



MINISTÈRE DU PASTEUR CLÉMENT SALOMON · DEVOTIONAL #2

Hope After Loss

When the chair at the table stays empty

The house is finally quiet. All week it was full — neighbors, borrowed plastic chairs, coffee at every hour, singing, people saying the right things and the wrong things. Now the last car has gone. There are dishes in the sink and a folded funeral program on the table with a face on it. And out of pure habit she opens the cabinet and takes down one plate too many. She stands there, holding it, in the middle of her own kitchen.

That is what grief really is. Not one big moment in front of everybody. A thousand small ones nobody sees.

If that is you tonight — or if you are reading this for someone you love — please don't skip to the end. There is a promise in the Bible with your name on it, and it is not a small one. But before we get to the promise, God wants to say something to you that most people never hear.

First: you have permission to cry

Somewhere along the way, someone told you that tears are a sign of weak faith. That a believer should smile and say "God knows best" and keep moving. Look at what Jesus did at the grave of His friend Lazarus:

"Jesus wept."

John 11:35 (KJV)

Two words. The shortest verse in the Bible, and one of the most important. Because here is the detail people miss: **Jesus was about to raise Lazarus.** He knew the ending. He knew that in a few minutes that man would walk out of the tomb alive. And He still stood there and cried.

Before that, the Bible says "he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled" (John 11:33). God in human flesh, shaking at a graveside. So let no one — including you — put a stopwatch on your tears. If Jesus cried at a funeral He was about to interrupt, you are allowed to cry at yours.

Where God is standing right now

People say "God is everywhere," and that can feel like He is nowhere in particular. The Bible is far more specific about where He goes:

"The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit."

Psalm 34:18 (KJV)

Nigh means near. Close. Not watching from a distance to see how you handle it — near enough to touch. If you feel far from God right now, understand what the verse is actually saying: broken hearts are the address He goes to first.

"He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds."

Psalm 147:3 (KJV)

Look at that word: *bindeth*. Bandages. Anyone who has ever dressed a real wound knows you do it slowly, gently, a little at a time, and you come back tomorrow to do it again. That is how God heals grief. Not with one dramatic touch — with daily, patient care.

And your tears are not falling on the floor:

"Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?"

Psalm 56:8 (KJV)

The crying you did in the shower where no one could hear you? God saved it. He wrote it down. Not one of those tears was wasted.

The promise Jesus made to people who mourn

When Jesus opened His most famous sermon, He listed the people heaven calls blessed. He did not list the strong or the successful. Second on the list:

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted."

Matthew 5:4 (KJV)

Read the tense slowly: **shall be**. Not "should already be." Comfort is coming — some of it here, all of it later — and it is guaranteed by the character of God, not by how well you are coping.

"Blessed be God... the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in trouble."

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 (KJV)

Do you see the second half? God comforts you so that one day you can sit beside someone else in the same dark room and actually help. Your loss is not only a wound. In God's hands it becomes a lifeline for somebody who has not been through it yet.

Paul's strange instruction

Now we come to the sentence that has held millions of people together at gravesides. Read it very carefully — one small phrase changes everything:

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope."

1 Thessalonians 4:13 (KJV)

Notice what Paul does *not* say. He does not say "do not sorrow." He says do not sorrow "**even as others which have no hope.**"

There are two kinds of grief in this world. One is grief with a wall at the end of it. The other is grief with a door. Christians are not given less pain — we are given a different ending. You are allowed to cry. You are not required to despair.

Why the Bible calls it sleep

Jesus used a word for death that changes how you picture the person you lost. When Lazarus died, He told His disciples:

"Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep."

John 11:11 (KJV)

Sleep. Not torment. Not wandering. Not lost somewhere in the dark trying to reach you. The Bible is plain about what the dead experience:

"For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing."

Ecclesiastes 9:5 (KJV)

Take that in, because it is meant as mercy. Your loved one is not suffering. Your loved one is not watching you struggle and unable to help. Your loved one is *resting*:

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord... that they may rest from their labours."

Revelation 14:13 (KJV)

This is also why the Bible warns us never to try to contact the dead or listen to anyone who claims to bring a message from them (Isaiah 8:19-20). Whatever speaks, it is not them — and God does not want you handing your broken heart to something that will only take from you. He has something better, and it is not a whisper in the dark. It is a morning.

Because that is the whole point of the word *sleep*: a sleep always has a morning.

The morning

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 (KJV)

Slow down and picture it, because God put it in writing so you could. A shout loud enough to reach into the ground. Graves opening across every country on earth. And that word in the middle of it all — **"together with them."** Not "you will hear about them." Not "you will think about them." Together. Arms around necks. Names called out in familiar voices.

