"Glory From Grief"

In the wake of several of our friends who went to be with the Lord these past two weeks, the Lord stirred in my heart to preach a message about grieving. As 1 Thessalonians 4:13 says, we do not grieve like the world grieves with no hope." Although we do not grieve like the world, you and I still grieve. I believe there is a healthy way to grieve and a way we can abide in the presence of God all through the process of our pain. The title of the sermon today is "Glory from Grief."

I was watching a sermon from a pastor up north in Montana who is a best-selling author. Years ago, his six-year-old daughter was rushed to the hospital with asthma complications and sadly she passed. The Lord used this in the pastor's life in a powerful way, and a beautiful book was the result. Just recently, the pastor's dad (who was a mentor) passed away from cancer. His daughter died around Christmas and his dad passed during Easter. For a pastor these are kind of important holidays, and he was now faced with the reminder every year while he had a tremendous amount on his plate. I share this story for a reason. The pastor knew his father was going to pass and he thought to himself, "After processing my daughter's death, I should be able to handle my father's a little better." But in reality, it was just as hard. Why? Because his father was an entirely different thing to grieve.

Today your heart may be heavy as we have seen our friends go and be with the Lord. But let me also say, there may be other things in your heart today that you are grieving. Whether it is a loved one who has passed or a crisis in your life, we need to all learn how to process our emotions with the Lord and grieve in the same way that Jesus did.

Last week I shared a message titled "The Source of Strength" and had no clue that I would need that sermon so much the following week. I focused on 1 Samuel 30 where we see David strengthening himself in the Lord his God. Today I want to look at another account of King David and learn from his example of grieving. If you have your Bibles please go with me to the book of 2 Samuel chapter 12. If you are not familiar with this passage of Scripture, David had sinned with Bathsheba, killed her husband, and had a baby with Bathsheba. Now the consequences of David's sin is catching up to him and we see David face a moment of loss and grief. Lets' begin, again in 2 Samuel 12 starting at verse 15:

Then the Lord struck the child that Uriah's widow bore to David, so that he was very sick. 16 David therefore inquired of God for the child; and David fasted and went and lay all night on the ground. 17 The elders of his household stood beside him in order to raise him up from the ground, but he was unwilling and would not eat food with them. 18 Then it happened on the seventh day that the child died. And the servants of David were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they said, "Behold, while the child was still alive, we spoke to him and he did not listen to our voice. How then can we tell him that the child is dead, since he might do himself harm!" 19 But when David saw that his servants were whispering together, David perceived that the child was dead; so David said to his servants, "Is the child dead?" And they said, "He is dead." 20 So David arose from the ground, washed, anointed himself, and changed his clothes; and he came into the house of

the Lord and worshiped. Then he came to his own house, and when he requested, they set food before him and he ate. 21 Then his servants said to him, "What is this thing that you have done? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept; but when the child died, you arose and ate food." 22 He said, "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, 'Who knows, the Lord may be gracious to me, that the child may live.' 23 But now he has died; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me." – 2 Samuel 12:15-23 NASB1995

I hope you noted the process David took during the loss of his child. The first thing David did was fast and pray while the child was sick. There was no need to grieve or worry when the child was alive. What was important was praying and fasting so that the Lord may have mercy. Unfortunately, the child died. What David did next was very important. It says he first washed, anointed himself, and changed his clothes. He took care of himself physically. Last week we talked about strengthening yourself in the Lord *before* you actually inquire of the Lord. There are things we need to do in the physical before we can actually receive from God in the spiritual. Once David took care of himself physically it says that he went to the house of the Lord and worshipped. He went to the Lord to grieve. Why is this so important? Because in your time of grief you need two very important things. You need a Word from the Lord, and you need hope. If you have a Word from the Lord going into your grief, it is like a car that you filed up with gas before going on a trip. If you are taking notes, please fill in the main key in David's life. What can we learn from David's grieving? It is that we need to grieve with hope.

Lesson from David's Greif:

MAIN KEY – Grieve with <u>Hope.</u>

The Greek word for hope is "Elpis" which means an expectation. If you are hoping in the Lord you are expecting miraculous things from Him. But here is the danger, you can also hope in negative things. In Job 2 we see a statement from Job where he says, "The thing that I feared has come upon me." Job was expecting calamity. He was so worried for his kids and possessions. He was hoping in the wrong thing. During our times of grief, we will be tempted to hope in the wrong thing. The enemy would love nothing more than to convince you to hope in the wrong thing. That's why we need to go to the Lord first in worship. To hear from Him and gain His perspective in the matter.

Hope is so important because just like Hebrews says, it serves as an anchor in our lives. When we face tragedy in life we will be tempted to change our theology. How can God be so good if there is so much evil? How can God be so powerful, yet did not intervene when our loved one passed? Greif leads you to a fork in the wrong. If you go one way, it will lead you to the Comforter. Matthew 5:4 says, "Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted." But if you turn to the other direction, you will resist the things of God.

When grief comes into our lives, we need to be aggressive with giving God a sacrifice of praise. I have said this many times before but there is no sorrow or grief in heaven. He will wipe away every tear so you will only have an opportunity to give God praise in your pain while on earth because you can't do it in heaven. If you chose hope in the middle of your pain, you can offer

God a sweet blessing and in turn walk in His presence staying connected to His comfort and wisdom. Bottom line is that you will either bring your grief to Jesus or you will blame Jesus for your grief.

As much as I love the example of King David, I want to look at how Jesus grieved in the New Testament. Isn't it amazing that Jesus grieved? He truly came to this earth to experience everything that you and I would face. If you are taking notes, please fill in point number one of how Jesus grieved:

How Did Jesus Grieve?

POINT #1 – Process the <u>Pain.</u>

In John 11:35 we see the shortest verse in the Bible…Jesus wept. His friend Lazarus had died. Everyone around the tomb were weeping. Jesus didn't ignore it or pretend to be happy. Jesus wept. How many know that if Jesus wept for the loss of a friend, we have permission to do the same. Ecclesiastes 3:4 says, there is a time to weep. When tragedy strikes your life, you cannot live in denial or pretend that you are ok. My counselor says, "Buried emotions never die." One pastor I listened to this past week said, "You need to feel before you can heal."

POINT #2 – Position for <u>Praise.</u>

In Matthew 14:13 Jesus hears the news that John the Baptist was killed. We see another picture of Jesus handling grief. It says in this portion of Scripture that after Jesus heard the news, He went away to a secluded place by Himself. The pattern in Scripture tells us that Jesus often got away to lonely places to pray. When you are facing grief, you need to worship. You need to go to the house of God. You need to remain in a place of prayer so that you are connected to the Father every step of the way.

POINT #3 – Preserve the <u>Promise.</u>

Personally, I have learned over the years that I don't have to be strong. As a husband and dad I face the temptation that Dad has to be the rock. Dad can't show emotions. Dad can't fall apart. But here's the thing, I don't have to be strong, but I do have to be faithful. Being faithful is not losing sight of God's Word and God's promises. In Hebrews 12:2 it says, "For the joy set before Jesus He endured the cross." Jesus had the promise that if He went through with the cross, He would save the world from their sins. It was the promise and the joy of salvation for every person that gave Jesus the strength to endure the horrors of the cross.

CONCLUSION – I don't want to pray for God's blessings so that my life is better. I want God's promises so that I am better at life.