

Life Group Notes
Sunday 10 July 2016

Title: Mourning & Grieving

Speaker: Sean Green

Passage: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

The bible says mourn with those who mourn, and we find ourselves in this place as a church. With the passing of Luca Anderson aged 23 months, we stand with the Anderson family and mourn with them. There may be some of us that also need to express our own sense of loss and sadness. To do this it is good to remind ourselves of what the bible says about grief and mourning; death and the hope of resurrection that Jesus won at the Cross of Calvary and displayed in his own resurrection.

In the bible we see that mourning is appropriate. King David mourned the death of King Saul and Jonathan; Jesus shed tears when he saw the mourning for Lazarus; Godly men mourned the passing of Stephen, Paul speaks about sorrow upon sorrow at the prospect of Epaphroditus' death. Mourning does take time and it does come in waves; you don't just get over it!

Mourning is appropriate because death is an enemy. Men and women were created to be with God for ever, we weren't created to experience death. It came in as a result of the rebellion of one man. Death has lost its hold on us; we no longer fear death; it no longer holds a sting; it has no victory, and ultimately death will be defeated!

Yet we mourn as those who have hope. A hope that death is not the final throw of the dice. When a believer dies their spirit goes into the presence of Jesus. There waiting in paradise enjoying being with Him until His second coming. When Jesus returns, those who have died will return with Him and receive their resurrection bodies.

Then we will be with the Lord forever, in the eternal Age. The earth will be renewed much like our own bodies. All whose sins are covered by the blood of Jesus will be there. We'll be in our final and permanent home: a place where we will dwell with God, with renewed bodies and minds, enjoying reunions; a place of beauty beyond imagination, where we will understand why and have His knowledge about things; a place of perfect worship. No mourning, no death, no tears or pain. No longer having to exercise faith!

We believe that Luca is with Jesus now, not out of sentimentality but out of conviction of what the bible teaches. Paul seems clear that children are covered by the faith of their parents when they are young (1 Cor 7 v 14). David seems clear that he will be reunited with his son (2 Sam 12v20) and when ultimately, like Abraham in Gen 18 v 25, we know that the Judge of all the earth will do what is right and the righteous will not be judged the same as the unrighteous.

We are therefore to encourage each other. Psalm 23 tells us that Jesus is our God shepherd, giving us all we need, giving us rest, renewing our strength. Even though our paths may pass through the valley of the shadow of death, we shall not be afraid because he is close by with his rod to defeat our enemies, and his staff to keep us on track. He prepares a feast for us, he honours us by sending His Holy Spirit to dwell with us, so much so that in the face of our enemies, including death, we can say "our cup overflows with blessing."

***Please see suggested questions on next page**

Suggested group time

- 1) Give people time to talk about their own experiences in all of this. Recognize that just because we rank what we think is more painful, that pain is real for all who experience loss.
- 2) Maybe finish by singing together and praying for anything that comes up in discussion and pray also for the Andersons