

GIVING PAUSE

I. [Romans 12:9-15](#) [2 Corinthians 1:3-5](#)

A. [Romans 12:9-15](#) (ESV) says: **9** *Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.* **10** *Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.* **11** *Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord.* **12** *Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.* **13** *Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.* **14** *Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.* **15** *Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.*

B. [2 Corinthians 1:3-5](#) (ESV) follows like this: **3** *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,* **4** *who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.* **5** *For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too.*

C. Today is the last Sunday of 2020. This past year will be a year we will never forget. What next year brings, we don't know but we do know God will be with us because that's *Who* He is, among Christ's many names is *Emmanuel*-God with us.

D. We have been on a six week journey on *Giving*. Five Sunday's ago I shared on *Giving Thanks*; four Sundays ago, *Giving Words*; three Sundays ago, *Giving Grace*; two Sundays ago I shared on *Giving Help*; and last Sunday it was, *Giving Christ*. And today our title is *Giving Pause*.

E. Besides COVID-19, it's been a year of political and cultural division, civil unrest, with restrictions, cancellations, and alterations, thrown in for good measure. All this has proven we're truly not in charge. But don't be sad, instead, rejoice. Praise God that we've been reduced to having to trust Him more than ever. We've also endured the loss of many dear loved ones and we weep with those who weep.

F. At Gail Miller's funeral and a couple of others, I shared the fact that many churches used to have cemeteries right on the church property. Some probably thought the practice was way too morbid, not very seeker-sensitive, a turn-off to visitors. But our forefathers in the faith saw it as a way to remind us that our loved ones lost had merely transferred their memberships from the *Church Militant* to the *Church Triumphant*. Walking past those stones also reminded us that the opportunities to serve God in the here and now were numbered and soon we too would take our places out in "the yard."

G. I want to read a list of folks we've lost. It's not an exclusive list. All of you likely have lost people in your respective spheres and have your own lists. For all the hardship experienced by families this past year, the loss of these named loved ones will have been the most difficult. So when you hear a name, yield up a breath-prayer for the family, put them before The Father of mercy and God of all comfort, and ask Him to wrap these folks tightly in His arms...

H. Hear these names with reverence, thanksgiving, and hope for reunion: Linda King, Bill Cobb, Gordon Hall, Julie Alfred, Vivian Rowntree, Dr. Richard Weidner, Lori Hallam,

Don Mohler, Daniel Cain, Janice Delzell, Darlene Curran, Phil Weldon, Sharon Bagent, Don Anderson, Roger Palmer, Bill Eiginger, Nancy Utley, Tom Bush, Kenny Kosch, Lois Wycliff, Dorothy Fisher-Hudnell, Brenda Stahr-Kirkbride, Skip Ricketts, Eileen Taylor, Dustin Duncan, John (Jack) Carson, Jim Spittler, Gina Cooper, Patty Campbell, Don Spurlock, Carol Keller, Effie Wilson, Kathy Reincheld, Jimmy Watson, Kay Shover, Charles Zollinger, Dorothy Hansberger, Tom Reiser, Sam Hindman, Jerry Stought, Chuck Ralston, Gail Miller, David Meek, Hope Logsdon, Al Hyslip, Dr. Paul Whetstone, Don Archer, Jerry Belt... **As it says in Job 1:21b: "The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD."** (ESV)

I. A man named Joseph Bayly lost three of his seven children. In His book, *The View From A Hearse*, Bayly writes about comforting those who are grieving: "I was sitting, torn by grief. Someone came and talked to me of God's dealings, of why it happened, of hope beyond the grave. He talked constantly. He said things I knew were true. I was unmoved, except to wish he would go away. He finally did. Another came and sat beside me. He didn't talk. He didn't ask me leading questions. He just sat beside me for an hour or more, listened when I said something, answered briefly, prayed simply, and then left. I was moved. I was comforted. I hated to see him go."

J. There's a much older story from the reign of Queen Victoria in England. The Queen heard that the wife of a common laborer had lost her baby. Having suffered loss herself, Victoria felt moved to express her sympathy so she visited the grieving woman. After she left, the neighbors asked what the Queen had said. "Nothing," replied the grieving mother. "She simply put her hands on mine, and we silently wept together."

