

## Scriptures to encourage...

*“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.”* Psalms 23:4

*“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”* 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

*“But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.”* 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14

## June Birthdays

9 Debbie Pescador                      20 Mike Bruni  
12 Celina Perales                        23 Agripina Carrillo

### Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.  
Sunday.....10:45 a.m.  
Sunday.....6:00 p.m.  
Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

**Preacher:**  
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# Indio Informer

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## “Consolation...”

### Death Hurts, But Jesus Helps

Allen Webster

Death hurts. We see this in Martha's words and Mary's tears. When the Visitor welcome above all others finally arrived at Martha's house, He did not find a party. He found tear-blurred eyes, faces red and swollen from crying, and emotions on edge. Death had charged a high toll and left poverty in its wake.

#### Death hurts because of the initial shock.

Mary and Martha's grief was doubtless intensified by the fact that Lazarus was cut off in the midst of his life. We never know when death will come.

*The clock of life is wound but once, and no man has the power,  
To tell just when the hands will stop, at late or early hour.  
Now is the only time you own, live, love, toil with a will  
Place no faith in tomorrow, for the hands may then be still.*

Often death comes unexpectedly - as in an accident or an emergency surgery that failed. Even if it comes expected - after several hard months dealing with a terminal illness, it still leaves a shock in its wake. If you've been to a funeral, then you know that death still hurts. If you've lost a parent, child, spouse, grandparent, friend, or someone else dear to you, then you know about the pain you feel deep down. You had time to tally the loss that continues long after everyone has gone home.

#### Death hurts because it leaves us lonely.

These sisters missed their brother. When death leaves an empty chair at the table, an empty bedroom in the house, and an empty pew at church services, it can be very lonely for a while...even when others we love are still around. It can make us feel like the little boy pictured in a Saturday Evening Post cartoon. It showed him talking on a phone, saying, "Mom is in the hospital, the twins and Roxie and Billie and Sally and the dog and me and Dad are all home alone." Mary and Martha still had each other, and their friends, but they felt all alone without Lazarus. Though we enter and leave the world by ourselves, we are sometimes more alone

*right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me; refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul" (Psalm 142:4; cf. Psalm 31:11; Psalm 69:20; Psalm 88:8; Psalm 88:18).*

Does Jesus know about this? Does He care? Oh, yes He cares! (Read 1 Peter 5:7.) Death hurts, but Jesus helps. How?

### **Jesus helps us grow through the adversity itself.**

Biologists recognize the adversity principle at work among plants and animals. Strangely, habitual wellbeing is not advantageous to healthy life. Any species - including people - that does without challenge soon becomes weak. One survey found that 87% said a painful event (death, illness, breakup, divorce) caused them to find more positive meaning in life. Jesus said, *"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world"* (John 16:33). Ironically, adversity can be therapeutic and trials can be occasions of joy (James 1:2). Adversity grants patience. James wrote: *"Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing"* (James 1:3-4).

**Adversity purges.** Peter said, *"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ"* (1 Peter 1:7). As gold ore is put into a fire of flame to remove dross, so we must be put into a fire of suffering to remove impurities from our characters that we might be better people. A poet said:

*I walked a mile with pleasure, she chatted all the way.  
Yet she left me none the wiser for all she had to say;  
I walked a mile with sorrow, and ne'er a word said she,  
But O the things I learned when sorrow walked with me.*

**Adversity sobers.** Paul teaches that *"young women learn to be sober, young men sober-minded and old men grave"* (Titus 2:2-6). One way God helps us gain this desired trait is adversity. Solomon said, *"It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart"* (Ecclesiastes 7:2). It is not more pleasant to go to a funeral home than a party, but it teaches more valuable lessons. It reminds us that (1) We will not live forever (Ecclesiastes 12:7; James 4:14) and (2) this lifetime is a training ground for the next (2 Corinthians 5:10). We must prepare (John 3:3-5; Acts 2:38) and live faithfully (1 Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10).

**Jesus helps people through His people** (2 Corinthians 1:2-4). The mourners who came to comfort Mary and Martha illustrate this point. This was a common Old Testament practice (Genesis 37:35; 2 Samuel 10:2; 1 Chronicles 7:21-22; Job 2:11; Job 42:11).

The Jewish mourning period generally lasted thirty days, and their custom was to weep at the tomb as often as possible during the burial week to get it out of their system. The weeping was often an almost hysterical wailing and shrieking, for they thought that the more unrestrained the weeping, the more honor it paid the dead.

Christians today are to help those who lose loved ones as long as it takes and are to *"weep with them that weep"* (Romans 12:15; Job 30:25; 1 Thessalonians 4:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:11). Those who have known affliction, doubt, sickness, and temptation are better equipped to console others in pain (1 Peter 3:8). Tender-hearted Christians (Ephesians 4:32), have often been known to cry with their friends in funeral homes and hospitals.

### **Jesus helps by assuring us that there is a better life beyond.**

Death is a termination of earthly life, but not a termination of life. We are not really on our way to death, but on our way to life. Edward the Confessor's last words were: *"Weep not, I shall not die; and as I leave the land of the dying I trust to see the blessings of the Lord in the land of the living."* The housing of the soul is torn away, the tabernacle to be taken down (2 Corinthians 5:1), but it's not destruction. We should not speak of a Christian in the past tense - as if he does not exist any more. God is not the God of dead beings but of living beings, for all live unto him. Imagine an artist carving a statue of expensive marble with gold inlay. He purchases expensive tools and spends years bringing the work to completion.

Will he then ask his helper to take a hammer and break it in pieces? Imagine a business owner thoroughly and patiently training a worker. He treats the worker as a son and shows him how to run every part of the business. When he has him trained and ready to take over the responsibilities, will he fire him? Yet that is what happens if God makes us His children, trains our souls, and then refuses to grant us immortality. After all, this life is but a vapor (James 4:14) and a thousand years are but one day (2 Peter 3:8).

On the great painter Albrecht Durer's tombstone in his native city, Nuremberg, they put the word *Emigravit*, which means, He has emigrated. That's death - an immigration path to heaven's fair city.

Imagine a flowerless rose vine growing on a garden wall. You notice the vine has pushed through a crack in the wall. So you go around to the other side, and see glorious blooms. So when our loved ones die, they pass through the other side of the wall of death, blooming in the radiance of eternal life. They have just changed places of residence.