

# Mourning Over the Past

by William MacDonald

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*We must stop mourning over the past and get on with the work of the present, recognizing that God's program has not failed and that He has a better plan than ours.*

**Scripture:** 1 Samuel 16:1, 2 Samuel 12:23, Psalm 30:5, Ecclesiastes 3:1-4, Isaiah 43:18-19, Matthew 6:34, John 16:22, Romans 8:28, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Philippians 3:13-14

**Topics:** "Embracing Change", "Moving On"

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## Description

William MacDonald emphasizes the necessity of moving on from mourning over the past, as illustrated by God's command to Samuel to stop grieving for Saul, whom He had rejected as king. Samuel's prolonged sorrow hindered his ability to fulfill God's plan, which included anointing David as Saul's successor. MacDonald draws parallels to our own lives, where we may mourn lost opportunities, relationships, or dreams, but stresses that while mourning is natural, it should not paralyze us from embracing the present and future. He encourages a timely recovery from grief, reminding us that God has a purpose beyond our disappointments.

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## Transcript

"How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel." 1 Samuel 16:1

There comes a time in life when we must stop mourning over the past and get on with the work of the present.

God had rejected Saul from being king. The action was final, irreversible. But Samuel had difficulty in accepting it. He had been closely associated with Saul and he now wept to see his hopes disappointed. He continued to mourn a loss that would never be retrieved. God said, in effect, "Quit mourning. Go out and anoint Saul's successor. My program has not failed. I have a better man than Saul to step onto the stage of Israel's history."

We would like to think that Samuel not only learned the lesson for himself but that he passed it on to David, who took Saul's place as king. At any rate, David showed that he had learned the lesson well. As long as his baby was dying, he fasted and mourned, hoping that God would spare the child. But when the infant died, he bathed, changed his clothes, went to the Tabernacle to worship, then ate a meal. To those who questioned his realism, he said, "Now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him but he shall not return to me" (2 Sam. 12:23).

This has a voice for us in our Christian life and service. Sometime it may happen that a ministry might be wrenched away from us and given to someone else. We grieve over the death of an avenue of service.

It may be that a friendship or a partnership is severed, and that, as a result, life seems empty and flat. Or that we have been cruelly disappointed by someone who was very dear to us. We mourn the death of a valued relationship.

Or it may be that some lifelong dream is shattered or some ambition is frustrated. We mourn the death of a noble aspiration or vision.

There is nothing wrong about mourning, but it should not be prolonged to the extent that it cripples our effectiveness in meeting the challenges of the hour. E. Stanley Jones said he made it a point to "recover within the hour" from the grief and blows of life. An hour may not be long enough for most of us, but we must not be forever inconsolable over circumstances that cannot be changed.

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