Then Paul finishes with an instruction, and it is not "believe this someday when you feel stronger":

"Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

1 Thessalonians 4:18 (KJV)

He wrote it to be *used*. Read at gravesides. Whispered at two in the morning. Sent to a friend who cannot sleep. Use it tonight.

The question Jesus asked at a grave

Martha had just buried her brother. She was hurting, and honest about it. Jesus did not hand her a lecture. He handed her Himself:

"I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"

John 11:25-26 (KJV)

Notice He did not say "I know about the resurrection" or "I will bring the resurrection." *I am*. The hope is not a doctrine. It is a Person, and He is standing in front of you asking a grieving woman's question in your own language: **do you believe this?**

And on the worst night of His friends' lives, He said it again, with a promise about where all of this is going:

"Let not your heart be troubled... In my Father's house are many mansions... I go to prepare a place for you... I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

John 14:1-3 (KJV)

He is not sending for you. He is coming Himself.

The last tear anyone will ever cry

The Bible ends with one of the tenderest sentences ever written. God does not simply announce the end of sorrow from a throne. Look at what He does with His own hand:

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

Revelation 21:4 (KJV)

To wipe a tear from someone's face, you have to be close enough to reach it. The God of the universe bends down to your face, personally, and finishes what death started in this world:

"He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces."

Isaiah 25:8 (KJV)

Then the funeral programs stop being printed. The black clothes go in the fire. And the words "I'll see you later" finally stop being a hope and become an address.

So what do you do with tonight?

Heaven is certain. Tonight is still hard. Here is what the Bible actually tells grieving people to do while they wait:

- **Tell God the truth, not the polite version.** "Pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us" (Psalm 62:8). He is not fragile. He can take your anger and your questions.
- **Let people carry you.** "Bear ye one another's burdens" (Galatians 6:2). Say yes when someone offers. You would want them to say yes to you.
- **Don't rush yourself.** Even Joseph, with all his faith, mourned his father for days (Genesis 50:10). Grief is not a race, and there is no prize for finishing early.
- **Keep one promise in front of your eyes.** Write Revelation 21:4 on a paper and put it where you will see it in the morning.

- **Do the next small thing.** God fed His people one day at a time. Today, do today.

And please hear this clearly: if the weight is too heavy — if you cannot eat, cannot sleep, or you have thought about ending your life — talk to a pastor, a trusted friend, and a qualified professional. This devotional is spiritual encouragement, not medical advice. **In an emergency, call 911.** Asking for help is not weak faith either.

Somewhere tonight a woman is standing in her kitchen holding one plate too many. She is not crazy, and she is not faithless. She is loved, God is nearer to her than the countertop she is leaning on, and the morning that is coming will be worth every night she had to walk through to reach it.

Before you close this — one prayer

You can pray this right now, out loud, in your own words: *"Lord, You know what I lost. I don't understand it, and it still hurts. But I believe You are near, and I want to see them again. Hold me until the morning."* That prayer has been heard.

Would you like to know more about Jesus, study the Bible, or go deeper on this topic? We would be honored to pray with you by name — and to sit with you in this. Reach us today:

 **903-748-9353** ·  [**jils19802012@gmail.com**](mailto:jils19802012@gmail.com)

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SHARE THIS WITH SOMEONE WHO IS GRIEVING TONIGHT

Viewer Handout

Hope After Loss — pocket version

5 truths to remember

1. Grief is not weak faith — Jesus wept at a grave He was about to open (John 11:35).
2. God is nearest to broken hearts, and He bandages them slowly and personally (Psalm 34:18; Psalm 147:3).
3. We sorrow, but not like those who have no hope (1 Thessalonians 4:13).
4. Death is a rest, and a sleep always has a morning — the dead in Christ shall rise (John 11:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:16).
5. God Himself will wipe the last tear from your face (Revelation 21:4).

Memory verse

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain."

Revelation 21:4 (KJV)

Think & pray about it

- What have I never said out loud to God about this loss?
- Who is the one person I most want to see on the resurrection morning?
- Who around me is grieving quietly — and what small thing could I do for them this week?

