

June 24, 2018 -

Hebrews 4:12-16 -

“Coping with Loss”

Introduction

This past week Conservatism suffered a great loss when intellectual and conservative icon Charles Krauthammer died at 68 in Washington, DC. He shaped American politics for generations. The Washington Post lost a great columnist where he worked for more than 30 years. Fox News lost a longtime commentator calling him the "dean of conservative commentators". Marty Baron of the Post said, “this will be a huge loss to vigorous and civil debate on public policy. What a lot of people did not know about Charles was he lost the use of his limbs in a diving accident during college many years ago. That loss did not stop him from becoming the man that so many admired. Here was a great man who truly exemplifies the tenacity of perseverance amidst great personal loss. He showed us you can go on and be happy and successful even when suffering loss... He was a Pulitzer Prize-winner. Loss does not have to ruin your life it can drive you into developing better character.

While it is common to think of loss and grief only in connection with death, life itself is full of losses that must be acknowledged and grieved. You might have experienced a loss dream, a loss friendship, a loss lifestyle, a loss career, health or even a limb. The experience of losing something we value is a part of life and no one can escape that reality. Loss comes in many varieties. It could be a relationship or marriage that comes to an end, a loved one dies maybe you have become an empty nester your children are all grown up and gone. Losing control that you once had or desire is also a loss to deal with. Our lives encounter many changes and transitions, people experience loss and need the grieving process to deal with the experience.

When a feeling of loss happens God knows all about it as we read in our passage that He is aware of everything. Hebrews 4:13 uses the word “*ā-fā-nas*” that carries the idea that nothing escapes God eyes he is fully aware. The Bible causes us to realize nothing is hidden from God, but everything in our lives is naked and opened before the eyes of God. He loves you.

When we suffer a loss we go through a grieving process which can generally start with denial and then go to feelings of anger, sadness and then acceptance. Awareness is important to make sure you're not stuck in any of these stages and that you can process each and move forward. If you are suffering a loss of any kind the scriptures have important things to keep in mind.

Application:

Are you struggling with loss that you have never really grieved over? Are there injuries in your past that you continue to struggle with to this very day? Any loss can bring about grief and pain but my good friends the Lord is familiar with grief.

I. Seek Jesus' Compassion

1. Jesus was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with "grief. " Look with me -**Isaiah 53:3-5**. That presents the question, what would He be grieving over? Perhaps it was the loss of a

perfect world and sin. Perhaps He grieved the loss of the position He held and gave up to put on an earthly flesh, come down here and live as we live, and die for us. Loss is a reality.

2. The very fact that Jesus walked where we need to walk gives me comfort and courage at the same time. He experienced grieved as we do and there will be times we need to allow ourselves this process so that we can cleanse our souls. We can share in His suffering, and can bond with Him as we go through the grief process for any kind of lost. We can be confident that He knows how to comfort us; He has been there and underwent it all in human flesh.

3. We have this truth affirmed in the NT in **Hebrews 4: 15**. Note the words, “be touched with the feeling” this is one word in Greek, the word “*sūm-pā-the'-ō* where we get the English word *sympathy* it means to feel for, have compassion or sympathy. He can be trusted; Jesus truly understands us. He knows what it is to be deserted, *lonely*, hurt, betrayed, rejected, abused, and even killed. He experienced it all yet without sin. He is not only able to sympathize with us;

Dr. Gary R. Collins a noted psychologist said, “Grief is an important, normal response to the loss of any significant commodity or person. It is an experience of deficiency and anxiety which can show itself physically, emotionally, cognitively, socially and spiritually.”

4. I believe the process of grieving, as scripture teaches can help us to heal. Or are you buying into the big lie that, “Time heals all wounds?” Folks, what does our Father tell us, “**Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows:** Jesus has already done that for you! Be acquainted with Christ. (gospel)

Refuse to believe or live in the lie that time is going to heal you. Yes, time will fade the pain and soften the blow but like a scar it will not just go away.

II. Seek Recovery in God’s Word. (VV.12)

1. The Psalmist said, " **My soul melteth for heaviness: strengthen thou me according unto thy word.** (Psalm 119:28). David is saying, my soul is heavy with sadness however I can be strengthen according to thy word. This *is* my comfort in my affliction: for **thy word** hath quickened me. Psalm 119:50
It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones. Proverbs 3:8

Knowing the Lord’s mercy you can go forward into the future free of despair and suffering. Recovery comes in steps. First you have to do some assessment of your losses and allow yourself to except the loss and trust Him with the pain. **Don't put excessive expectations on yourself.** Admit the grief and verbalize your loss. Trying to move forward denying the reality will only cause one more pain.

2. Give yourself permission to cry. Jesus wept. Weeping releases excessive tension. --- **John 11:35-38** Tears are essential; crying is one of the healthiest reactions to loss & grief. Tears are nature's way of washing away the pain. Studies have shown that tears shed in sadness have a

different chemical makeup than tears of joy. It is possible that this substance actually has a calming effect on the body. Crying is a release and is therapeutic and cathartic. It means a person is releasing anguish and is on the road to recovery. Have your cry, you need it.

Job 16:16 - My face is foul with weeping...

2. Ignoring grief will not make it go away. It will remain intact until you decide to look at it, sort it out, work through it, and then put it to rest. If it is ignored, it will just continue to manifest itself in physical illnesses, eating disorders, temper tantrums, lack of concentration, or other disruptive ways. Someone once said, in recovery first you hurt, then you hate, last you heal... This is the time when you realize the loss. That job is gone, that pension is lost or worst that loved one is not coming back. God has given you wisdom and compassion through His written word to work through the loss. **II Corinthians 1:3**
Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. --- I Peter 5:7

3. Trials don't indicate a reduction in God's love for you. He loves you and promises to make a way for you. I Corinthians 10:13. Spend time focusing on His unchanging love for you. **(Romans 8:38-39)**, focus on the essence of God's love. Allow your relationship with Jesus be your encouragement! "Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!" (2 Cor. 9:15) His church is a gift too, seek out God's help.

III. Seek the Lord's Comforters.

1. Romans 12:15 **"Rejoice with those who rejoice, and mourn with those who mourn."** Research shows that the best way to get rid of grief is to talk about it. A part of the responsibility we have as believers is that we mourn with one another. This is another reason why we are to surround ourselves with godly people. Have the right circle of people around you. God has provided His Church and His Word so you can express your feeling. **Galatian 6:2**. Research shows that people who do not deal with their negative emotions in a healthy way have many more physiological problems as well as psychological ones.

2. God has blessed some with the gift of compassion and comfort. Some people know just what to say and others are Job's comforters. Stay away from them.

Conclusion:

Release everything to the Lord, including any so-called regrets about your loss. Learn to grow from the loss: Loss has a lesson for us to learn. Be more resilient, learn to adjust to what you cannot change, change what you can; Allow God's abiding love to encourage: "Christ is ready to...stand in the gap between you and the pain, and to be your constant companion in the dark hours. It may not feel easy. It may even feel impossible. He loves you." In Christ you can do all things. Ask Jesus to love through you and get your eyes off problems and on to Him and others.