

Phoenix Rising

This grief newsletter is sent to members and friends of Paradise Valley United Methodist Church following the loss of a loved one. PVUMC pastors are available to you if you need one-on-one support. Contact the church office for more information at 602-840-8360. If you wish to be removed from the mailing list, contact the church office or e-mail ddoran@pvumc.org.

Debbie Doran, Editor

Surviving Grief

We Can Help

Paradise Valley United Methodist Church is sponsoring a 13-week grief class provided by GriefShare®, where you will learn how to walk the journey of grief and be supported on the way. It is a place where grieving people find healing and hope. Class material includes videos, a workbook and discussion.

Where: Paradise Valley United Methodist Church, Room H6

Dates: September 3—November 26, 2024

Day and Time: Tuesdays, 11:00 am—12:30 pm

Leaders: Bill Quigg and Polly van Rensburg

To register: go to griefshare.org

Registration fee: \$20 paid through GriefShare.org

Childcare is not available



Grieving

Grieving is like having broken ribs. On the outside you look fine, but with every breath, it hurts.¹

Show Your Grief

Our grief doesn't show on our bodies. That leads other people to think we're fine. I sometimes wish our skin turned purple when we started grieving. The worse we feel on any given day, the darker the purple. Grief's invisibility does no one any favors.

Then, because we live in a culture that tries to hide grief, we often become complicit with grief's invisibility. "How are you doing?" people ask us. "Fine," we say. "Pretty well."

I've learned that what "doing well" in grief usually means is avoiding or hiding it. We're hurting inside, but we're trying to look and act fine outside. The only remedy is to live our inner truth by expressing our grief actively and openly. We tell people our broken hearts hurt like hell. And in the telling, we begin to heal.

When I'm hurting inside, I'll find ways to show it on the outside.²

Faith

Faith is not a declaration of the known; instead, it is an acceptance of the unknown—the unknowable.

To 'know' God is to accept by faith that we have a connection with him, yet how this connection is possible is unknowable. It's beyond our minds to compute and beyond our souls to comprehend in any rational or numerical expression.

We can never explain it. It's unexplainable.

We can never prove it. It's unprovable.

Yet, we hold it to be true, unshakably true, that we do know God. How?

Not by facts. Not by proof. But by faith

Death takes the body. Our mind holds the memories. Our hearts keep the love. Our faith lets us know we will meet again.³

You can shed tears because they are gone, or you can smile because they lived. You can close your eyes and pray they will come back, or you can open your eyes and see all that they left for you. Your heart can be empty because you can't see them, or you can be full of the love you shared. You can turn your back on tomorrow and live yesterday, or you can be happy for tomorrow because of yesterday. You can remember only that they are gone, or you can cherish their memory and let it live on. You can cry and close your mind and feel empty, or you can do what they would want. Smile, Open your heart, Love... and go on.

—Elizabeth Ammons
lessonslearnedinlife.com



Despite, Not Because

“Give thanks in all circumstances.”

1 Thessalonians 5:18 (NIV)

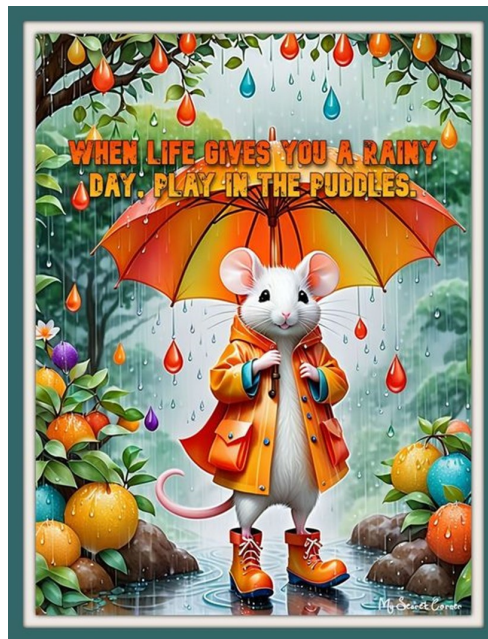
I have often heard it said that “God will never give us more than we can handle.” Yet, there are times in our lives when this is simply not true, and such statements ring hollow.

Perhaps the biblical passages that are used to promote this idea have been misinterpreted. For example, 1 Corinthians 10:13 is a verse commonly cited, but it is about temptation rather than suffering.

Passages like 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 and James 1:2 tell us to rejoice always. But being told to rejoice when we have lost a loved one or are facing a life-altering health diagnosis can seem cruel.

The command to rejoice in our suffering, however, is about rejoicing in Jesus despite our circumstances, not because of our circumstances. What a difference that understanding can make when trials come! It is much easier to rejoice in Jesus and what he has done for us than to rejoice in the difficulties we face.

Understanding these passages better has helped me lift my gaze from very difficult circumstances to God, who is with us every step of the way, offering hope, joy, and encouragement in the midst of life's most troublesome times.⁴



Footnotes:

1. Author Unknown
2. GRIEF ONE DAY at a TIME, April 10, 2016 by Alan D. Wolfelt, PH.D.
3. Anonymous
4. Upper Room; April 23, 2024; by Bronwyn Ashton Winch (Queensland, Australia)