Presenter Bullet Sheet

- **Open with the story** (the quiet house, one plate too many) — ask gently: "Who here still reaches for the phone to call someone who is gone?" Give the room time.
- **Point 1 — Permission to grieve:** John 11:33-35. Jesus wept even though He was minutes from raising Lazarus. Remove the shame from tears.
- **Point 2 — Where God stands:** Psalm 34:18; Psalm 147:3; Psalm 56:8. "Nigh" = near; "bindeth" = bandaging, daily and patient; tears are kept, not wasted.
- **Point 3 — The promise to mourners:** Matthew 5:4 (note the tense: *shall be* comforted); 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 — comfort received becomes comfort given.
- **Point 4 — The key text:** 1 Thessalonians 4:13. Paul does not forbid sorrow; he forbids hopeless sorrow. Grief with a door, not a wall.
- **Point 5 — Death as sleep:** John 11:11; Ecclesiastes 9:5; Revelation 14:13. They rest, they do not suffer. Warn kindly against seeking messages from the dead (Isaiah 8:19-20).
- **Point 6 — The morning:** 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18. Emphasize "together with them," then hand the group verse 18 as an assignment: comfort one another with these words.
- **Point 7 — The Person, not just the doctrine:** John 11:25-26 — "Believest thou this?" Ask it directly. Then John 14:1-3: He comes personally.
- **Point 8 — The last tear:** Revelation 21:4; Isaiah 25:8. God bends down close enough to wipe a face.
- **Appeal:** Invite each person to name their loss silently before God, and to say yes to Jesus, the resurrection and the life. Offer personal prayer and free Bible study. Remind the group that heavy grief also needs qualified help — a pastor, a counselor, a doctor; in an emergency call 911.
- **Close:** Memory verse (Revelation 21:4) + tease the next study ("Can We Really Trust the Bible?").

10 Myths vs. Facts

Myth	Fact (with Bible)
1. Real Christians don't grieve; tears mean weak faith.	"Jesus wept" at Lazarus' grave (John 11:35). Paul tells believers to sorrow differently, not to stop sorrowing (1 Thessalonians 4:13).
2. If you had enough faith, they would have been healed.	Scripture never measures faith by outcomes. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises" (Hebrews 11:13, 39-40). The promise is resurrection, not exemption from death.
3. God took them because He needed another angel.	The Bible never says people become angels; angels are a separate order of created beings (Psalm 103:20; Hebrews 1:14). Our hope is the resurrection (1 Thessalonians 4:16).
4. The dead are watching over us and can send us messages.	"The dead know not any thing" (Ecclesiastes 9:5); "his thoughts perish" (Psalm 146:4). Scripture forbids seeking the dead and points us to God's word instead (Isaiah 8:19-20).
5. Death is simply the end of the story.	Jesus said, "I am the resurrection, and the life" (John 11:25). The dead in Christ shall rise at His return (1 Thessalonians 4:16).
6. Time alone heals grief.	The Bible credits the healing to God, who "healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds" (Psalm 147:3) and draws near to them (Psalm 34:18).
7. Mourning for a long time means you don't trust God.	Scripture records extended, honest mourning by faithful people (Genesis 50:10). Jesus Himself groaned and wept (John 11:33-35). Comfort is promised to mourners (Matthew 5:4).
8. You should hide your tears to honor God.	God keeps our tears on record (Psalm 56:8) and invites us to "pour out your heart before him" (Psalm 62:8).
9. Now that they're gone, you face this alone.	"I will fear no evil: for thou art with me" (Psalm 23:4). God comforts us so we can comfort each other (2 Corinthians 1:3-4; Galatians 6:2).

10. The reunion is only symbolic — a nice thing we say.

Paul describes a literal resurrection at Christ's literal return: caught up "together with them" (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17), and a world where "there shall be no more death" (Revelation 21:4).

Where this comes from (Sources)

This devotional is built on the Bible and reflects the published beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Verify everything for yourself:

- The Bible — passages on grief, death and the resurrection: Genesis 50:10; Ecclesiastes 9:5-6; Psalm 23:4; 34:18; 56:8; 62:8; 103:20; 146:4; 147:3; Isaiah 8:19-20; 25:8; Matthew 5:4; John 11:11, 25-26, 33-35; 14:1-3; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4; Galatians 6:2; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Hebrews 1:14; 11:13, 39-40; Revelation 14:13; 21:4 (King James Version, public domain).
- Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs — see especially #26, "Death and Resurrection," and #25, "The Second Coming of Christ": <https://adventist.org/beliefs>
- 28 Fundamental Beliefs (2020 edition, PDF): <https://adventist.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/ADV-28Beliefs2020.pdf>
- General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists: <https://gc.adventist.org/>
- Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* and *Steps to Christ* (public domain) — on the resurrection hope and God's comfort: <https://whiteestate.org/> / <https://m.egwwritings.org/>

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pasteurclementsalonon.org · 903-748-9353 · jils19802012@gmail.com

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