

WHEN PARENTS BURY THEIR CHILDREN

GOLDEN TEXT

“We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed”. (2 Corinthians 4:8, 9)

USEFUL PRACTICE

We should not be indifferent to unexpected death, but neither can we despair like someone who has no hope.

SCRIPTURE READNG

Job 1:13, 16-19

13 One day when Job’s sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother’s house,

16 While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, “The fire of God fell from the heavens and burned up the sheep and the servants, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!”

17 While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, “The Chaldeans formed three raiding parties and swept down on your camels and made off with them. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!”

18 While he was still speaking, yet another messenger came and said, “Your sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother’s house,

19 when suddenly a mighty wind swept in from the desert and struck the four corners of the house. It collapsed on them and they are dead, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!”

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- I) To describe** Job's family;
- II) To reflect** on how to deal with death in the family;
- III) To raise** awareness of how Christians should face family loss.

INTRODUCTION

The patriarch Job was a prosperous man; he had a happy family, and enjoyed reasonable security. His wife was a woman dedicated to their home and everything seemed normal, until the family tragedy hit his household. In this lesson, we are going to study the death of Job's sons and daughters, and how the patriarch's family went through this tragedy. We are going to see that the ordeal of parents burying their children is perhaps the most painful experience of human life and, at the same time, how we can find comfort in the face of such a situation in the Bible, the Word of God.

I - JOB'S FAMILY

1. Who was Job? The patriarch Job was born in the land of Uz, in northern Arabia. Research says that he lived in a time before Moses, even before Abraham, between the 25th and 28th centuries BC. At that time, human longevity was greater than today, which explains the 140-year survival of the patriarch (Job 42:16). More specifically, he was born after the Flood (Job 22:16) and became a rich and prosperous man (Job 1:3; 42:12). God himself testified about his holy character: blameless and upright, a man who fears God and “shuns evil” (Job 1:8).

2. Job's wife. All that is known about Job's wife is recorded in chapter 2 of the book. She was labeled as an insane and ambitious woman because of the loss of all material possessions and the sons and daughters who were killed by a tragedy. Still, Job was the victim of painful sores that disgusted her. However, she played her part as a wife, not abandoning the patriarch. Undoubtedly, Job's wife was losing patience in the face of her husband's trial. Her despair affected her faith, to the point of leading her to declare to

her husband, “curse God and die” (Job 2.9). She had 10 children with Job, and as he was not influenced by his wife's desperate proposal, the patriarch endured everything until God changed his fortune and turned evil into blessing.

3. Job's sons and daughters. Job was attentive to his children's way of life. They held regular social banquets, with lots of foods and drinks. The Bible shows that the father offered sacrifices to God for his children, and prayed for them every day, that is, there was diligence and care of the patriarch for the spiritual welfare of his children (Job 1:4, 5).

II – DEALING WITH DEATH WITHIN THE FAMILY

1. Job and his wife were surprised by the death of their sons and daughters.

Verses 18 and 19 relate the moment when the news of the death of his children reaches Job's house. When everything seemed normal, death surprised them. All their children died. God did not create us to die, but death is a curse arising from sin and only the Lord Jesus was able to nail this curse to the wood of his cross on Calvary (1 Cor. 15:55,56). Thus, we all get perplexed in the face of death and, especially, when it involves someone close to us. Therefore, the Word of God shows us that we must be aware of the reality of death. We have no control over it. However, our trust is in Christ and, because of his resurrection, we can say that death will not keep us in the grave, but it will serve as a means for us to enter eternal life with our Savior (John 5:24).

2. Reasons for the grief in the mourning of Job and his wife. In a sense, Job had a happy family (Job 1:1-5). In this context, Satan challenged his faithfulness and confronted him with the death of his children (1:13-18; 2:1-6). The Bible does not record the burial of Job's sons and daughters, but it certainly happened. It is important to emphasize that a loss like this brings immense sadness. The Word of God says there is a time for everything: There is a time to laugh and there is a time to weep (Eccl. 3:4). Grief and weeping became part of Job's family, once happy and prosperous.

3. Faithfulness to the Lord in the midst of pain. Chapter 1 of Job shows the patriarch's reaction to the tragic news of the death of his children: Job tore his robe, shaved his head, fell to the ground and worshiped the Lord (Job 1:20). Exactly! Job worshiped God. Here, he started the process of accepting what happened before the Lord of life. This biblical passage shows us that the pain of loss is there, but the acceptance process makes mourning more dignified. Therefore, the patriarch could say in an attitude of adoration, “Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will

depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised” (Job 1:21). Still, the biblical text says that Job did not sin at all or charge God with wrongdoing (Job 1:22).

III – CHRISTIANS AND MOURNING

1. Don't blame God. It is not very difficult, in moments of unexpected loss, for human beings to despair and start blaspheming against God. This is not what we learn from Job (cf. Job 1:21, 22). The old patriarch teaches us to trust in God even in the tricky moment of the unexpected death of a loved one. We will not always know the reason for the death of a loved one or some certain suffering. There are mysteries in life that we are not able to unravel on Earth (Deut. 29:29). The book of Job itself does not reveal why human beings suffer. What the book teaches and encourages is to bear suffering with patience, being faithful in the ways of the Lord in the face of undeserved suffering. There will be a day when everything will be made clear before our eyes (1 Cor. 13:12).

2. Experiencing mourning. We learn from the patriarch Job that believers in Jesus should not be indifferent to mourning, because, psychologically, this is not healthy. As human beings, we must manifest the emotions proper to a moment of mourning, such as: weeping, silence, focus. Faced with the pain of the family of Lazarus, our Lord was moved in spirit, felt touched and wept (John 11:35 – NIV).

3. Keep hope. We have seen that it is healthy to express emotions typical of the mourning period, but it is also true that the believer should not despair like someone who has no hope (1 Thess. 4:13). It is necessary to take into account that the mourning period lasts, on average, six months. If, after this time, the person is unable to return to normal activities, it is necessary to seek specialized help, because this is not healthy. This care is consistent with the Christian faith that proclaims the hope of life because our Lord rose on the third day, overcoming death. Therefore, the Word of God brings consolation and comfort to the bereaved soul (2 Cor. 1:3-5). Anytime soon, we will be forever with a loved one who has departed in Christ (1 Thess. 4:14-18).

CONCLUSION

Undoubtedly, death is a very painful experience for human beings. That of a child, then, has a huge psychological overload. The extent of the pain of losing a father and a mother is immeasurable. Therefore, it is important that we take into account this statement of the psalmist: “My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.” (Psalm 73:26 - NIV). In the grieving process, we should not blame God, but keep

our hope in Him firm. The Lord Jesus conquered death and rose on the third day. This is a comforting and, at the same time, hopeful truth. Therefore, at this moment, it is time to trust in God.