K. Perhaps you are among those who came through 2020 unscathed. Or perhaps you suffered much. Either way, I believe God can use you to minister to hurting souls. Lend your shoulders for others to cry upon. Be as present as you can even if it's on adjacent porches, or through a closed window, or over the phone. Make use of the communication methods still unaffected by all the imposed restrictions. Do whatever you can, with or without words, and keep those in mourning in the forefront of your prayers.

1) Samuel Chadwick said: "Compassion costs. It is easy enough to argue, criticize, and condemn, but redemption is costly, and comfort draws from the deep. Brains can argue, but it takes heart to comfort."

2) Here's a higher theological imperative: Love God. Love one another. Love one another as God has loved us. Love like the One who generously gave us His Son to rescue us from death and grant us life forevermore...

*** May Psalm 94:17-19 (NLT) be the testimony of those who've lost a loved one this year:**
17 Unless the LORD had helped me, I would soon have settled in the silence of the grave. 18 I cried out, "I am slipping!" but Your unfailing love, O LORD, supported me. 19 When doubts filled my mind, Your comfort gave me renewed hope and cheer.

*** Close with Prayer...**

[Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff](#)

Romans 12:9-15 (ESV)

9 Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. **10** Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. **11** Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. **12** Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. **13** Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality. **14** Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. **15** Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.

2 Corinthians 1:3-5 (ESV)

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, **4** who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. **5** For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too.

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Quote by Joseph Bayly

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- Joe Bayly, *The View From A Hearse*.

We Wept Together

Once during Queen Victoria's reign, she heard that the wife of a common laborer had lost her baby. Having experienced deep sorrow herself, she felt moved to express her sympathy. So she called on the bereaved woman one day and spent some time with her. After she left, the neighbors asked what the queen had said. "Nothing," replied the grieving mother. "She simply put her hands on mine, and we silently wept together."

- Unknown Source

Video Clips & Important Articles

"Shoulders" - For King & Country

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TfiYWaeAcRw>

What Do We Say to Grieving People? - Nancy Guthrie (Desiring God)

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/what-do-we-say-to-grieving-people>

"It Is Well With My Soul" - Audrey Assad

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zY5o9mP22V0>

Joni Eareckson Tada On Words that Hurt, Actions that Help - Interview by Marvin Olasky
https://world.wng.org/2013/01/joni_eareckson_tada_on_words_that_hurt_actions_that_help?#.UPTdU5mWVRk.twitter

"Cry Out To Jesus" - Third Day
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JmVxRI5bc4Y>

"Hope Where There Was None" - Loud Harp (Thank You Ryan Snyder!)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cqr8fNVehbE>

Bonus Stuff

Job 42:10-11 (NIV)

10 After Job had prayed for his friends, the LORD restored his fortunes and gave him twice as much as he had before. **11** All his brothers and sisters and everyone who had known him before came and ate with him in his house. They comforted and consoled him over all the trouble the LORD had brought on him, and each one gave him a piece of silver and a gold ring.

Psalm 34:17-19 (ESV)

17 When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears and delivers them out of all their troubles. **18** The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit. **19** Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all.

Psalm 73:28 (NASB)

28 But as for me, the nearness of God is my good;
I have made the LORD God my refuge,
That I may tell of all Your works.

Isaiah 50:4 (NASB)

4 The LORD God has given Me the tongue of disciples,
That I may know how to sustain the weary one with a word.
He awakens Me morning by morning,
He awakens My ear to listen as a disciple.

Proverbs 25:11 (NASB)

11 Like apples of gold in settings of silver
Is a word spoken in right circumstances.

Hebrews 2:10-18 (NIV)

10 In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the Author of their salvation perfect through suffering. **11** Both the One who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers. **12** He says, "I will declare your name to My brothers; in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises." **13**

And again, "I will put my trust in Him." And again He says, "Here am I, and the children God has given Me." **14** Since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity so that by His death He might destroy him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil-- **15** and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. **16** For surely it is not angels He helps, but Abraham's descendants. **17** For this reason He had to be made like His brothers in every way, in order that He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest in service to God, and that He might make atonement for the sins of the people. **18** Because He Himself suffered when He was tempted, He is able to help those who are being tempted.

