

1 The Value of Tragedy

2 Tragedies are Tragic

- Losing a loved one is tragic.
- Whether the loss comes through a romantic breakup, a separation, a divorce or a death, we go through a long and painful grieving process.
- Most of us have experienced at least one tragedy in the course of our lives, and we know how agonizing it is.
- But how about watching a tragedy?
- That's a very different experience.

3 We Humans Love Tragedy

- Consider the classic play King Lear, by William Shakespeare. A vain old man loses everything, including his devoted daughter. Audiences love it!
- Or the blockbuster movie Titanic, which ends with the hero's slipping sadly into the icy waters of the North Atlantic. It's the second-highest-grossing film of all time!
- Journalist Tom Jacobs reports that in inflation-adjusted dollars, three of the top 10 movies in history -- Gone With the Wind, Doctor Zhivago and Titanic -- fall into the tragedy category.
- The point is that while we hate going through tragedy, we love watching one.

4 The Jacobs Report

- Jacobs reports that a team of researchers at Ohio State University have marshaled evidence . . .
 - “that watching tragedy inspires self-reflection, which allows us to refocus on the people in our lives we might otherwise take for granted.”
- They conclude that the melancholy we feel when watching these stories ultimately provokes “pleasant feelings of gratitude.”
- That's right . . . watching a tragedy makes us feel thankful.
- Kind of weird isn't it.

5 Communication Research

- Writing in the journal Communication Research, these cultural scholars say that the sadness we feel during such a story “fosters thoughts about one's close relationships.”
- We naturally contrast our own lives with the miserable fates suffered by tragic characters, and the end result is a feeling of happiness.
- Tragedies can wake us up, remind us of the fragility of life, and inspire us to count our blessings “with regard to close relationships.”
- At the end of the story, we are grateful for what we have.

6 Tragedy in the NT

- In the introduction of John's gospel, the onset of a great tragedy is foretold, He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. (John 1:10-11 NIV)
- The letter to the Hebrews has tragic elements too, and parts of it sound as strange to our 21st-century ears as Shakespeare's King Lear.
- According to Hebrews, Jesus Christ "had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people." (Hebrews 2:17).
- He entered once for all into the Holy Place, not with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption (9:12). Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin (9:22). Therefore Jesus also suffered outside the city gate in order to sanctify the people by his own blood. (13:12).

7 A Crucified Messiah?

- A sacrifice of atonement, with Christ's own blood. A shedding of blood that leads to forgiveness. Sacrifice, blood, suffering, death.
- A sad, sad story. A tragedy is it not? Didn't Jesus cry out, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" (Matt 27:46 NIV)
- The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One." (Luke 23:35 NIV)
- So why does it leave us feeling good instead of bad? Why does it make us feel grateful?

8 Tragedy of the Cross

- He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. (Is 53:3-4 NIV)
- We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. (Is 53:6 NIV)
- Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand. (Is 53:10 NIV)

9 Tragedy of the Cross

- After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light [of life] and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. (Is 53:11 NIV)

- Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. (Is 53:12 NIV)
- So then was Jesus' death on the cross a real tragedy?
- To those who were there and were eyewitnesses it no doubt seemed like one. But those of us today, who know the story should realize that Jesus was doing something for us, which we should be very grateful.

10 Spiritual Transaction

- Richard Mouw, the president of Fuller Theological Seminary, says that “on the cross of Calvary, Jesus did something for us that we could never do for ourselves as sinners.”
- He completed a transaction that no Republican or Democrat could pay.
- By offering his life as the purest of “sin offerings,” sinners whom God has called can through faith become rich to pay their debtors.
- In the John's gospel, Jesus' last words were, “It is finished (teleo).” (John 19:30 NIV)
- The word finish, is in the Greek the word teleo—a word used in commerce meaning “paid in full.”

11 New Covenant

- The new covenant is not based upon the Mosaic Law, with all of its ceremonial laws and observances.
- Instead, the new covenant is based on the continuation of the Abrahamic Covenant, where all people of the earth (Jew or Gentile), will be blessed or cursed on how they bless or curse Abraham or “his seed.”
- The Apostle Paul makes it clear that Abraham's seed was Christ. The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say “and to seeds,” meaning many people, but “and to your seed,” meaning one person, who is Christ. (Gal 3:16 NIV)
- So how we respond to Christ will dictate whether or not we will be blessed or cursed.
 - If by faith we bless Christ by honoring his life and message, we will indeed show the true character of our heart and be blessed and inherit all the blessings that His life has purchased for us.
 - But, if through unbelief, we curse Christ by dishonoring his life and message, we will all show the true character of our heart and be cursed and remain poor.

12 Honoring Christ

- Ways we can by faith honor and bless Christ?
 - Give Him the praise and thanksgiving He deserves.

- Show Him that we are grateful by testifying to others what He has done for you.
- Show Him we trust Him by living out His word in our lives and be holy, and
- In times of personal tragedy, don't give up hope because God might be doing something for our good that at the time we don't understand.

13 Honoring the Body of Christ

- Ways we can by faith honor and bless the Body of Christ?
 - Encourage your brothers and sisters in the faith.
 - When you're faithful in your attendance.
 - When you're faithful in your giving.
 - Call or write when you know they're going through rough times.
 - Serve the body of Christ by volunteering
 - Helping in the function of a service. (Childcare, Greeting Visitors, Ushering, Worship Team, Sound & Video, and Custodial, Car Pooling, and etc.)
 - Host or Lead a small group.
 - Visitation & Outreach
 - Visit Shut-ins and those who are in the hospital or Nursing Homes.
 - Follow-up on visitors that have visited our church.

14 Let us Think!

- As the writer of Ecclesiastes has said, "It is better to go to a house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting, for death is the destiny of every man; the living should take this to heart. Sorrow is better than laughter, because a sad face is good for the heart. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of pleasure." (Ecclesiastes 7:2-4 NIV)
- Whenever something goes wrong, most people . . . stop and take an inventory of their life and what direction they are going in.
- So in this regard, one will find more wisdom at a funeral or at a Kentucky Football game than at Hooters.
- Tragedies are not all bad, as they help us to properly think and evaluate our lives.
- So then as we remember what Jesus went through for us, let us take a good inventory of our lives, as we know and understand that by honoring Him and His Body all blessings will flow.

15 The Memorial of Remembering