



Dear Friend,

If you are grieving, then I know you are suffering. Our desire is that you do not suffer alone, but find comfort and peace through the encouragement and love of fellow believers. We care about you, and as a pastor, I care deeply about the pain you are in, the very real hurt you feel, and want you to know that while we pray for comfort, your loss is never minimized in our eyes.

The apostle Paul once wrote, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Roman 8:18). I once watched a dear friend die, and as I sought to comfort myself with Paul's words, I have to confess, I found myself thinking that there's really nothing so glorious about suffering. There's nothing good about losing a loved one and having your heart broken. As a pastor, I've sat beside many grieving people. I've listened to families weep over a child's death, and watched beloved friends die of cancer. I've experienced my own heartache through the loss of an infant son and dear brother. There are days when I shake my head and close my eyes tight to stop the tears and wonder what can ever be so "glorious" that it will make all this seem so insignificant. Did the apostle Paul know what he was talking about when he wrote this passage of Romans? Did he really understand pain and suffering?

The answer is yes. Paul knew suffering and loss. And so have many who have gone before us. The Scripture verse that I would like to leave with you is "I will turn their mourning into joy and will comfort them and give them joy for their sorrow" (Jeremiah 31:13). That's the hope. While our losses will never be forgotten, God's Word promised us deep, heartfelt blessings, like precious gold in our lives; that will come with time. And He promises us comfort and joy, feelings that can seem impossible to ever experience again. But with the help of people who care, God will heal your heart and allow you to know joy again.

I hope that you find the accompanying information helpful as you walk with your Lord through this time of grief. My prayer and encouragement is that you will also come to our GriefShare ministry and feel free there to honestly and without embarrassment, share your burdens and your hurts. I am sure that you will find the help you need, and most of all, experience the love of God in a profound and healing way.

May the God of all comfort be with you,



Pastor Ray Bentley