

LAMPLIGHTER
NOVEMBER 2009

THEME: “Under God’s Watchful Eye-Living with Sadness”

LUKE 12:6-9

“In the month of Nisan in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was brought for him, I took the wine and gave it to the king. I had not been sad in his presence before; {2} so the king asked me, ‘Why does your face look so sad when you are not ill? This can be nothing but sadness of heart.’ I was very much afraid, {3} but I said to the king, ‘May the king live forever! Why should my face not look sad when the city where my fathers are buried lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?’” (Neh 2:1-3 NIV)

Feeling down? Got the blues? You’re not alone. Everyone gets sad. Sadness is a feeling – it’s one of the many normal human emotions or moods we all experience. It is an emotion people feel when they have lost something important, when they have been disappointed about something, or when something sad happened to them or to someone for whom they care. When we are lonely, we feel sad.

Nehemiah, in the above text, felt sadness as he contemplated the ruined lands of his forefathers. Living in the time of the Babylonian exile and serving as cupbearer to the king, Nehemiah grieves over the loss. The once great and magnificent city of Jerusalem now laid barren and desolate. This city once alive with the hustle and bustle of people, commerce, and trade now was lifeless and dead. These thoughts brought great sadness to the heart of Nehemiah. **(Gen 40:6 NIV) When Joseph came to them the next morning, he saw that they were dejected.** Or think of Joseph who was imprisoned for allegedly forcing himself on the King’s wife which he did not do. When the cupbearer and baker were imprisoned, they were both troubled by their dreams since they did not understand the message revealed. Joseph interpreted their dreams with God’s guidance. As Joseph had foretold the cupbearer was restored to his position of service to the king and the baker was hanged from a tree, but Joseph’s humble request of “remember me and show me kindness to Pharaoh, and get me out of this prison” was forgotten by the cupbearer. **(Mat 23:37 NIV) “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.”** As I think about and hear these words of our Lord, I can’t help but hear a note of sadness in his voice. He desired desperately to have a relationship with the people of Jerusalem, but they rejected him just like all the prophets before him. **(Mark 10:22 NIV) At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.** This rich man could not bear the cost of being Jesus’ disciples. The loss of his wealth and possessions was too great. **(Luke 24:17 NIV) He asked them, “What are you discussing together as you walk along?” They stood still, their faces downcast.** The disciples on the road to Emmaus were sad over the death of our Lord Jesus. What are the things in your life that cause you to feel sad?

When you’re sad, the world seems dark and unfriendly. You might feel like you have nothing to look forward to in the future. You may feel like being alone for a little while. Or you may want someone to comfort you, keep you company, or perhaps just listen to you. You might feel like crying and sometimes the tears are hard to stop.

The author to the book of Ecclesiastes writes: **(Eccl 7:3 NIV) “Sorrow is better than laughter, because a sad face is good for the heart.”** While this sounds a bit backwards, we discover that it is during the sad times of our lives when we are open to hearing God’s Word of comfort and hope. In those sad moments of life God comes to us as the Apostle Paul assures us in 2 Corinthians 1:3-4: **“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.”** God is in the midst of our sadness to listen, to keep us company, and to comfort us. He is always more ready to listen than we are to pray. God who is faithful will be there in our times of greatest need. He has demonstrated His commitment and loyalty through Christ our Lord.

When you are in a sad mood, you may feel like it will last forever, but usually feelings of sadness don't last very long – a few hours, or perhaps a day or two. If your feelings begin to last longer, you may be battling a more serious depression. In such cases we would encourage you to seek the help of a professional counselor or perhaps your family physician. For more warning signs of depression, please connect with Lutheran Family Service of Iowa at: www.lfsiowa.org. Friends, be joy-filled people for God's watchful eyes are upon you!

Close with prayer, the Lord's Prayer, Benediction, and Song – #108 "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow"