THE LOSS OF A SPOUSE

Your heart needs to be healed and blessed by Jesus

By Mel D Westbrook MBTh

The Loss Of A Spouse

Loneliness: The loss of companionship, friendship, comradery, teamwork, fellowship, unity, and communication creates painful emotions in your heart. When you realize you will not be able to reestablish that relationship, your heart doesn't respond well to the situation. When you face the issue that you can no longer talk to them, be with them, and enjoy their company, your heart feels pain. The big question is, how do you deal with this suffering? What is the best way to be able to move on?

You had a special relationship where you were able to trust, be open and honest, be yourself, feel loved, feel respected, be listened to, be able to plan together, spend time together, enjoy one another's company, and cry together. You were on the same page with each other in so many ways. You understood each other, agreed on so many issues, had so much history together, could know what to expect from them, and could anticipate their reactions, moods, preferences, likes and dislikes, and interests. This is what you now miss being able to experience with someone.

Mat 11:28 (NIV) Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Can you talk to Jesus like you talked to your spouse? Will He satisfy the loneliness that a loss like this was able to create? Can He fill the hole in your heart, where your best friend is no longer occupying it? How can He heal such a huge wound that is causing so much pain? It sounds impossible; but, Jesus can go where no one else can go. Where it took years to develop the relationship you had with your spouse, Jesus can move into that lonely area like no one else can. The reason He is inviting you to come, is because knows what you need right now.

Jesus, this is a desperate moment in my life. I feel so much loneliness because of the companionship I had with my spouse. They were there, when I needed them. I could tell them things I couldn't tell anyone else. Help me open my heart to you and tell you everything I am going through right now. Help me not hold back the tears, the pain, or the feelings of loneliness from You. Help me say everything I feel. Help me understand all the things that are going on in my heart. Let me express things that I often have a hard time saying.

Grief: The pain you are experiencing is called grief. You are grieving over a relationship loss. If you grieve in a good way, you will have a healthy recovery. You will be able to get heart-healing that doesn't create walls, defenses, hardness, or resistances that aren't healthy. How you go about handling grief is one of the most important aspects of your recovery. Your heart has a number of ways for trying to protect, defend, and heal itself. Many of them can leave you with relational problems where you find yourself not trusting any close relationships.

1 Pet 5:7 (KJV) Casting all your care upon Him; for He cares for you. Because your heart doesn't want to go through this kind of suffering ever again, it can handle grief with solutions that can keep you from loving, trusting, committing, and sometimes even establishing a relationship with someone else. If you let Jesus heal your heart, you will be able to love, trust, confide in, and open your heart to others. Jesus will help your heart not build up walls, defenses, protections, and barriers. Your heart needs to remain soft, trusting, loving, and accepting. Jesus will protect you from danger; but, He will help be open to those who are trustworthy. He knows how to protect you, while you are being healed.

Jesus, help me not start trying to get rid of the grief through human reasoning. Help me be willing to cry and feel pain, so I don't use unhealthy methods to numb myself. Help my heart to be able to love, trust, feel pain, and take chances in my future. Help me understand why You made me capable of feeling grief. Show me that You made me in Your image and likeness. You want me to be human and not a machine. You want me to care, to feel, to miss people, and to be able to suffer because I gave my heart away. Protect me from trying to not care, not suffer, not grieve, not love, and not miss my spouse.

Depression and Hopelessness: If you try to find or establish a close relationship with someone right away, you will find that the quality, closeness, and compatibility you had with the loved one you lost took a lot of time and experiences to create. It didn't happen in a short period of time; and, it didn't happen with just anyone. You had to find someone who was *capable* of melting in with you and your personality. That means you could go for a long time finding such a person. And, when you find them, it will take time developing the intimacy, experiences, understanding, and companionship you just lost.

Phil 4:19 (NIV) And my God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus. As you deal with the difficult challenge you face in trying to get back what you have lost, you can experience depression and hopelessness. What you need is a way to have those things you lost right away. If it is going to take as long to find and grow into a quality love relationship, as it took with the one you lost, that can look impossible. You need very important relational, emotional, financial, physical, and spiritual needs met right now.

Jesus, protect me from emotions that don't bring healing. Protect me from thoughts that create feelings of depression and hopelessness. Help me reject thoughts that add to my pain. If I am thinking something that depresses me, help me bring it to You immediately. Help me understand that it is an attack against me to destroy me. If I don't see a way out of a situation and I start feeling hopeless, help me instantly bring it to You and not dwell on it. Help me to resist anything that tries to add additional pain to me missing my spouse.

Desperation and Recklessness: If you try to get your relational, emotional, financial, physical, and spiritual needs met right away through some human relationship, you can put yourself in a lot of danger. You are *very* hurt, vulnerable, and in need. You can be so anxious and in need for companionship that you drastically lower your standards, expectations, and requirements for what type and kind of person you open your life to. You may want to love, trust, be open with, and have companionship with someone so bad that you do it with someone not trustworthy.

Gal 6:9 (NIV) Let us not become weary in doing good, <u>for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up</u>. Jesus wants you to find someone who can be totally trusted with your heart and your life; but, you need them as soon as possible. That is where you need to spend a lot of time in prayer. This is an emergency; this is a crisis situation that can't be treated like you are just having a bad day. You need to be talking to Jesus and telling Him everything you feel, everything you think, and everything you need. The more time you spend talking and listening to Him, the less chance you will make your life worse.

