

You Will Grieve, But Your Grief Will Turn to Joy!

TODAY'S READING: JOHN 16:22

The Saturday between Jesus' death and resurrection is not mentioned in the Bible, but much must have gone through the minds of the disciples. They had just seen Jesus suffer the most painful death possible. Three years earlier, Jesus had called them to follow him. They had seen his miracles and listened to his amazing teaching. They had been filled with hope for the heavenly Kingdom. But now, so suddenly, he was dead. They still did not understand. Confusion flooded their minds and anxiety gripped them. They were afraid and ashamed of having run away from Jesus; Peter had an especially pained conscience after having denied the Lord three times. Jesus had told them, "Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy" (John 16:22). But how could they possibly hope for joy when their hearts were filled with grief?

The coronavirus has taken thousands of lives: grandfathers and grandmothers, fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, wives and husbands, friends and colleagues. For many, the loss came suddenly with no time to prepare, sometimes with no chance even to say goodbye. The grief and sadness are deep. How can we comfort these people? Descriptions of future hope may be hard for them to hear at this time, but a listening ear and a reminder of God's goodness today may help them carry on. "Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness" (Lamentations 3:21-23).



Happening Now:

During the current pandemic, the tragedy for many families grieving the loss of a loved one is intensified because they have not been permitted to see the dying or deceased due to the risk of infection. In many places, even a proper funeral is impossible because gatherings are prohibited, making it more difficult to process the grief. Believers can come alongside suffering families, offering comfort and encouragement and sharing the hope that sustains us because death does not have the last word.

Have You Thought About...

- How do you think the disciples felt on Saturday? Have you ever experienced such a time "in between"? What gave you hope?
- Do you know someone who has lost a loved one because of the coronavirus? Maybe you could send a note saying that you are thinking of and praying for them. Maybe you could call them just to listen and be present in their time of grief.
- When Jesus said, "Your grief will turn to joy," he was referring to his resurrection. Our faith tells us that death is not the end, but the beginning of eternal life. Is there an opportunity for you to share this hope with someone today?