

## A SERIES OF DEVOTIONS BASED ON PAUL'S LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN ROME

### MOURN WITH THOSE WHO MOURN

Romans 12:15 “. . . mourn with those who mourn . . .”

After Lazarus died, Jesus went to the village of Bethany, where Lazarus was buried. When Jesus saw Martha and the other mourners weeping, He also wept. He was moved by their grief and also by the fact of Lazarus's death. The astounding thing is that, even though Jesus knew He was going to raise Lazarus from the dead, He chose to participate and share in the grief of Lazarus' family and friends. Jesus truly is a high priest who can “sympathize with our weaknesses” (Hebrews 4:15).

Jesus extended the blessed life to include mourning when He taught in Matthew 5:4, “Blessed are those who mourn.” When Jesus said, “Blessed are those who mourn”, He was truly saying that those who are grieving are not alone or forgotten – they too are worthy of God's love and comfort. At Lazarus' death, Jesus went to Bethany to mourn with Mary, Martha, and the rest who mourned His friend's death to share in their grief.

Mourning can be a good thing. Bringing food to the home of a mourning family is a common way of mourning with them to give them encouragement and bring about healing of their hearts. Christians join the family for the funeral (memorial) service to focus upon the blessings God brought about through the life of the deceased and to celebrate the promise of God of everlasting life through faith in Jesus His Son.

In your mourning always remember these words of St. Paul found in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, “Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve (mourn) like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words.”

Prayer: Lord, fill my heart with compassion, especially for those I know who mourn the passing of a loved one. Lead me to join with them in their mourning to uplift and encourage them through Your Word of eternal victory through faith in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Oh, how blest are they whose toils are ended,  
Who through death have unto God ascended!  
They have arisen From the cares which keep us still in prison.

We are still as in a dungeon living,  
Till oppressed with sorrow and misgiving;  
Our undertakings Are but toils and troubles and heart-breakings.

They meanwhile are in their chambers sleeping,  
Quiet and set free from all their weeping;  
No cross or sadness There can hinder their untroubled gladness.

Christ has wiped away their tears forever;  
They have that for which we still endeavor.  
By them are chanted Songs that ne'er to mortal ears were granted.

Come, O Christ, and loose the chains that bind us;  
Lead us forth and cast this world behind us.  
With You, the Anointed, Finds the soul its joy and rest appointed.  
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