your pain into healing.
- Be prepared: store up core truths and habits; rest in God's steadfast love.

UNDERSTANDING GRIEF

Grief Is ... (The following is adapted from online articles cited above)

Grief is a deep and powerful emotion caused by the loss of someone or something we held dear. Grief is part of loving and engaging with life. Loss is bound to come in this fallen world, and grief with it. Grief is not an emotion to be avoided, but one to acknowledge and walk through.

Grieving is an individual experience; there's no right/wrong way to grieve. It depends on many factors, including your personality and coping style, your life experience, your faith, and how significant the loss was to you.

Why We Grieve

Any loss we experience can cause grief, including:

- Divorce or relationship breakup
- Loss of health, job, or financial stability
- Miscarriage
- Retirement
- Loss of a cherished dream
- Selling the family home

A Timetable for Grief

The grieving process takes time. Healing happens gradually; it can't be forced or hurried, and there is no “normal” timetable for grieving. Some people start to feel better in weeks or months. For others, the grieving process is measured in years. It's important to be patient with yourself.

How to Grieve Well

- Acknowledge your pain.
- Rest in God's unwavering love and mercy to you.
- Rely on the core truths of the Christian faith.
- Accept that grief can trigger many different and unexpected emotions.
- Understand that your grieving process will be unique to you.
- Seek out face-to-face support from people who care about you.
- Support yourself emotionally by taking care of yourself physically.