

35.3 We Don't Go It Alone

A friend of mine lost her husband rather unexpectedly. Her preacher told her, "Sally (not her real name), you are not the first woman to go through this." While he was trying to give her counsel, he actually caused her pain. She felt he was downplaying her grief. Her response, was, "**Maybe so, but it is the first time for me.**" She doesn't attend his church any longer.

I don't want today's podcast to sound harsh or cold. I hope that it will give us comfort in our grief. You see, sometimes we feel like no one has ever gone through what we are going through. In one way that is true – you are unique and no one faces tragedy the exact same way as you.

However, there are times that we can feel so wrapped up in ourselves that we forget others have been there, too. Others have felt similar pain as we have. Others have gone ahead of us and are terrific resources for our help and comfort in times of loss.

It helps me to know that if others survived it, I can, too. When my wife died, I struggled. I was angry at what she had gone through and felt frustrated and alone. One thing that helped was to know others have been there before me. If they could, I could.

I heard a story of a lady who was a recent widow. One of her coworkers wanted to ask her out on a date. He nervously approached her and uttered the most inappropriate pick up line you have ever heard, He said "**So, your husband has been dead for 6 months, are you over it yet?**" Needless to say he did not get a date.

Losing a loved one is not something that you "get over". Someone has defined, "Grief" as "intense sorrow: great sadness, especially as a result of a death." Of course, we can grieve losses other than the physical death of a loved one. Other kinds of grief and loss affects us, too.

Grief and depression can go together. Grief is a shock to our system and often we are not equipped to handle it. So, if we aren't careful, we can slip into depression by withdrawing from life.

Granted, there is a time to step back and be alone. Better yet, there is a time to step back and be alone but not alone. That is, to be with God. But we cannot stay in isolation. There is a time to come out and reengage life. Yes, it will be different and may be difficult, but it is life and we are blessed to have it.

If you are dealing with grief, you may also be dealing with frustration and depression. Once again, you are not alone. In addition to people you know, many of God's key characters have dealt with grief, frustration, and depression.

Think about all that God and Moses went through in leading the children of Israel in the wilderness According to **1 Corinthians 10:6-11** the children of Israel engaged in all kinds of foolish behavior including lust, idolatry, immorality, tempting God, as well as complaining. The people behaved so poorly that they angered God and caused Moses to be so frustrated that eventually he so lost his composure that he struck the rock instead of speaking to it as God had told him in **Numbers 20:8**. It cost him entrance into the Promised Land.

Think of all of the complaints of the Hebrews. They wanted food and God provided manna (in **Exodus 16**). They grumbled about water and God provided it as Moses struck the rock (**Exodus 17:6**). They complained about no meat and God provided quail (**Numbers 11**). They felt frightened in the wilderness and wanted to go back to Egypt (**Numbers 14**). No wonder Moses got frustrated and likely depressed.

Is it any wonder that Paul would admonish us to “**Do all things without complaining and disputing,**” in **Philippians 2:14** (NKJV)?

We could go on talking about God’s leaders who dealt with disappointment and grief like Jeremiah (**Lamentations 3.1-8**); Jonah (**Chapter 4**); and Elijah in **1 Kings 18-19**. Let me just mention Elijah for a moment.

Elijah defeated the prophets of Baal at Mt. Carmel and then Jezebel threatened to kill him. He was so shaken that he went to Mt. Horeb to escape. Elijah felt all alone even after his great victory. Notice his words to God in **1 Kings 19:10** (NKJV):

¹⁰So he said, “I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life.”

In the midst of grief we can also develop depression or frustration. In the midst of grief, depression, and frustration we can feel all alone. We can feel like no one could possibly understand what we are feeling. This is where it is important for us to remember and trust the promises of God.

God promises include:

Exodus 33:14 (NKJV):

¹⁴And He said, “My Presence will go *with you*, and I will give you rest.”

Psalms 145:18 (NKJV):

**The LORD *is* near to all who call upon Him,
To all who call upon Him in truth.**

Jeremiah 29:13 (NKJV):

¹³And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV):

¹⁶Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

We may not feel the presence of God. We may not feel His compassion. We may not hear His voice. But He is there. He is with us and we are not alone.

And, by the way, He also understands what we are going through. He lost His one of a kind Son on a cross 2000 years ago. He knows the agony of loss and tore the veil of the temple from top to bottom to express His sorrow. We are not alone in our grief.

Keep The Light of God’s Presence with Us Burning!