**"A Time for Grief”**

**Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, 14; 1 Peter 1:6-7; Prov 13:12**

 ***Overview***

One of the emotions we are all acquainted with (but would often rather do without) is that of “grief”. Each of us has known the pain of that emotion as a result of a loss – be it loss of a loved one, a cherished dream, a fervent hope.



Each of us reacts to grief in our own way. For some, grief is an occasion to withdraw into silent suffering. Others of us lash out in anger. Still others enter into a state of depression. The responses are multi-faceted and unique.

Nevertheless, followers of Jesus do share a common faith. And they share access to spiritual resources that can provide peace, comfort and strength when the waves of grief threaten to overwhelm.

 ***Getting Started*** *A Time For Grief?*



1. What childhood activity do you miss the most?

2. What have you missed the most during this current pandemic?

3. What emotions have you been feeling over the last while? What thoughts or questions have surfaced during the challenge of the last several weeks?

 ***The Text***

There is a time for everything,



 and a season for every activity under the heavens:

 2a time to be born and a time to die,

 a time to plant and a time to uproot,

 3a time to kill and a time to heal,

 a time to tear down and a time to build,

 4a time to weep and a time to laugh,

 a time to mourn and a time to dance,

 5a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,

 a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,

 6a time to search and a time to give up,

 a time to keep and a time to throw away,

 7a time to tear and a time to mend,

 a time to be silent and a time to speak,

 8a time to love and a time to hate,

 a time for war and a time for peace.

I know that everything God does will endure forever; nothing can be added to it and nothing taken from it. God does it so that people will fear him.

 Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, 14 (NIV)

6In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 7These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

 1 Peter 1:6-7 (NIV)

 12Hope deferred makes the heart sick,

 but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life.

 Proverbs 13:12 (NIV)

 ***The Video (optional)*** *“A Time For Grief” – Eccl. 3:1-8, 1 Peter 1:6-7, Prov. 13:12* - by Kyle Corbin, May 10/20 (view at www.immanuelonline.ca)



 NOTES:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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 ***Understanding***

 1. Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 lists a number of life’s activities. Which of them do you imagine might be accompanied by grief?



 2. What comfort (if any) may be taken by the truths affirmed in Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 and verse 14?

 3. Peter declares in 1 Peter 1:6 that “in all this” we greatly rejoice. To what does the word “this” refer to?

 4. What, according to Peter, is the purpose of the trials we have suffered (1 Peter 1:7) with relation to our faith (cf. James 1:3-4)? With respect to God (Zech. 13:9)? When will this purpose be accomplished?

 5. How do trials prove the “genuineness” of our faith (see Gen 22:12, Job 1:8-11, 2:7-10)?

 6. Peter declares that our faith is worth more than gold. Why is this true (cf. 1 Peter 1:18-19)?

 7. Is there a relationship between hope and grief according to Prov. 13:12? If so – how would you describe that relationship?

 ***Applying***

 1. The “this” of 1 Peter 1:6 presumably causes great rejoicing in Peter’s mind. Does it cause you to greatly rejoice? How is that joy expressed?



 2. Given all that you have seen in the study today, would you say trials are necessary to our faith? Why? How does your answer affect (if at all) the way you approach the trials of life?

 3. According to Evelyn Underhill – Thomas A Kempis (a monk from the late medieval period) wrote that suffering is the “gymnastic of eternity” and the “terrible initiative caress of God”. Would you agree or disagree? Explain.

 4. What losses, if any, have you suffered during this COVID crisis? Where are you in the processing of that loss (typical stages of grief include denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance)?

 5. C.S. Lewis has said ...”God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world.” What has God taught you or said to you in your pain?

 6. Peter likens suffering to a forge which refines and purifies us (1 Peter 1:7). What are some of the imperfections that the fire of suffering reveals in us?

 7. How might you better prepare for the suffering that will inevitably come? What are some spiritual disciplines that you can be doing which will help you get ready for your time of trial?

***Memory Verse(s)***

6In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 7These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.



 1 Peter 1:6-7 (NIV)

***Extra Resources***



* *“A Time For Grief” – Eccl. 3:1-8, 1 Peter 1:6-7, Prov. 13:12”* – by Pastor Kyle Corbin (“Immanuel Church” website, May 10, 2020). Pastor Kyle addresses a common response to the COVID pandemic – that of grief.
* *"Stephen Ministries”* – at [www.stephenministries.org](http://www.stephenministries.org). Stephen Ministries is a Christian educational ministry dedicated to training and resourcing lay people to care for those in crisis. One of their resources, a set of four short books entitled *“Journeying through Grief”*, is an excellent tool to help people process loss.
* *"Champagne for the Soul”–* by Mike Mason (Regent College Publishing, 2007). If you are looking for an antidote to grief, how about a book about joy? You won’t find a better one than this (especially if you are a believer in the power of words).