

We Are Better Together

David Flatt

By now, most have heard about the tragic death of Caleb Amador. He passed away last Tuesday. Times like these turn our lives upside down. For the living, death is disorienting. Yet, the Christians at this congregation responded. Upon hearing the news, some immediately went to the Amadors. Prayers were offered by Christians all over the world.

Also, our elders organized a special worship service that was conducted last Wednesday evening. John Coleman read Scripture and offered a prayer. Josh Campbell led the songs, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" and "Blest Be the Tie." Jack Eastham and Matt Heaton offered prayers. Steven Martin and I offered remarks.

As sad as the evening was, we were blessed by being together. We worshiped together. We cried together. We truly encouraged one another. We are better together. We are stronger together. We were blessed by the God of all comfort through our bonds of faith and family.

The following is a statement from the Amador family as well as the remarks I made last Wednesday.

To Our Fry Road Family

Ruben & Minnie Amador

It is with much pain and suffering that we inform our esteemed brethren at Fry Road that Caleb Coby Amador passed at home unexpectedly yesterday, August 15th. Caleb was found unresponsive yesterday afternoon several hours after his passing. We are deeply saddened. Caleb had just turned 17 on April 5th. He was looking forward to his final year at Cy-Ranch and holding on to a part-time job after school. Caleb was a Christian.

Although several main questions remain unanswered regarding the cause or reason for Caleb's death, nothing known or unknown will bring about a different outcome. Our Caleb stepped into eternity. God will surely have mercy on Caleb's soul – just as God has promised to all His creation.

We remain confident that God will see us through today just as He has walked us through similar problems in the past. Your prayers are accepted and requested by the immediate and extended Amador family. We know that we can count on you, our Fry Road family, as we walk through the hallways of life and death.

In the love of Christ,

Ruben, Minnie, Ciara and Catia Amador

Remarks about Psalm 88 by David Flatt

O LORD, God of my salvation; I cry out day and night before you. Let my prayer come before you; incline your ear to my cry! For my soul is full of troubles, and my life draws near to Sheol. I am counted among those who go down to the pit; I am a man who has no strength, like one set loose among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, like those whom you remember no more, for they are cut off from your hand. You have put me in the depths of the pit, in the regions dark and deep. Your wrath lies heavy upon me, and you overwhelm me with all your waves. Selah. You have caused my companions to shun me; you have made me a horror to them. I am shut in so that I cannot escape; my eye grows dim through sorrow. Every day I call upon you, O LORD; I spread out my hands to you. Do you work wonders for the dead? Do the departed rise up to praise you? Selah. Is your steadfast love declared in the grave, or your faithfulness in Abaddon? Are your wonders known in the darkness, or your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness? But I, O LORD, cry to you; in the morning my prayer comes before you. O LORD, why do you cast my soul away? Why do you hide your face from me? Afflicted and close to death from my youth up, I suffer your terrors; I am helpless. Your wrath has swept over me; your dreadful assaults destroy me. They surround me like a flood all day long; they close in on me together. You have caused my beloved and my friend to shun me; my companions have become darkness.

The Psalms give us a language to express to God the emotions of our hearts. Our hearts react to our surroundings and experiences. Sometimes we are awed by the beauty we see in the world. Sometimes we are overwhelmed by the goodness of God. Sometimes we are crushed by sorrow. Tonight, we are filled with sadness, confusion, and even anger.

The eighty-eighth Psalm gives us a language to express sadness, confusion, and anger. This psalm is a lamentation: anguish directed to God. The psalmist cries out to God that his soul is full of trouble. He has no strength. He feels helpless and alone. Darkness has become his only companion.

This is one of the most haunting chapters in the Bible. Perhaps we are even surprised by its darkness. This is not how we typically expect people in the Bible to react to tragedy. Yet, this reaction is completely natural and human. So, to those feeling these emotions tonight, know this: how you feel is ok. It is your time to mourn and our time to help bear your weight.

But there is another aspect of this Psalm that must not be overlooked. This psalm, like all psalms of lament, is born of faith that God will make all things right. In the opening lines, the psalmist cries out to his Lord, the God of his salvation! This is the ray of hope that comes bursting through the darkness.

We must never forget that our God is a God of salvation. He comes to our rescue. The God of our salvation has sent us a Savior. Jesus can save us from our sins. He can transform us

into something beautiful, graceful, and strong. By the power of His love, He can defy all the odds life may stack against us.

Even as we grieve, Jesus can help us in times of confusion and despair. You see, Jesus knew darkness. He knew disappointment and grief. He was a man of Sorrows. Therefore, He can give us grace and mercy in our times of need.

As we cry out in the darkness, may we never lose sight of our bright glimmer of Hope: our God of salvation. We must press on. We must live in faith that one day God will make everything right. Tears will be dried. Joy made unending. And the great circle of God's family will be unbroken.