

The House of Mourning

"It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting; for this is the end of all men, and the living will lay it to heart." Ecclesiastes 7:2

If you want an accurate estimation of life, you must face it at its worst. When you face life like it is, you prepare yourself for difficulty, for you realize when it comes, you are not alone, an isolated case. For this reason, you have opportunity to learn more going to a funeral than to a wedding, to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting. When you face life like it is, you develop empathy for others. When you yourself experience tragedy, it alters your character, for good or for bad. Time in the house of mourning, as you comfort others, prepares you for your own encounter with grief.

Angry people resign themselves to the hurts of life. Blaming God, others, or life itself, they say, "I cannot avoid life's pain. The cruel experiences that crash around my head destroy any hope of happiness. Don't blame me for being cynical; life is a sick joke." Such people learn nothing from the house of mourning. Instead of softening their character, making them more empathetic and thus able to minister to others, tragedy has the opposite effect in their lives. They refuse to "lay to heart" the lesson God intended that they learn.

Solomon says that this life is the seedtime for eternity. No one escapes the "grim reaper." Mortality is 100 percent. God brings grief into your life to sober and prepare you, not to discourage you. God sees "the end from the beginning,"¹ and He invites you to the house of mourning so that you can do the same thing.

¹ Isaiah 46:10