

Daily Devotion For December 12, 2022

“For we do not grieve as those who have no hope.” I Thessalonians 4:13

Christmas is a time of wonder, joy, peace and those warm-hearted feelings that make December “the most wonderful time of the year.” But for many this season may be marked by grief, loneliness, doubt and fear. Traditions that used to bring joy now bring a flood of tears.

9 years ago today, my wife Kazuko passed away from a long battle with liver and lung disease. Sherry and I remember that sense of loss and grief as we celebrated our first Christmas without her. It was like we didn't know what to do and our grief threatened to rob us of the joy that Christ's birth should bring.

But what we learned is that it is okay to grieve. Grief is painful and complex. In the midst of it, we face a strong temptation to push it down and ignore it. The truth is that it's okay to grieve. Jesus grieved. The apostle Paul said, “we do not grieve as those who have no hope.” Yes we mourn, yes, we grieve, but this season of advent reminds us that Jesus came into the world to conquer sin and abolish death. And God is big enough to handle all the emotions and questions that come with our grief.

Christmas will never again be exactly the same after the death of someone special. But it can still be sweet and joy-filled. Take time to remember and share the happy memories of your loved one. Hang a special ornament to honor them. Listen to their favorite song and sing along. Make their favorite Christmas treat and enjoy it. Don't feel guilty for enjoying life. Celebrating does not disrespect their memory—it honors it.

**Thought For Today:** What special Christmas memories do you have of your loved ones who have passed away? How might you honor their memory this Christmas? Remember to look to Jesus. He is our Emmanuel, The God who is with us.

**Today's Prayer Focus:** Pray for those during this Christmas season who have lost their loved ones and will be spending this Christmas for the first time without them. Pray for the Shirley Wong family at Pat's passing. The family of Judy Yamashita who lost her brother Stanley. Prayers also for Anne Kageyama who has surgery today for her Thyroid Cancer. Deo Volente.