

## Memorial Service for Marie Mendy

01/10/2020

Hymns: 15 It Is Well with My Soul 90 He Arose 31 Victory in Jesus  
Scripture: Psalm 90

Big Idea: Sorrow into Joy

Prelude: "Give it all to Jesus" by Evie

We are gathered here today to honor the memory of Marie Mendy. Marie dedicated her last years in service you – the residents at Sunrise. It takes a special and very patient person to provide loving care to so many in need. Tragically, her life was cut short with a fatal illness.

A colleague of Marie's gave me the following information to share with you:

*Born in Banjul Africa, Marie passed away at age 43. She was survived by her husband (Richard Mendy), daughters (Ann Marie, Cecilia, Marian Valeria, and Odette), brothers, sisters, her parents and in-law brothers and sister.*

*Marie loved to care for others. Despite physical challenges related to her own illnesses and having family responsibilities at home, Marie maintained a singular focus to the residents at Sunrise while on duty. Sunrise was her second home for sure. She loved to spend time at Sunrise even when not on duty.*

*Caring for others – including her family – was her passion. Marie was loving, strong, courteous, caring, selfless, dedicated, loyal, confident, energetic, religious, and a true leader. She had a **huge** heart, and left a touch of her soul on everyone she met. She was a very special God-giving woman who would do anything to help others out and will be missed by all.*

That's quite a tribute. I suspect these words ring true for you who knew her. After today's message, any who wish may share personal tributes to Marie as well.

For a few minutes though let's turn to the Word of God to put into perspective the sorrow of this loss and *seemingly* untimely departure.

Our devotional comes from:

Psalm 90 (selected verses)

*[2] Before the mountains were brought forth,  
[and even before] thou ... formed the earth and the world,  
even from everlasting to everlasting,  
thou art God.*

*[4] For **a thousand years** in thy sight are but as **yesterday** when it is past,  
and as a watch in the night.*

*[5] Thou carriest them away as with a flood;  
they are as a sleep:  
in the morning they are like grass which grow[s] up.*

*[6] In the morning it flourish[es], ...*

*in the evening it is cut down,  
and wither[s].*

New life is beautiful, but it is so fleeting.

*[10] The days of our years are **threescore ... and ten**;  
and if by reason of strength they [are] **fourscore** years,  
yet ... their strength [is] labour and **sorrow**;*

*for it is soon cut off, and we **fly away**.*

Notice the beautiful metaphor for passing from this life – flying away.

*[12] So teach us to **number** our days,  
that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.*

[Prayer]

Just last week a little reminder came to me for an upcoming dental checkup. Don't you just **love** to receive those notices? When we think of going to the dentist we often think of **pain**.

Many years ago my dad shared a story with me about **his** very unique dental experience.

Dad was a WWII veteran and the son of a WWI vet.  
You know the type: a returning war hero – tough as nails.

He went in to a dental appointment to have a few routine fillings done. His former dentist had retired and a couple of young dentists took up the practice. Dad informed the new dentist that he does not do Novocaine for fillings. He prefers instead to **endure** a few minutes of **pain** rather than hours of numbness.

The dentist proceeded to complete his job **as** instructed, and Dad left. As he was traveling home and he was checking out the work with his tongue, Dad noticed that a piece of a tooth fell off. He turned around and returned to the office. The dentist told him it would be no problem, and he would take care of it.

The job was taking a particularly long time – perhaps approaching a half hour. Dad kept wondering what were all of those strange curved instruments he was using. Finally he asked:

What are you doing?

The dentist, who Dad says is really a **surgeon at heart**, replied proudly,

"This is the first root canal I've ever done without anesthetic."

Dad said, "Me too."

Dad said he lived through it but was not too thrilled with how the dentist handled the situation.

That's one way of dealing with pain.

How do you deal with pain? Today we're going to examine that question in light of God's word and specifically see one way our Lord dealt with it.

Who knows the shortest verse in the Bible? That's right:

John 11

*[35] Jesus wept.*

Even **Jesus**, God in the flesh, experienced **sorrow**. It's part of **this** life isn't it?

How does a Christian cope with tragic events? Are we permitted to **grieve** and even **weep** in our **pain**?

The Bible tells us to rejoice always. (Philippians 4:4)

It also says the fruit of the Spirit includes joy (Galatians 5:22). There's no mention of **sorrow** there.

But likely you do remember this familiar description of our Lord:

Isaiah 53

*[3] He is despised and rejected of men;  
a man of **sorrows**,  
and acquainted with **grief**:  
and we hid as it were our faces from him;  
he was **despised**,  
and we esteemed him not.  
[4] Surely he ha[s] borne our **griefs**,  
and carried our **sorrows**: ...*

II Corinthians 7:11 speaks of **sorrowing** after a godly sort. Could **that** be what Jesus was doing when He wept? Let's examine the details of the incident.

Where was Jesus when the Apostle John said "He wept?"

He was at the grave site of Lazarus with mourners.

This was not unlike many funeral settings and even a bit like our own memorial service right here.

John chapter 11 is all about the story of Lazarus. Jesus had been staying somewhere else – perhaps beyond the Jordan River -- when He received **urgent** word that his friend Lazarus was dying.

Here's the story in a nutshell:

- Lazarus was sick.
- Word was sent to Jesus.
- Jesus delayed.
- Four days after Lazarus died, Jesus showed up.
- Jesus then raised Lazarus from the dead.
- The religious leaders determined Jesus must die.

Jesus was not Lazarus' sisters genie. God is not our genie. Our lives are not about us but about Him. Jesus intentionally did not do what His friends hoped he would do. He **never** does that. Instead, He did what **God the Father** wanted Him to do – bring **greater** glory to God through a **greater** miracle.

