Psalms 30:5 (Leslie L. Winters) 130495

Sorrow's Night, Sorrow’s Night (30:5)

To One in Sorrow

Let me come in where you are weeping, friend,And let me take your hand;I, who have known a sorrow such as yours,Can understand.Let me come in — I would be very stillBeside you in your grief:I would not bid you cease your weeping, friend;Tears bring relief.Let me come in — I would only breathe a prayer,And hold your hand,For I have known a sorrow such as yours,And understand.

Grace Noll Crowell

Dear benighted fellow-griever,

During the night following my wife’s death, one of my family members stayed with me, and this seems to be a common desire on the part of most newly bereaved people. At night our sorrow seems more acute and problems trouble our thoughts which don’t do so to the same degree in the daytime. The darkness makes us feel afraid and lonely: How reassuring is the presence of someone else, especially if he or she can empathize with us —words are unnecessary.

The Scriptures equate a time of extreme sorrow with the night season, saying, “Weeping may endure for a night” (Psa. 30:5), and how like a night which seems endless as we await its passing grief can be. Some might in impatience ask, “How long will I feel this grief ?” There is no set timetable for the scars of grief to heal, but we should not sit complacently by and let our thoughts dwell endlessly on our sorrows. This will only serve to make us more remote to our friends and stimulate our exclusion from many of their activities.

Grief is not something to be ignored or suppressed but to be lived through and used as a stepping-stone, that our lives might be enriched and our capabilities increased to enter into the sorrows of others and extend help to them. Maybe at this point in your experience you don’t feel like helping anyone and can only exclaim, “Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow” (Lam. 1:12).

With the onset of grief, especially through the loss of our mate, life loses its luster and we tend to feel there is nothing to live for. As the result of difficulty in controlling our emotions in public, especially in formerly frequented locations or talking about the recent events, we might be inclined to stay at home. Let us not be surprised at such feelings, for they and others will be normal to the grieving process.

Perhaps as the result of your recent introduction to sorrow you have become one of those who find it necessary to “lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees” (Heb. 12:12). While time alone will help to lessen your feeling of grief, there are other measures to be tried which can aid you in your recovery.

Shortly after the death of her teenage son, a friend of mine wrote the following note, which describes one such recourse:

“The days are slipping by so fast and each day brings a few different feelings. I’m making a list of things to be thankful for while caring for L. [her son] the last two months of his life, and it’s getting to be a long list. It was such a special time. He was in so much pain, yet so courageous. He was such a thankful, caring person himself, always trying to help others when he could hardly do for himself. We are so grateful that the Lord took him on a Sunday when we could all be at his bedside at home.”

In addition to weighing our circumstances against what they might have been and being thankful, it is also helpful to find a good listener and unburden ourselves to them: Just rehashing all that our loved one went through, or how we felt or are feeling, in spite of the fact that these things may have been gone over many times before (your true friend will overlook this fact), helps to release some of our pent-up emotions.

It has been said, “Misery loves company” and perhaps this is especially true when the pair or group are fellow-grievers, understanding and being understood. Opening your heart to the needs and comfort of another tends to give what may be a new direction and purpose to your life. Some fellow-grievers in their concern for us have written books and pamphlets which can be helpful and bring comfort and understanding.

Above all, there is the Lord Jesus, who as the “Man of sorrows” (Isa. 53:3) said, “Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden” (Matt. 11:28).

Sincerely, Leslie L. Winters

If I should die and leave you here a while,Be not like others, sore undone, who keepLong vigil by the silent dust and weep.For my sake turn again to life and smile,Nerving thy heart and trembling hand to doThat which will comfort other souls than thine;Complete these dear, unfinished tasks of mine,And I, perchance, may therein comfort you.

Mary Lee Hall