Jesus, help me not sit around thinking, remembering, trying to figure out what to do next, and going over a lot of things that I need to bring to You. Help me realize that You won't speak peace, wisdom, and power into my life, if I don't invite You in. Show me that I need to spend a lot of time praying rather than worrying, thinking, remembering, and planning. Help me see that You will bring great wisdom and power into me, if I consult You. Make it clear to me that You will not force Yourself on me. You are waiting on me to start talking to You.

Determination and Avoidance: If you decide that you don't like all this pain and suffering, you may decide to heal your own heart by toughing it out. You may decide to stop thinking about anything that takes you back to your loss. You may bury your hurt by ignoring your loss and by "moving on." You may try filling your life with activities, shallow relationships, and entertainment. You may believe that "time heals" and try to just ride it out.

Rom 5:5 (NIV) And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, Whom He has given us. If you don't do what it takes to get your heart healed, it will build walls, develop hardness, and create defenses that will make love relationships difficult. You need a serious relationship that meets your more intimate, real, and personal needs; and, you need it right away. God's love for you and through you is already inside you. But, it is like everything God does; it is gentle, submissive, and subservient. Ask Jesus to help you experience this love, so you can stay in love with Jesus.

Jesus, help me not decide that I don't want to hurt. Help me not make up my mind to just not care. Help me see that this love I have for my spouse is more valuable than gold. Show me that is was You that gave me this love, so I could go beyond normal human relationships. Help me protect this love and encourage it to flow into me, so I can feel loved and cared for by you. Help me see that this love is going to bring healing to my heart. Teach me that You are expanding this love to an even higher level. Let me give my heart to those who are suffering like I am. Help me not turn inward, but, outward to other hurting people.

Anesthetized and Numbed: Should you try to drug yourself or drink your way into some kind of healing, you will just be postponing the pain. This causes you to need to keep drugging yourself because the pain is just waiting for you to get sober again. It pushes you out of being able to get the help you really need. It makes you feel like you have found temporary relief. Soon you are escaping life and no longer facing the potential of true healing and blessings that are available to you.

Eph 5:18 (NIV) Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. The Holy Spirit has been your friend for most of your life. He was the One Who talked to your conscience, when you were doing things that would hurt you. He has been the voice of your conscience guiding you into those things that would bless and help you have a much better life. How that you are a Christian, He is available to help you pray some heart felt prayers. There are some things that your heart needs that it can't tell you about. It is hurting deeply; but, it doesn't have a language like your mind. So, all it can do is express feelings.

Rom 8:26 (NIV) In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. Jesus, help me listen to that little inner voice that is trying to help my heart express itself. If it needs to cry or groan, help me go where I can freely yield to my heart and the Holy Spirit. Help understand that He is aiding my heart to give up the wounds and pain that are being stored and held in it. Guide me into yielding to the Holy Spirit, so He can pray prayers that my heart needs expressed for it.

Waiting and Hoping: You may try to let time heal you; you could just try to wait it out hoping that it will eventually go away. But, this allows your heart to come up with its own solutions. Rather than it getting healed through proper procedures, it uses a process of burying the problem. It starts trying to push your pain back in areas where it can't be accessed. If you gradually get to the place where it starts seeming like it didn't happen, then you can treat it like a bad dream. Your heart treats it like it wasn't real; it tries to make it fuzzy and hard to remember all the actual details of the loss.

Rom 8:27 (NIV) And He (your heavenly Father**) Who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.** Time does *not* heal all wounds. Your heart hasn't actually been healed; it is still there influencing many of your decisions and future plans. It's like a sticker in your finger. The skin may grow over it; but, infection is growing down under the skin. You don't want time to heal your heart. You need Jesus to reach into that hurt and damaged area and remove the loneliness, depression, helpless and hopelessness, grief, desperation, recklessness, and avoidance.

Jesus, help me be actively pursuing a healing in my heart through You. Help me not just let it all go away, as I busy myself with the cares of life. Help me care about how my heart is doing. In spite of all that is going on in my life right now, help me take out time to bring my heart before You, so you can address its needs. Show me the difference between my heart and my mind. Help me understand that I can reason my mind into a certain amount of peace and comfort. But, help me realize that my heart is totally different and needs special care.

Studying and Praying: The only way for your heart to experience real healing is to allow the Bible and Jesus to do a supernatural work in it. What your mind thinks greatly affects your heart. If you dwell on depressing, worrisome, or agitating things, it damages your heart. Its God-given job is to protect you from pain. If your thoughts are focusing in on wonderful, encouraging, faith-filled things, your heart will relax and accept healing. Jesus can help you be able to think about all the wonderful things that He has for you and your future. He will offer you a relationship that is honest, trustworthy, and meaningful.

Phil 4:8 (NIV) Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things. If you will look this list over and see the pattern set in it, you will have a guide for the kind of thoughts you should be spending your time thinking about. You aren't being naive, unrealistic, or gullible. You are setting your mind and heart up for approaching all situations with a very positive mind and heart. It is so much easier to face the issues of life like that than with doubts, fears, and worry ruling your mind and heart.

Jesus, help me trust You to protect me, so I can take a Philippians 4:8 approach to my loss. Help me see that, if I **think about such things,** I will help my heart be filled with faith and trust in You. Show me that my heart is responding to my thoughts. Help me see that a lot of the pain I am experiencing is coming from the thoughts I am thinking. Let the feelings of my heart be my signal as to what kind of thought I am thinking. If it is feeling bad or in pain, help me understand that I am thinking something negative. If it is happy, then I am thinking Philippians 4:8 thoughts.