God did not even grant **Jesus'** own request a few days later at Gethsemane when He asked His Heavenly Father for a way out of His trial, but Jesus was not so foolish or presumptuous to make *demands* upon God.

So we know where Jesus was – at the grave site of His friend, but why did he weep?

Let's look at next verse:

*[36] Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!*

That's why most were weeping that day and why most weep in similar circumstances. But that wasn't the case for Jesus. Now let's look at the verse that tells us why:

*[33] When Jesus therefore saw her [Mary, Lazarus' sister] weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he **groaned** in the spirit, and was **troubled**,*

Perhaps you may recall from previous messages that often people do not understand Jesus because they don't understand His point of view. These Jews had an earthly perspective. Christ has a heavenly perspective. He knew what He was about to do, He even said so – three times:

*[4] When Jesus heard that [the message of Lazarus' sickness], he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the **glory of God**, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.*

And how would He be glorified? Ultimately dying on the cross and then rising from the dead in just a few days (John 17:1). Jesus was very likely looking beyond this momentous miracle to His own resurrection.

*[11] ...he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.*

*[23] Jesus saith unto her [Martha, Lazarus' other sister], Thy brother shall rise again.*

Jesus knew He would restore Lazarus' life. Why did He weep? He was weeping in **sympathy** with His grief-stricken friends.

Sorrow and suffering are part of this life. If the Apostle Paul and Jesus Christ faced it, what makes us think we shall escape?

II Timothy 3

*[12] ... all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall **suffer** persecution.*

I Peter 2

*[21] For ... Christ also **suffered** for us, leaving us an **example**, that [w]e should follow his steps:*

I Peter 4

*[12] Beloved, think it not strange concerning the **fiery trial** which is to try you, as though some **strange thing** happened [ ]to you:*

*[13] But rejoice, [knowing] y[ou] are partakers of **Christ's sufferings**;*

that, when his glory shall be revealed,  
y[ou] may be glad also with **exceeding joy**.

Let's look at **three** reasons to turn to Jesus to find **comfort** and **healing** in times like these:

**1. He knows our sorrows.**

Hebrews 4

*[15] For we have not a[] high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities;*

*but was in all points te[s]ted ... as we are, yet without sin.*

*[16] Let us therefore come boldly []to the throne of grace,*

*that we may obtain mercy,*

*and find **grace** to help in time of need.*

**2. He shares our burdens.**

Matthew 11

*[28] Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

I Peter 5

*[7] Cast[] all your care upon him; for he care[s] for you.*

**3. He turns sorrow into joy.**

Perhaps the greatest example of this was the emotional roller coaster Jesus' disciples experienced when Jesus died on the cross and then rose from the dead three days later. Here's how Jesus described this to His disciples before it happened:

John 16

*[20] Verily, verily, I say unto you, That **ye shall weep and lament**, but the world shall rejoice: and **ye shall be sorrowful**, but your **sorrow shall be turned into joy**.*

You know Johnson's Baby Shampoo has a "no more tears formula" Well, God has a formula all His own, and it doesn't come in a bottle:

Revelation 21

*[1] And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.*

*[4] And God shall **wipe away all tears** from their eyes; and there shall be no more **death**, neither **sorrow**, nor **crying**, neither shall there be **any more pain**: for the former things are passed away.*

**Application**

To wrap up, let me share with you a few words about my nephew Drew. He contracted tongue cancer and decided to fight it using every medical option. This included ever-invasive surgeries – first localized and later widespread across his body. He endured round-after-round of chemotherapy and radiation treatments.

As the end neared and his suffering intensified, I spoke to him to try to explain that although his fight was courageous and admirable, he might consider that his mission on earth was complete. After all, both John the Baptist and Jesus completed their missions at about his same age.

At age 32, after massive, prolonged medical interventions, Drew died. Shortly before he died, Drew was nearly unrecognizable from facial swelling. But when I saw his lifeless body still in his hospice bed, his grotesque swelling had receded. He looked like Drew again. What a contrast! He was finally at peace!

On his grave marker is inscribed the following quote of Jesus from our story:

John 11

*[25] ... I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:*

You see, Drew knew the Lord and trusted Him to give him new life. When we who know the Lord breathe our last breath its only the beginning of something far better. The Apostle Paul put it this way:

I Corinthians 15

*[53] For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

*[54] ..., then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written,  
Death is swallowed up in **victory**.*

*[55] O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy **victory**?*

*[56] The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.*

*[57] But thanks be to God, which giveth us **the victory** through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

So perhaps, just perhaps, like my nephew Drew, John the Baptist, and Jesus Christ Himself, the timing of Marie's parting – no matter how painful it seems to us – was not an accident. Perhaps she also had completed her mission and now was the time for her too to find peace and rest. It's something to consider as we deal with the real sorrow of losing her.

At this time, are there perhaps others who wish to share personal tributes to Marie. This is your opportunity to speak.

In the same memorial park where Drew's remains are buried, next to him lies the body of my mom, his grandmother Gladys. The inscription on her marker contains the words "The Lord is my shepherd." Together let's reflect on those words as they apply to Marie today as I recite:

Psalm 23

*[1] The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.*

*[2] He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:  
he leadeth me beside the still waters.*

*[3] He restoreth my soul:  
he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.*

*[4] Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil:*

*for thou art with me;*

*thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.*

*[5] Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:  
thou anointest my head with oil;  
my cup runneth over.*

*[6] Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:  
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.*

[Prayer]

**Benediction**

Numbers 6:24-26

*[24] The LORD bless thee, and keep thee:*

*[25] The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee:*

*[26] The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.*

[Postlude: "I'll Fly Away" by Alan Jackson]

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