



Links Players

Trust - Part 3

He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and as one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised, and we esteemed him not. (Isaiah 53:3, ESV)

Of all the sad expressions I've observed, one such is when I see a golfer walk away from 18 green after a miserable round. The word "forlorn" hardly begins to describe it.

Until that final putt drops, a tiny ray of hope usually remains alive. We keep telling ourselves to "finish strong." Even if a good round is out of the question, playing the last few holes well tends to "keep us coming back."

As a teenager, I played in the New Orleans Open Pro-Am. An older gentleman from my club played in the group ahead of ours. He was well known back home for having the "yips."

After hitting his left toe on his first effort, he four-putted in front of a small crowd sitting in the stands behind the 18th green. I was in the fairway watching this debacle unfold. It was cringe-worthy!

Maybe none of us have four-putted in front of a crowd, but all of us can relate to an awful round. A bad round of golf can spoil one's dinner, contribute to a bad mood, or worse. As we all know, this game produces magnificent highs and almost unbearable lows.

Like golf, "Capital L-Life" has a way of creating unspeakable joys, debilitating lows, and everything in between. None of us gets through life without going through the "valley of the shadow of death."

We all have scar tissue reminding us of previous seasons when we faced profound grief due to disappointing losses in life: The very mention of a loved one who has left us all too soon brings tears to our eyes. An off-handed remark by a stranger reminds us of a business or relational failure long forgotten.

Life, viewed from one angle, is an extended battle with the realities of living in a fallen world. C. S. Lewis, after losing his wife, Joy, wrote in A Grief Observed, "Come, what do we gain by evasions? We are under the harrow

(distress) and can't escape. Reality, looked at steadily, is unbearable." What are we to do when we face profound grief?

While there is much more to say, two promises from Scripture we can trust are: First, "For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all" (2 Corinthians 4:17), and second, "Let us then, with confidence, draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16).

We know that when life beats us up, we can run to him for grace and mercy to find help in our time of need and that no matter how ugly our circumstances are, the life to come will far outweigh the struggles we face here and now.

Prayer: Jesus! Show us that you are our ever-present help in our time of need and that our eternal future is inexpressibly bright.

READING: Luke 22:39-46; 1 Peter 2:19-25; Hebrews 2:5-18

1. Think back and then discuss those times when you managed miserable rounds well and not so well. What internal and external factors attributed to success or failure in the ways you navigated poor play?

2. After reading the suggested texts, what are some things we learn about our Savior and his suffering? How does this help us when we face difficult seasons?

3. Application: Take the time to investigate your heart to see underlying motives and patterns that give rise to certain behaviors.
