

“Tattered Blankets”

CHAPTER 4

THE THREAD OF GRIEF

The Image: A Torn Blanket in the Valley

Grief has a way of tearing through the fabric of life. One day, the blanket of love and security feels whole; the next, it is ripped open by loss. We cling to a single thread, trying to hold ourselves together: memories, regrets, unanswered questions. But one thread cannot cover us.

Grief leaves us exposed, it reminds us that we are vulnerable, that life is fragile, that love always risks pain.

The Story: Hospice Tears

I remember sitting with a woman whose husband of sixty years had just passed. She held his wedding band in her hand like it was the last thread holding her to him. *“I don’t know how to go on,”* she whispered through tears. *“Everything feels empty now.”*

Her grief was honest. She wasn’t pretending, and she wasn’t “strong” in the way people often expect the bereaved to be. She was simply broken, and in that rawness, I thought of Psalm 23: *“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me.”*

The valley is real; the shadow is real; the grief is real, and yet, we are not alone.

The Scripture: We Do Grieve, But Not Without Hope

Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians 4:13, *“We do not grieve like those who have no hope.”* Notice what it does not say, it does not say, *“We do not grieve.”* We do grieve, we ache, we weep, we lament.

But our grief is not hopeless, it is infused with a promise: that the Shepherd walks with us through the valley, that joy will come in the morning, that love is stronger than death.

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The Pastoral Word: Your Own Losses

My wife Amy and I cannot read these scriptures without remembering our son Anthony, whose life ended too soon, I think of the tattered places left in us, places that no sermon or doctrine could ever patch.

And yet, even there, perhaps especially there, we have sensed the Shepherd whispering, *“I am with you; I will restore your souls.”*

Grief is not a thread we must clutch in shame; grief is a valley we walk through, step by trembling step, held by the One who does not let us go.

The Invitation: Honest Lament, Honest Hope

Where are you carrying grief today? A person? A relationship? A dream that died?

- Pause. Name the loss aloud. Let it be as real as it is.
- Pray. Whisper, *“Even though I walk through the valley, You are with me.”*
- Rest. Imagine yourself lying down under a blanket, not a tattered one, but one whole and warm, God’s presence covering you in your sorrow.

Let your tears be prayers; let your grief be held, and let your hope, however faint, be anchored in the One who walks beside you.

Journal Prompts

- What grief am I carrying right now? (Person, dream, relationship, season of life.)
- How does Psalm 23 speak to me in that grief?
- Where can I sense even the faintest hope alongside my grief?

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