



Hello Friends,

Video 5 link: <https://www.wevideo.com/view/1625439007>

Yes, we're feeling a number of different griefs.

For one, as we edge into these last few weeks before Holy Week and Easter I can't help but notice that one of the things I am grieving right now is the hope and anticipation, that planning for and participating in shared services and Easter service.

Perhaps now is the time to get creative with our worship services, but then I realize worship is more than Sunday mornings, more than singing and sings alone. And like you, I feel the world has changed and is changing and it has and will do so. Change is inevitable, but with change comes also the loss of the familiar. We know this is not temporary, but right now we don't want to feel that way. Yet we realize things will be different, always have been and always will. Just as going to the airport is forever different from how it was before 9/11, things will change. The loss of normalcy as we got to know it; the fear of economic toll; the loss of connection. This is hitting us and we're grieving. Collectively. We are not used to this kind of collective grief all around us.

You said we're feeling more than one kind of grief?

Perhaps we're feeling anticipatory grief. Anticipatory grief is that feeling we get about what the future holds when we're uncertain. And it is no longer just I but everyone has similar feelings. Usually the feeling centers on loss of control. It is unlike the sudden feeling when someone gets a dire diagnosis but it is more like when we have the normal thought that we'll lose a parent someday. But we don't like these normal feelings and so we avoid the topic, both in our thoughts and in our conversation, and yet we deep down know they are their within us. This avoidance left us unprepared to the eminent feelings we have right now.

Yet anticipatory grief is a more broadly imagined future. There is a storm, not just coming, it's there, but it looks very differently than we thought. There's something bad out there, a virus, and that changed more than we imagined. This kind of grief is confusing to us. We know something bad is happening, we can see it, but we can't control it. This breaks our sense of safety. We all are feeling that loss of safety. I think we've collectively lost our sense of general safety because we all feel similar. Individually or as smaller groups, people have felt this before. But all together, this is truly new. We were grieving on a micro level all the time, as individuals or in small groups but now we grieve on a macro level, grief is everywhere.

What can individuals do to manage all this grief?

Understanding the stages of our grief is a start. But whenever we talk about the stages of grief, we must remind ourselves that the stages aren't linear and may not happen in this order. In other words what you see here is not a map but it provides some scaffolding for this unknown world.

There's denial, which we saw a lot of early on: *This virus won't affect us.*

There's anger: *You're making me stay home and taking away my activities.*

bargaining: *Okay, if I social distance for two weeks everything will be better, right?*

There's sadness: *I don't know when this will end.*

And there's acceptance. *This is happening; I have to figure out how to proceed.*

Acceptance, as you might imagine, is where the silver lining lies. We find control in acceptance. *I can wash my hands. I can keep a safe distance. I can learn how to work virtually. I can pick up the phone and engage in a conversation. But acceptance is just that, the silver lining. There is more.*

Let's go back to what is called anticipatory grief. Unhealthy anticipatory grief is really anxiety, and that's the feeling of losing control. Our mind begins to show us images. My parents getting sick. We see the worst case scenarios. That's our minds being protective. Our goal is not to ignore those images or to try to make them go away — your mind won't let you do that and it can be painful to try and force it. The goal is to **find balance in the things we're thinking**. That

is one reason why we need to be renewed in our thinking. Anticipatory grief is the mind going to the future and imagining the worst.

Breathe. Breathe in deeply and breathe out deeply. Realize that in the present moment, nothing you've anticipated has happened. In this moment, you're okay. You have food. You are not sick. Life goes on, although differently.

You can also think about how to **let go of what you can't control**. What your neighbor is doing is out of your control. What is in your control is staying six feet away from them and washing your hands often.

But perhaps more important than anything you can do is to know...God as your Father who has blessed you, not just for your own sake but also for the sake of those around you. In fact, it's a good time to **show compassion**. Everyone will have different levels of fear and grief and it manifests in different ways. One of my daughters got very snippy with me the other day and I thought, *That's not like my daughter; that's how they're dealing with this. I'm seeing her fear and anxiety*. So be patient with one another and with yourself. **Think about who someone usually is and not who they seem to be in this moment**. Later she came to me; "Sorry that I snapped at you."

One particularly troubling aspect of this pandemic is the open-endedness of it.

This is a temporary state, although some changes that came with it will be long lasting and even permanent. However, the precautions we're taking are the right ones. History tells us that. This is survivable. We will survive. **This is a time to overprotect but not overreact**. But in all our reaction, in all our protection we can know that we are here to be a blessing. The neighbor of my mother (87 years of age) brought her a freshly cooked meal to her door. She, although not a Christian, became a blessing to my mother and even to me, being 6000 km away.

And that is what comes after the silver lining, meaning. I believe we will find meaning in this time, in our grieving by being a blessing. I do believe we find light in those times. Even now people are realizing they can connect through technology. In our grief we do not need to stop at acceptance, there is meaning in those darkest hours, because God our Father is there with us. In these times He is not as remote as we may feel or think. Realize you can use your phones not just for long conversations, but also for encouragement. I believe we will continue to find meaning now and when this is over. For one, God our Father has not changed and neither did His will for us.

From your friend **Manfred**

I'm indebted to Scott Berniato and his article "That discomfort you are feeling is grief."

<https://hbr.org/2020/03/that-discomfort-youre-feeling-is-grief?fbclid=IwAR3VGaMcnPRSpzW8tRFYrQdtuj5nAY1yg1YwmVouSOXhhWJnc9WehveJf1k>

Church of God at Camrose • 780 672 3461 • ccog@camrosechurchofgod.ca • 4722 55

Street Camrose, Alberta T4V 2B6

Don't want these kinds of emails? [Unsubscribe.](#)