

I HEAR YOU HAVE LOST A LOVED ONE

Yes, it's true, the one thing you feared most but tended to put to the back of your mind, has now invaded your own home and your own life. Until now your life has been running fairly normally and you had subconsciously developed a sense of immunity to tragedy, even death. It has come to others, neighbours, friends, even close family members, and it impacted upon your life to a degree. You were able to comfort them and support them in their time of need, but now the bottom has dropped out of your own world, your own ship has struck a rock in the middle of the ocean.

I have no desire to intrude upon your private grief, only to help in this hour of trial. Let me encourage you so as not to give yourself to despair. When we are bereft of a dear one it is a tremendous shock, and for a time we are stunned. We must not, however, fall into despair. At first you may find it very difficult not to let your grief overcome you.

DO NOT DESPAIR

When you are tempted to despair your only hope may even be that you too might be allowed to pass away or at least that the life you now have be short lived. You cannot help but mourn and perhaps refuse to be comforted. You dwell on the memories of the one who has gone, on the plans you made.

Perhaps the question in your mind is, "How can God allow this to happen to me?" This is a legitimate question to ask when a loved one is called from our side. Possibly it might be answered indirectly by asking, "Why should this not have happened to me?" "Is there any reason why I should escape the sorrows and heartaches of others?"

It is not an easy thing to answer the questions of someone who has been recently bereaved, to their comfort and satisfaction, for the simple reason that at such a time they are not their normal selves. It is difficult for the mind that is shocked so severely to be

reasonable. A breaking heart seeks no logic. It needs only comfort and peace, and above all to recall the life that is gone.

“If only I had ...” This self accusation, the blaming of one’s self for the things that are unchangeable. However, there is also every possibility that things might have been made worse rather than better if we had changed them. However, please know that there is a place for sincere repentance for wrong doing or neglect and there is also the assurance of forgiveness wherever there is genuine repentance.

Frequently the question, “If only ...” reflects not just a sense of guilt, but often a measure of desperation as at times we may speculate how the sad outcome might perhaps have been avoided. “If only I had taken the first signs of the illness more seriously ...”, “If only we had called the doctor earlier”. Please know that, even if this is so, that you feel you didn’t do something you might have done, that God can forgive our mistakes as well as our sins. Jesus is an utterly forgiving Saviour and He can mend and fully restore broken hearts that are handed over to Him for His attention.

DOES GOD CARE?

Most certainly He does. In fact, we could well call Him, “The Great Consoler”. Jesus came specifically to “Comfort all that mourn .. to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning; the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness”. One of the great reasons for the sufferings of Christ was that He might be our perfect friend in sorrow. His heart was broken not only that He might save us from our sins, but that He might understand and heal our broken hearts. That was one of the special works that He came on purpose to do. He was, “Sent to bind up the broken hearted”.

“Jesus wept”. This speaks of Him as the human sympathiser. And He will lay His heart’s sympathy upon your heart’s wounds. He will let you feel that the grief has brought Him very near to you, and you very near to Him. When human refuges fail, when human

friendships wither, and human props give way, how sustaining it is to have Jesus as the “anchor of the soul”.

WHERE CAN COMFORT BE FOUND?

You may ask yourself, “Where can my broken heart find comfort in this hour of grief?” Do beware of seeking comfort in anything less than a full and assured faith in Jesus Christ Himself. Please do be sure that you do not even try to find even partial comfort in spiritualism. God calls all spiritualistic practices an abomination to Himself. When people are grieving they will turn to almost anything for solace and when they are misled by spiritualists into believing that they can communicate with their departed loved ones and hear them speak again, they are unaware that the voice they hear will be that of an evil spirit called in the Bible a “seducing spirit” which is able to impersonate the loved one by mimicking their voice so accurately that even the mourner is unable to detect the deception.

Has it ever occurred to you that the empty place in your heart and in your life can be more than adequately filled by God Himself. He says to you, ***“Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid ... I will not leave you comfortless ... I will come to you”***. Yes, if you pray to God to come and fill the emptiness in your life, He will take the place that is offered to Him. He is more than able to make up for all of the earth’s losses if we will only trust Him.

Often, God, in His mercy, reveals Himself to us through His Son Jesus Christ, when we begin to grapple with the problem of suffering, and we find the answer to our problem in the deeper discovery of finding Jesus for ourselves.

