

GOOD GRIEF??

Is there such a thing as good grief? Charlie Brown often says "Good Grief" but it is used as an expression of frustration or amazement instead of actually grief. A few Sundays ago, after church, I asked my son, bless his heart, to take me to the cemetery where my family is buried. I had been yearning to visit my brother's grave. I don't know why this was on my mind with such urgency, but one reason was that I wanted my son to know where my family was buried. This thought would not leave me so on Sunday, after church I went to the cemetery with my Son to visit the graves. He said he remembered the location probably from one of the funerals. He drove right to the spot, and we walked to the graves. As I stood there, I felt like I was 12 years old once again. I could see my brother's funeral. It was a military funeral and a Martin-Line bus had stopped that July day to pay homage or just to observe I have no idea why. I could see the bus and there were children and adults watching from the fence of the cemetery. Children were reaching through the fence and taking the flowers that were waiting to be placed on the grave. I told my mother that they were taking Bill's flowers. This upset me and I started over to tell them to stop, that they were my brother's flowers, and I remembered my mother pulling me back saying to me, "It doesn't matter," and I stopped and cried in my sorrow and loss. As I remembered this incident, I felt the tears once more coming with the memory of that sad, sad, day and I missed my brother all over again. I thought to myself that it was 1947 when he died, 77 years ago this June and still I grieve for that boy that was more my parent than brother but a parent I could tell anything to, and a mentor that gave me so much advice in our short time together. I grieved for him like no other one since. The memory of our relationship gave me comfort and strength in the days to come, I knew he had loved me. is that good grief? Or is there no such thing? I know that good grief is that grief that helps you heal but my grief for him is unlike my grief for my other losses. The talks that we had and the advice he gave me, advice that he had taken from his own mistakes was the very advice that made me overcome my home life. Advice that stayed with me for my whole life. The very same advice that I gave my children. I sometime think that I grieve for what he never had, finding love, marriage, being a parent, growing old with me, the sister that adored him.

The shortest verse in the Bible but it tells us so much about Jesus's humanity. While he brings Lazarus back from the dead this time, he foresees the death of Lazarus John 11:35 Jesus wept.

God, we know you are with us in our joys and in our sorrows and are always with us in our loss. Be with those who grieve, may they feel your comfort, and may they know that Jesus also felt sorrow, be with those who are sick, comfort them and heal them. Be with our Pastor and we thank you for his presence in our lives, guide him, comfort him, bless him. Be with his family, we thank you for their sacrifice as they love and support him and his work. Be with our staff and leaders, guide and protect them. Lord, our country is in turmoil and our world is filled with the sorrow and the anguish of wars, help us Lord in our struggles. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Grace Epperson