

Good Grief

Charlie Brown says it all the time but is there such a thing as good grief? I have been writing about grief for a couple of weeks now. Grief is a natural thing to have with the loss of a loved one, or a marriage, or a vocation or even a limb. When patients suffer an amputation, they often experience phantom pains. The limb is gone but they can feel the pain. This is because of the severing of the nerve endings. This is expected and treated in hospitals. No medical person ever says that the pain is not real, it is as real as the pain that is felt with the loss of a loved one. But we all, if we live long enough, know the pain of grief. But is there good grief? I was thinking of something my brother did when I was a young child and I smiled at the remembrance and laughed when recalling it to someone else. That is good grief. To remember not with sorrow but with joy that we shared happy moments. To rejoice and thank God for the time they were in our lives. The disciples learned this. They had been despondent but then they realized that Jesus was still with them, that he would not leave them, that he was still in their lives. So it is with our loved ones, they never truly leave us, their actions, the memories live on in us. We tell their stories. We tell of the times they made us happy, the times they made us laugh and the times they drove us crazy and even the times they made us sad. There is Good Grief that comes with memories of love, sacrifice, and time well spent. Perhaps we didn't have the time we desired, or they didn't have the happiness they deserved, but with our memories we have the chance to remember and love again. Perhaps that is good grief and a gift from God.

Roses in December. God gave his children memory that in life's garden there might be June roses in December. From the poem "Roses in December by Rev. C. Anketall Studdert-Kennedy

Isaiah 41:10 So do not fear, For I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Lord, we thank you for the days you have given us and for the joys in our lives from those who were with us for a while. Be with us this day Lord and may what we say and do be a blessing to you and a mere reflection of your love. Be with those in our midst who grieve and suffer illness. May we speak your words to them. Be with our Pastor may we be a blessing to him as he is to us. Bless his family. Be with those around us, may we show those people, known and unknown, your love and kindness. Be with our staff and leaders, bless them in their work and for all they do in your service. May we be the hands and feet of Jesus in this time and in this place. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen

Grace Epperson