

Message: The Force of Death

I would like to take a few moments to share with you some passages from the Word of God. The Bible has much to say about life and death and gives us much comfort on how to deal with it.

In **Psalm 23** David writes: *"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; and Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me."*

If you will allow Him, God is able to comfort you, even in your darkest moments of grief.

Psalm 46:1-11

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Even though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though its waters roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with its swelling there is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God.

God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her, just at the break of dawn. The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved; He uttered His voice, the earth melted. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

Come, behold the works of the Lord, Who has made desolation in the earth. He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariot in the fire.

Be still, and know that I am God, I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth! The Lord of Hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our refuge.

In this passage of Scripture the Psalmist felt the helplessness of his own strength just as possibly many of you have during the past few days and hours. You too, may have identified with this sense of helplessness.

How hopeless we feel when we want life for someone. Most of us would do anything to change the course of events and yet there appears to be little, if anything, we can do to change the events that led to _____ death.

Having suffered the loss of a loved one you may find yourself faced with this same hopelessness. There may not be mountains that are visibly being carried into the sea, but in a very strange way, the earth is trembling, and you seem to find yourselves under the influence of a very powerful force – the force of death.

We know very little about the force of death, a force that very quickly puts us in touch with our limited capacities as human beings. It is in this kind of insecurity that the Psalmist points the way for us.

He exhorts us to listen to the still quiet voice of God, by being still and knowing that God is God and He has everything under control.

There are few times that we need strength and refuge more than when death invades our families and friends. There is no need to panic, no need for frenzied efforts for survival, and certainly no need to give up. Only one act is needed: "Be still and know that God is God." He is with us. Jesus has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

What does the conquering of kingdoms have to do with grief? It has everything to do with it. Grief shakes us at our deepest level. Grief creates fear. Our world may appear to be crumbling and turned upside down, but God is there to help us.

It is in the midst of this kind of trouble and grief that God comes to us and offers us the kind of refuge and strength we need. Jesus said, "*I will not leave you as orphans, I will come to you.*" He not only helps us, but is a present help.

Death does not have to be the destructive and totally mysterious force that we feared it to be. If our hearts are properly prepared death can be an

event we all look forward to and say as the apostle Paul said, "to live is Christ and to die is gain."

Someone noted that our view of death is like a group of mourning caterpillars carrying a cocoon like a corpse. Above there is a beautiful butterfly inside the cocoon staring down in disbelief.

There's a story of a father who was taking his children to the funeral of their mother. They stopped at a traffic light and a large truck sped by, its shadow engulfing them for a moment. Turning to his children, the father asked, "Would you rather have been hit by the truck or its shadow?"

'The shadow, of course,' his children responded. He then responded, "That's what happens when we die and we have allowed the Lord's rod and staff to *comfort* us. Your mother was simply touched only by the shadow of death."

Let's Pray.