Hebrews 4:14-16 (AMP)

14 Inasmuch then as we [believers] have a great High Priest who has [already ascended and] passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession [of faith and cling tenaciously to our absolute trust in Him as Savior]. **15** For we do not have a High Priest who is unable to sympathize and understand our weaknesses and temptations, but One who has been tempted [knowing exactly how it feels to be human] in every respect as we are, yet without [committing any] sin. **16** Therefore let us [with privilege] approach the throne of grace [that is, the throne of God's gracious favor] with confidence and without fear, so that we may receive mercy [for our failures] and find [His amazing] grace to help in time of need [an appropriate blessing, coming just at the right moment].

"I Just Helped Him Cry" - Excerpt by Joseph F. Conley

Whether factual or apocryphal matters little, for its poignancy is powerful. A group of professional people posed this question to a group of 4 to 8 year-olds, "*What does love mean?*" The winner was a four year old child whose next door neighbor was an elderly gentleman who recently lost his wife. Upon seeing the man cry, the little boy went into the old gentleman's yard, climbed onto his lap, and just sat there. When his mother asked what he had said to the neighbor, the little boy said, "*Nothing. I just helped him cry.*"

- Joseph F. Conley, *Reflections: Musings of an Old Missionary*, Xulon Press, p. 189.

Quote by Oswald Chambers

"In the midst of the awesomeness, a touch comes, and you know it is the right hand of Jesus Christ. You know it is not the hand of restraint, correction, nor chastisement, but the right hand of the Everlasting Father. Whenever His hand is laid upon you, it gives inexpressible peace and comfort, and the sense that "underneath are the everlasting arms," (Deuteronomy 33:27) full of support, provision, comfort and strength."

Quote by Charles Spurgeon

"Your sorrow itself shall be turned into joy. Not the sorrow to be taken away, and joy to be put in its place, but the very sorrow which now grieves you shall be turned into joy. God not only takes away the bitterness and gives sweetness in its place, but turns the bitterness into sweetness itself."

Quote by John Piper

"There are nutrients that we draw out of seasons of suffering that are strengthening to the bones of our faith and sweetening to the marrow of our faith like we can't get any other way. Eat them. Go ahead and eat them. As long as God keeps you in that season, don't waste it by wishing and wishing, wishing you'd be out of it. Go ahead and eat the fruit that grows on that tree alone."

Quote by C. S. Lewis

"The problem of reconciling human suffering with the existence of a God who loves, is only insoluble so long as we attach a trivial meaning to the word 'love.'"

Quote by Karen Bosch

"As we cry to God, He hears, and dares us to look at things from His perspective."

Quote by David W. Dyke

"Job didn't get an answer to his questions. He had to accept the fact that a relationship with the One who knows the answers is better than the answers themselves."

Quote by F. B. Meyer

"Earthly prosperity is no sign of the special love of heaven; nor are sorrow and care any mark of God's disfavor, but the reverse. God's love is robust and true and eager--not for our own comfort, but for our lasting blessedness."

Prayer by George Matheson

"Teach me, dear God, the glory of my cross; teach me the value of my "thorn." Show me that I have climbed to Thee by the path of pain. Show me that my tears have made my rainbow."

Quote by Philip Yancey

"Who would complain if God allowed one hour of suffering in an entire lifetime of comfort? Why complain about a lifetime that includes suffering when that lifetime is a mere hour of eternity?"

Poem by J.J. Lynch

Say not, my soul, "From whence
Can God relieve my care?"
Remember that Omnipotence
Hath servants everywhere.

His help is always sure,
His methods seldom guessed;
Delay will make our pleasure pure;
Surprise will give it zest.

His wisdom is sublime,

His heart profoundly kind;
God never is before His time,
And never is behind.

Hast thou assumed a load
Which none will bear with thee?
And art thou bearing it for God,
And shall He fail to see?

Be comforted at heart,
Thou art not left alone;
Now thou the Lord's companion art-
Soon thou shalt share His throne.

- *Alliance Witness*, January 1, 1986, p. 9.

Mr. Beaver on Aslan, From The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe

"He'll be coming and going. One day you'll see him and another you won't. He doesn't like being tied down - and of course he has other countries to attend to. It's quite all right. He'll often drop in. Only you mustn't press him. He's wild, you know. Not like a tame lion." "...Then he isn't safe?" said Lucy. "Safe?" said Mr Beaver; "don't you hear what Mrs Beaver tells you? Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the King, I tell you."

- C.S. Lewis, *The Lion The Witch, and The Wardrobe in The Chronicles of Narnia*.