Now you may ask, “But how can I find God for myself?” There are four simple but profound steps to Him:

FIRST

We must admit our need of Him. We must acknowledge that we are sinners and have lived our lives independently from Him. This is

called sin and the Bible says, ***“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”. Romans 3 verse 23.***

SECOND

We must turn away from all that is wrong in our lives and from living our own way independently from God. The Bible calls this repentance, and it says, ***“Repent then and turn to God that your sins may be wiped out. Acts 3 verse 19.***

THIRD

We must believe that Jesus is the Son of God and trust what the Bible says He did for us – ***“That Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, that He was buried and that He was raised on the third day, according to the Scriptures.” 1 Corinthians 15 verses 3-4.***

FOURTH

We must make Jesus our personal Lord and Saviour. When we do this we become a child of God. ***“Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.” John 1 verse 12.***

To guide you as you make your own response to God here is a short prayer which you might find helpful. Find a quiet place somewhere and simply speak it out sincerely to God from your heart.

MY PERSONAL PRAYER

Dear God, I know I am a sinner and up till now I have gone my own way and lived my life independently of you. I am now willing to repent and turn away from all that is wrong in my life and from living independently of You and ask You to forgive me. I believe Jesus is Your Son and that He sacrificed His life on the cross for my sin, and was buried and rose back to life again after 3 days. I now ask Jesus to be my own personal Lord and Saviour, and I commit myself into Your hands, and ask You to comfort and support me and to guide me and help me live my life Your way. Amen.

A NEW LIFE

Having now made this response to God in faith and sincerity you can be sure that your sin has been forgiven and your relationship with God has begun. This booklet is not intended as an instant solution to your present and very real grief. However, in time you will begin to enjoy a new life here and now with God Himself and His Son, Jesus, at the centre of everything for the rest of your life here on this earth and for eternity. You will also receive a quiet and gentle inner strength from God's Holy Spirit to help you live as God wants you to.

You will go on to find that you enjoy meeting with other Christians to worship God and get to know Him. You will begin to find out about praying (talking and listening to God), reading the Bible, and living by what it says. After a while you will discover that your tastes, lifestyle and outlook begin to change as you follow God's true purpose for your life. The Bible says in **2 Corinthians 2 verse 17, *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation: the old has gone, the new has come.***

Responding in this way to God will be the turning point in your life – turning from being your own master in all things, from trusting in your own capabilities and ingenuity, and from relying on fragile and uncertain worldly resources. You will begin to trust God and allow Him to lead and guide you more and more. His plan for your life will begin to unfold. The Bible says, ***Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight. Proverbs 3 verses 5-6.***

You will begin to understand and experience the love of God and find real peace and comfort which comes from the assurance that your life and your future are now safe in His hands. Jesus says in ***Matthew 11 verses 28-29, ... Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you***

and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

TAKE CARE

You may already attend a church and have experienced child baptism and/or confirmation. You may already pray and read your Bible. You may do good deeds and lead an honest life. If so, that is really good. However, the Bible clearly shows us that this is not the way God has provided for us to have our sin forgiven and cancelled out, for us to have our relationship with Him restored and to spend eternity with Him.

Once we have responded to God the way He wants us to then these activities will become a natural part of our everyday life. However, on their own they have no part in securing our destiny (which the Bibles calls our ‘salvation’). In ***Ephesians 2 verses 8-9*** it says, ***For it is by grace you have been saved – and it is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.***

You may believe you are not good enough or worthy to receive God’s free gift of salvation. You may feel you need to try to better yourself in some way before being able to receive His free gift. Please understand that Jesus came to save you from the consequences of your sin, no matter what kind of life you have led or what condition you believe yourself to be in. Don’t wait till you feel good enough to come to Jesus – come as you are. He came to bind up the broken hearted and to seek sinners, not those who already believe they are good enough. Jesus says, ... ***For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners. Matthew 9 verse 13.***

TIME IS SHORT

There are many things in life we know we ought to do but somehow we find a reason or excuse to delay. I strongly urge you not to let this happen to your response to what you have just read. The Bible tells us what the world will be like as the end draws near, ***But mark this; there will be terrible times in the last days. People will be***

lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. 2 Timothy 3 verses 1-4. In the gospel of ***Matthew 24 verses 7-8*** it also says, ***Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains.***

These bear an uncomfortably close resemblance to the world we see and hear about today, so time is clearly running out. Don't let it run out for you, don't ignore or reject God's free gift of salvation and His plan and purpose for your life and eternity. The Bible says, ***I tell you now is the time of God's favour, now is the day of salvation. 2 Corinthians 6 verse 2.***

NOW WHAT?

A warm welcome awaits you in your new family now that you have become a Christian, a child of God. It will be really good for you to tell your friends and family. As soon as possible you should become part of a church where you can worship God, get to know Him and enjoy good fellowship with other Christians. You will also need to be baptised. So take this further step and begin to experience life as God intended.

If you have any questions or would simply like to talk about what you have just read, the person who gave you this booklet will be able to help. In any event please feel free to contact us directly at:

Costa Blanca Mission
Apartado de Correos 5234
03186 Torrevieja, Alicante, Espana
Tel/Fax: (0034) 96 571 6601
E-mail: costablancamission@prayersharers.org