

Current

A Good Death

DEUTERONOMY 34:1-12

SESSION 6.43



☐ *Prepare in Advance*

Before the Session

- Have the *Bible Background Video* ready to view.
- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Review the article about Brittany Maynard's choice to die (links are provided on this session's webpage).

☐ *Introduce*

Invite the group to look at the picture of Brittany Maynard's wedding (seen in the article). Have them describe what this picture brings to mind. Perhaps words like promises, hope and future come to mind. Why? Then, explain that this young woman is facing a terminal illness and will soon face death.

Say: Death is present in the text today. So are promise, hope and future. Listen for how you hear these ideas.

Have someone read Deuteronomy 34:1-12 out loud. Show the *Bible Background Video*.

☐ *Discuss*

Invite discussion by saying something like: It's likely that this topic can evoke a variety of emotions; many people have experienced the loss of family or friends because of terminal illness. As the group responds to this story, be mindful that experiences like that can make emotions raw. Sensitivity and thoughtful words are essential here. Brittany Maynard is a 29 year old who has lived "a fearless life – running half marathons, traveling through Southeast Asia for a year and even climbing Mount Kilimanjaro." She is now making plans for her death. On Nov. 1, Maynard, who in April was given six months to live, intends to end her own life with "medication prescribed to her by her doctor – and she wants to make it clear it is NOT suicide." Her physical state is becoming quickly altered due to the disease, which is not treatable.

☐ *Ask*

- Brittany's youth and daring spirit are in stark contrast to a terminal illness. What stands out to you about the contrast between her life and her illness?
- Facing death is something we don't often like to discuss. How often is facing death something you

hear about in faith communities? Should we talk about this more? Why?

- Think about promises unfulfilled. Think about Moses not experiencing the fullness of the promised land. Does the impact of missing out on the promised land seem tragic to you? Why?
- Think about Brittany's life, the fullness of her experiences and the likely end of her life at a young age. What emotions might her family experience? Have you experienced something like this?
- Brittany said what goes through her mind when facing death is the things that need to be said to family and friends. A sense of time and what's important weighs heavily on her and her family. How does this kind of knowledge change what we do and say with those we love?
- Nikki referenced a song that this text brings to mind. What other songs of faith does this story or text bring to mind for you? What truths do these songs offer?
- Brittany's situation is tragic at present, whether or not her life ends on her terms or not. Think about how hope is present in situations like Brittany's and many like her. What role do we have to play in offering hope, comfort and community in tragic moments like there.

☐ *Pray*

Pray together to end the session, asking God to help us offer hope, care and compassion when death and tragedy are very present.

By Erin Hall

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