

T R A N S I T I O N S

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TERTIARY ROADS

For he shall not much remember the days of his life; because God answereth him in the joy of his heart.
Ecclesiastes 5:20

tertiary - of third rank, importance or value

When snow falls and accumulation is high, news broadcasts begin to speak of tertiary road closures. Weather has to be serious and hazardous due to snow or heavy rains to hear about these third ranked arteries. To some travelers, these roads may be routine pathways to home or work; to others they are ancillary routes rarely taken. But there are times when new roads must be taken for these are the only passages there are. Tertiary roads are linked to every meaningful relationship we know in life. Whether we are ready for them or not, we embark on these roads when grief enters relationships.

Every life knows endings. Endings come as a result of choices we make, and they come due to circumstances imposed. Endings come due to abrupt deaths and departures for which there is no preparation. Endings are inevitable. The question that eventually gets answered (over a lifetime) is how and when endings meet us. When they do, they put us on paths unfamiliar, emotional, unwanted, and lonesome. Yet, when grief leads us on these paths, grief offers certain points of worth that could not have been on primary or secondary roads.

Scripture (as quoted above) speaks of a joy in the heart; a joy that comes from a quick passage of time because life has been busy being lived while the heart was recording the living. In an odd way, grief takes us on a mental and emotional tour of a particular season of our lives that held someone or something of value. We may not even realize how much someone meant to us because we were so happy living life. When a goodbye comes, it hurts to review and to remember. That is the underside of love. But it is still part of love. The ache of goodbye is the heart's emphasis on the strength of that connection to you, to me. Even though it is painful to remember moments that cannot be relived, it is grace to have had them at all. It is grace to hope to know of other joys to come.

God is a promise-keeper. THE promise-keeper. Whatever He said shall be, shall be. He promised in Romans 8:28 that *all things work together for good for those who love God and are called according to His purpose*. All things. That includes grief. That includes loss. I take God at His Word. I pray that you take Him at His Word. He assures us that the tertiary roads we rarely yet of necessity must travel, are roads on which He shall accompany us. They are paths through which He knows the way, and shall bring us through by the integrity and strength of His love.

Lord of Life, You know the way through all the endings and their adjacent emotional roadways. Grief hurts yet we must travel that path. In Your steady manner, You show us the way and shield us with Your love as we walk those weak steps. Thank You, Lord, for Thy precious companionship. Thank You for the gift of life we are granted to share with others. What we exchange is a gift that continues to give exponentially beyond a goodbye; in You, Lord Jesus, everything lives and flourishes forevermore. In Thee, Lord Christ, Amen.