

# Comforting the Bereaved

*An outline by Warren Wiersbe*

## I. Comforters are needed

- A. It is the ministry of the entire church to comfort the bereaved (Rom 12:15)
- B. It can cause great harm when we neglect or devalue their sorrow
- C. Word 'comfort' – from latin words meaning – give strength
  - \* comfort is not protective sympathy
- D. How do we comfort and minister to bereaved?
  - 1. We minister through our physical presence
  - 2. We minister through what we say
  - 3. We minister by sharing God's Word
  - 4. We minister by praying
  - 5. We minister by mobilizing the church family

## II. The Bible and Death

### I. Old Testament Pictures

- A. Sleep – Deut. 31:16
- B. Going to an eternal home – Eccles. 12:5
- C. Grass cut down – Ps. 90:5
- D. Water spilled out – II Sam. 14:14
- E. An ember put out – II Sam. 14:7
- F. Overwhelmed by waves – II Sam. 22:5
- G. Darkness and shadows – Job 3:5
- H. Return to dust – Eccles. 3:20
- I. Going to one's fathers – Gen. 15:15
- J. Giving up the Ghost – Gen. 25:8

### II. New Testament Pictures

- A. Sleep – Matt. 9:24
- B. Absent from the body – II Cor. 5:8
- C. Departure – Luke 2:29
- D. Exodus – Luke 9:31
- E. Putting off a tent – II Peter 1:14
- F. Changing clothes – I Cor. 15:51-57
- G. Planting of a seed – I Cor. 15:36-38
- H. An enemy – Heb. 2:14
- I. Rest – Rev. 14:13

J. A King – Romans 5:14

K. Going home to the Father – John 14:1-6

IV. Job – life and death

# Comforting the Bereaved – part 2

## The Grief Process

### I. The stages of Grief

- A. Shock
- B. Strong emotion
- C. Depression
- D. Fear
- E. Guilt
- F. Anger
- G. Apathy
- H. Adjustment

### II. Key verses to assist others with Grief – from Warren Wiersbe

- Psalm 16:11            God's guidance and presence
- Psalm 18:30            He makes no mistakes
- Psalm 20:1-2            God sends us help
- Psalm 22:24            God is sensitive to our needs
- Psalm 27:5            God's gracious protection
- Psalm 30:5            Joy in the morning
- Psalm 34:17-19        God hears and delivers
- Psalm 46            Our refuge and strength
- Psalm 48:14            Our guide
- Psalm 55:22            Give God your burden
- Isa. 40:28-31            God gives power to the faint
- Isa. 43:1,2            Through fire and water
- Jer. 29:11            God's thoughts of Peace to us
- Lam. 3:22-26            God's faithfulness
- Matt. 11:28-30        God's promise of rest
- John 11:25-26        He is the resurrection and the Life
- John 16:22            Joy in the midst of sorrow
- II Cor. 1:3-4            The God of all comfort
- II Cor. 5:1-8            Believers are present with the Lord
- Heb. 2:9            Jesus tasted death for us
- Heb. 11:13            We are pilgrims here
- I John 3:1,2            We are God's children

## Comforting the Bereaved – Part 3

(\* most information from Warren Wiersbe)

- I. The Funeral service
  - a. A Christian's purpose for a funeral service
    - i. To Glorify God - I Cor. 10:31
    - ii. Must focus on the living
    - iii. To dignify mankind – Eph 4:30
    - iv. To testify to our faith – a time of witness.
    - v. To fortify the mourners
  - b. Funerals to avoid in Church ministry
    - i. The secular funeral (no mention of God)
    - ii. The superstitious funeral (ethnic imagery)
    - iii. The superficial funeral (a production – not realistic)
    - iv. The sentimental funeral (overly emotional & imagery)
    - v. The sensational funeral (news worthy) \*family issues
  
- II. The Funeral Message \* From Pastor Gunther
  - a. God made life
  - b. Sin introduced death
  - c. God provided Hope
  - d. Comfort for Bereaved
  - e. \*\* Details from deceased if appropriate \*\* without exaggerations
  
- III. Specific Instances
  - a. Death of a Child
    - i. Hardest on Mother
    - ii. Often causes marital difficulties
    - iii. Other children in the home
      - 1. Children under age of 9 generally do not understand death
      - 2. Children often refuse to accept reality – they protest

3. Don't offer the children wrong explanations (I Cor. 15:35-50)
  4. Often the greater the age difference between siblings – the harder they take the loss
- iv. Miscarriages = A very personal loss of a child
- b. Suicide
    - i. Growing epidemic – mental illness
    - ii. Family and Friends struggle with guilt – “What could I have...?”
    - iii. David and Saul – II Samuel 1:17-27