

REFERENCE POINT

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A Time to Weep

“For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven... a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;” (Ecclesiastes 3:14 ESV)

As I reflect on these past few years, in this season that never seems to end, the years are a tumble of continued change, loss, and uncertainty. Each person is experiencing these years differently. I know that good things have happened in all our lives, yet there is a heaviness that is with us. The pandemic has heightened our awareness of death and suffering and of injustice and brokenness.

My parents recently lost both of their dogs – really, my family and I, we lost our dogs. The loss of the family pets comes on the heels of a series of losses that includes dear family, friends, and students. I have not had time to weep over or to mourn each loss. Bad news has followed bad news, and losing my favorite dogs magnified all the other losses.

Loss has come to us all in one way or another – the loss of a trusted friend; cancer stealing away years yet to be lived; the loss of a child yet born. Disease has taken the lives of young and old – stolen irrepressible laughter, twinkling eyes, the very earthly presence of someone who loved us, the opportunities for reconciliation. Strength has waned in battles for health. We, in our connected lives, are aware of each other’s losses. Collectively we are facing sustained loss.

Have we taken the time to weep?

God instructs us there is a time to weep, to mourn. He juxtaposes laughing with weeping, dancing with mourning. Are they opposites? Or is God pointing to sorrow as an awareness of what is lost? Those who bring laughter to your

heart, those with whom you have danced – they are gone, and that loss necessitates weeping and mourning.

How do we grieve with hope? How do we mourn? I think the answer lies in not in hurrying past today to that glorious day when we shall see Jesus, but rather in abiding with him now, in the midst of our suffering. He tells us, “Blessed are those that mourn, for they shall be comforted,” (Matthew 5:4, ESV).

He has placed us here, in this moment, with one another, as his Church.

If there is any comfort in Christ – Christ, who wept; Christ, whose visage was marred; Christ, who suffered; Christ, who overcame this world – may we comfort one another with the comfort with which Christ has comforted us.

Our Jesus meets us in our sorrow. He recognizes that we mourn. He blesses us with His comfort.

We do not grieve as the world grieves, but oh, we still grieve. May we grieve with hope, knowing that our God has overcome this world, and all of its loss. And may we grieve with gratitude for the lives lived.

May we hold space to mourn all whom we have lost, and all that we have lost. May we weep with those who weep, knowing that He makes all things beautiful in His time.

—Andrea Abernathy



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