

Blue Christmas

Tonight, is not about anyone trying to convince you that joy during **this** holiday season is possible or even necessary. But maybe, just maybe, you will find a small sense of peace. Losing a loved one, losing a job, dealing with an addiction, a devastating illness, or a feeling of being abandoned and alone, can quickly change one's life and often, not for the better. When it happens, is often irrelevant, whether it be yesterday, 6 months ago, or 6 years ago. Everyone experiences grief in their own way. More than any other time of the year, to someone in a state of grief or loss, the Christmas Season can be overwhelming. Tonight, is a chance to see through that grief, but **not** to dismiss it; to feel the love of Jesus for you, and begin to embrace that love. This is a place to feel safe and accepted for who you are and where you find yourself.

Grief is the natural, normal expression of emotional pain. It is **NOT** a destructive process. Unmourned grief, however, **is** a destructive process. C.S. Lewis once said, "No one ever told me that grief felt so like fear." Think about it. It can be very scary to grieve any loss because it deeply involves the heart. Every single one of us faces life transitions, unwanted loss, and new beginnings. It can frighten us to the point of simply not dealing with it. But grieving a loss can allow us to heal because we don't store it or hide it. Pushing away the sadness and fear only works for so long, because eventually, it does come out and not under the most ideal conditions. Losses are inevitable. The degree of loss varies widely depending on the person and the situation. Some are very painful and others we barely notice. The losses can be isolated or cumulative. They may find us unprepared and come unexpectedly. But however, they show up, we are never alone in facing them. The most important take home message tonight is that Jesus loves you, right where you are at. He understands your grief. Henri Nouwen, professor, writer, and theologian wrote about Jesus and mourning. He said; "Jesus, the Blessed One, mourns. Jesus mourns when his friend Lazarus dies (see John 11:33-36); he mourns when he overlooks the city of Jerusalem, soon to be destroyed (see Luke 19:41-44). Jesus mourns over all losses and devastations that fill the human heart with pain. He grieves with those who grieve and sheds tears with those who cry".

Tonight, in this place, our hope is that you will rest in Jesus' love and understanding. We join you in prayer that your journey through grief to inner peace will take root and grow by the grace and peace of God which truly surpasses all our understanding.