

Where Is “Joy to the World” When I’m Grieving?

by Eric Redmond – Dec, 2017

** The coming of Jesus to give His life on the cross reminds us that God brings joy even in sorrow, life from death, comfort after pain:

¹⁴ Inasmuch then as the children [*all Christians*] have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself [*Jesus, when He became flesh in Mary’s womb*] likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil... ¹⁷ Therefore, in all things [*including sorrow and grief – Isaiah 53:3*] He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. [*Jesus took the infinite, righteous wrath of God on behalf of those who trust in Him, so that God is FOR His people.*] ¹⁸ For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted. (Hebrews 2:14–18, NKJV [*my comments are italicized in brackets*])

** Satan often tempts with thoughts like: “If God cared, He wouldn’t let you go through this.” If he tries this, turn to the cross and remember that since God gave His own Son, the end of the story of EVERY Christian will be – “He didn’t hold back ANYTHING that would be for my good.”

³² He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? (Romans 8:32, NKJV)

** When the person we’re grieving was clearly a fellow believer in Jesus, we’re to be encouraged knowing that we’ll spend eternity together with the Lord (1 Thess 4:13-18). But other times we’re quite sure they were not saved. First, remember that God, the Judge of all the earth, will do what is right (Gen 18:25). Second, there will be people in heaven who in their last moments were brought by God to trust in Jesus, just as the thief on the cross (Luke 23:39-43). Third, it’s right to acknowledge the gifts God gave through the person you’re grieving. Study how David taught the people to mourn after Saul and Jonathan were killed in battle. From 2 Samuel 1:17-27, you’d never know that Saul was killed in judgment for his sin, and that he spent years tormenting and hunting David. Instead, David concentrates on the good things that God did through Saul’s life.

** However, don’t participate in FALSE comfort for someone you’re not sure was in Christ. We must be ready for comments like: “At least they’re in a better place.” Notice Jesus’ response to tragedy in Luke 13:1-5 – He had people examine themselves to see if THEY are ready to stand before God. Maybe we could respond like this: “God makes it clear that all those who turn from their sin and trust in Jesus as their Savior and Lord will be with Him forever in heaven. This is a good time for all of us to make sure we’re ready to die and stand before God.”

** 2 Corinthians 4:17-18 tells us that the painful things in this life only serve to make heaven even more glorious for the Christian. Life in this fallen world is filled with groaning (Romans 8:22-23), but meditate on all the hope and joy-filled truths that are in Romans 8:18-39! And note Romans 8:37 – In (not only “after”) all these painful things we are MORE than conquerors THROUGH HIM WHO LOVED US. With a God who loves us like this, we can be “sorrowful, yet always rejoicing” (2 Corinthians 6:10).