

and about how they can be saved through Him, you do not know then whether God brought them in their last minutes of life to turn to Him and to be saved. You do not know and so you can rest in your knowledge that Jesus Christ works all things in accordance with His holy will. You do not need to continue to sorrow if you have done your part while they were living.

But it is like a wound. It takes time to heal. It is good to be aware of this and to know we can expect it. As Paul said to the Thessalonians we should not sorrow like others do. He did not say we should not sorrow. We can't help sorrowing when we lose a loved one. But we don't sorrow like others do because we know that if they knew Christ they are in the presence of the Lord. So I think it is good for each of us to be ready for that experience and to realize that for most of us it is something we have to do through and that it takes time to heal.

The third area I'd like to speak about is the area of the pastor. Now we are all if we know Christ to be pastors in a sense. Because it is His will that everyone who knows Him should be His instrument to have a part in pastoring His flock. Everyone who knows Christ has a part in making Christ known, or should have, must have if he truly knows Christ. Everyone who knows Christ must have a part in helping to lead the people of Christ; in helping them in their joys and in their sorrows; in helping them to move forward and to grow in their knowledge of Christ.

Particularly if you are in the pastorship of a church you will have many experience, though you will have some no matter what your station in life where you have friends who are in terrible anguish with misery to go through in the death of loved ones.

In such a case I think one reason why God gives most of us this experience is to prepare us so we can help others. To prepare us so we can bring them to an understanding. Oh how easy it is with someone whom you feel is sorrowing, is in misery because of the death of a loved one, to feel Oh we must not mention it, we must not refer to it. That will bring the feeling of misery on their part.

I remember hearing how one woman told me that when her mother died, for the next few months everybody she was with was so careful not to refer to her mother. Yet I just longed to hear them tell me about how they had known her and what a blessing she had been to them. Paul said we should rejoice with those that rejoice and mourn with those that mourn. I think God wants us to have a special preparation to help those who are going through this particular misery. Help them and mourn with them and share with them their problems. To bring them the assurance that Jesus Christ knows all things and controls everything in their lives and has a purpose in it, and though that does not end the misery it makes it easier to understand and time will heal the wounds and misery.

About 1919 we had the great flu epidemic in this country. Shortly before that, a few months before it, a young minister was in a church in Altoona, PA. This was his first church. He had been there a few months, and he had a little daughter born and his wife died.