



Links Players

Suffering - Grieving With Hope

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. (1 Thessalonians 4:13,14, ESV)

Seven years ago, the world heard a recording of Fred Couples on Golf Channel sobbing; it could have only meant one thing—Arnold Palmer had died. On September 25th, 2016, “The King” has passed. Fred’s grief was palpable and endearing.

Fred’s tears would not be the only ones shed for Arnie that day; the world of golf wept with him, me included. More than likely, you, too. For those who watched his Memorial service, it would have been easy to mistake it for a service honoring a British Monarch.

There was hardly a dry eye in the house. Young and old alike were deeply stirred at the passing of this hard-charging, golf course-conquering, smiling, thumbs-up golfer—who always had an “army” following his every step. I was overwrought with emotion as I listened to Jack’s tribute.

Arnie’s impact on golf, aeronautics, charities, and culture is incalculable. To this day, drinking an “Arnold Palmer” is much more than consuming a refreshing drink; it’s an emotional tribute to my childhood idol.

In truth, most of us only knew Arnie from outside the ropes as we watched him weather the ups and downs of competitive golf. Nevertheless, watching someone who has inspired you for years die carries with it deep grief.

Indescribably more painful, watching someone you intimately know, love, admire, and deeply care for die is too painful for words.

What are we to do when, as Christians, we face death, either our own or that of someone with whom we don’t want to let go? How is our approach different from those who don’t know Jesus?

The answer for the Christian is that we both rejoice and grieve. We rejoice that the one for whom we care so much is in the presence of the Lord, fully enveloped in unspeakable love. And yet, we grieve at our loss—we miss them from some unexplored depth of soul.

How can this be? One reason and one reason only! Jesus Christ has conquered death. And in doing so, he promised that those who live for him in this life will enjoy life everlasting in the age to come.

So, in one sense, death is still our enemy! Yet, in yet another sense, death is our friend. Death is our enemy because it was not God’s design to separate soul and body. But death is the Christian’s friend because it is the door through which we enter his everlasting presence.

Above all else, we rejoice that Jesus will one day return and eliminate death entirely. At his coming, those who have “fallen asleep” in Christ will rise in immortal bodies and souls, and those who are alive and remain will rise in immortal bodies and souls to meet him in the air.

Prayer: Jesus! Fill our minds and flood our hearts to know with deep assurance that death does not have the final say in the life of the believer.

READING - 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 21:1-4; Hebrews 2:1-9.

1. Where were you, and what feelings did you experience when you heard of Arnie’s, Payne Stewart’s, or Tom Weiskopf’s passing? How did you relate this to your mortality?

2. After meditating on the suggested readings for today, why does the Christian, unlike the non-Christian, have “hope?”

3. Application: Depending on how close you are to your Links Fellowship, consider sharing your grief and hope with one another.
