

## A Christmas Message for the Mourning

By Kevin Keelen

The holidays can be excruciating for those who are grieving. As Christmas approaches, I think it may be helpful for those of us who grew up celebrating it, to try to remember exactly what this holiday, or *Holy Day*, is really all about. So much of its true meaning has been covered in glitz and tinsel, in packaging and presents. But Jesus was born into our world to bring *Glad Tidings*, a message of *Comfort and Joy*, the *Good News* of everlasting life.

That's why Christmas makes no sense without Easter, if Jesus had not risen from the dead, we would have never looked back to celebrate his birthday.... And so Christmas is about God coming into the world as one of us, and when he did, he didn't cheat... He experienced all the things we do- family, friendship, hardship, suffering, laughter, tears, loss, grief, and the final human experience- death.

We know that the cross is not the end of the story for Jesus, and our faith clearly tells us that the death of all of our loved ones is not the end of their journey either. - They are Home. They are with God. They are now in the Light, -the fullness of God's Love. This is what Christmas is really all about. It's not about the 'feel good' nostalgia of holiday cheer... it's about something so much deeper.

Even at Christmas we are an Easter people- we believe in the MORE- in what is above the surface, on the other side. We believe that we will be together again. God has promised us that. Its why God came into the world at Christmas, its why he died on the cross, - so that we all would know forever and for always - death is not the end, it's the doorway to our true home, which is forever with God and all those we love. That is the Christmas promise, that is the Easter promise, that is God's promise to us all.

**The Promise:** John 14:13 "Jesus said to his disciples, I am going to prepare a place for you, and I will come back again to take you to myself, so that where I am, you also may be...."

*So, when you see the lights this year, try to look at them not so much with the pain and sadness that the holidays may bring, but with the promise that Jesus came into our world to deliver.*

### **A HOLIDAY PRAYER FOR THOSE WHO MOURN**

We come to you Lord with broken hearts as we grieve the loss of those we love.

During the holiday season this burden is heavy to carry.

Please help us to find new life amidst the pain,

so that we can find joy again, and smile and laugh once more,

so that we can cherish the memories we have created,

and so that we can have gratitude

for all our loved ones who now abide with you in Paradise.

Loving God, pierce our darkness with your Divine Light,

and as we see the lights of the season around us everywhere,

help us to know that our loved ones are with you in Light and Love

and with us always,

Amen.

**My Christmas Card for Those Who are Grieving this Christmas**

**God bless us everyone!**

**Peace & Serenity,**

**Kevin**

