Hope In The Midst Of Grief sermon for 5-29-16

**Grief is not a short term phase; rather, it is a journey of the heart and mind.**

**The key is not how you start, but how you finish.**

No matter if you start in sorrow, confusion, disbelief, shock, despair, guilt, or anger, you can finish in peace.

**Your relationship with Jesus will make all the difference between a painful finish or a peaceful finish.**

**Painful finishes:**

1. **Never starting the journey at all.**
   1. Denying the loss indefinitely.
   2. Burying the pain.
      1. Going it alone.
      2. Down-playing how much they meant to you.
      3. Getting too busy to grieve
   3. Replacing the loss.
2. **Ending the journey in paralyzing sorrow.**
   1. Fear of getting too close to others
   2. Constant sorrow weighing down.
      1. Depression
   3. Cycles of “shutting down” your life
   4. Fear of going on without them
      1. Dishonoring their memory
      2. Failure without them
3. **Ending the journey in destructive bitterness.**
   1. Angry with God
      1. Giving up on anything to do with God
      2. Becoming an opponent of God
         1. Evil speaking
   2. Angry with others
      1. Won’t forgive
      2. Blame others for loss
      3. Those surviving only remind you of your pain causing you to lash out
      4. Angry that others seem to move on without much trouble and forget your loved one
   3. Angry with yourself
      1. Survivor guilt
      2. Regrets
      3. Angry that you can’t move on

**Peaceful finishes:**

1. **Making your way through the grief one foot in front of the other**
   1. Acknowledging the loss and pain
   2. Embracing friendships
   3. Being Honest
2. **Ending the journey in revitalizing hope.**
   1. Decide to live again.
      1. **Psalms 71:14-16**

But I will hope continually,

And will praise You yet more and more.

**15**

My mouth shall tell of Your righteousness

*And* Your salvation all the day,

For I do not know *their* limits.

**16**

I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD;

I will make mention of Your righteousness, of Yours only.

* 1. Decide to be vulnerable to this pain happening again.
     1. Getting close to others
  2. Decide to exchange pain for praise.
  3. You will never leave them behind by pressing on.

1. **Ending the journey wearing love.**
   1. **Don’t allow Satan to take advantage of your loss.** 
      1. **Ephesians 4:23, 26-27, and 31-32**

**23**and be renewed in the spirit of your mind,

**26**“Be angry, and do not sin”: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, **27**nor give place to the devil.

**31**Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. **32**And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

* + - 1. **Satan wants control of your thoughts; and so he will use your pain as an entrance to the traffic control room of your mind.**
         1. **Colossians 3:1-2**

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. **2**Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

* + - * 1. **Why?**

**Isaiah 26:3** You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You*,* Because he trusts in You.

* 1. **Put on Love even when you are hurting.**
     1. **Colossians 3:12-15**

**12**Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; **13**bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do.* **14**But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. **15**And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

* + 1. **1 Corinthians 13:4-7**

**4**Love suffers long *and* is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; **5**does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; **6**does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; **7**bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

* 1. Love yourself.

Place your hope in the Lord. Decide to trust Him at all times.

He will strengthen your heart and get you through every struggle.

**Jesus is our only hope in the midst of grief.**