

## **Processing Grief from the perspective of Jesus the “Man of many Sorrows”**

*He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; (Isaiah 53:3a ESV)*

Jesus, being acquainted with grief, has good news: “Blessed are those that mourn for they will be comforted” (Matthew 5:4). The comfort God wants to give us is not by teaching us to distract ourselves from the pain or convincing ourselves that we shouldn’t be sad, but it is through the process of grieving.

Jesus models at least 6 important aspects of processing grief.

1. **Grief is inevitable...** Every Major Change in Life Brings has the potential to introduce grief. Grief is a normal and natural response to any loss or major change. Death, divorce, children transitioning into adulthood (leaving home), moving to a new town, the loss of a job, leaving a church; all have the capacity to introduce a sense of loss and therefore bring grief. Even good things can lead us into grief. Getting married, having kids, or a new promotion, while bringing joy, can also trigger grief in way of the loss of freedom. We observe Jesus experiencing grief in the Gospels when He wept over a death (John 11:35), when he triumphantly road into Jerusalem (Mark 11) and when He questioned God on the cross (Mark 15:34). Grief is a common experience. Accepting it as such is imperative.
2. **Don’t Deny the Pain...** Grief ignored can store up pain for another day. Unresolved grief can obviously lead to depression, but it can also be an entry point for sickness and disease. Our body’s are not designed to carry grieve; we need to deal with it. God designed the grief process for us to deal with the changes in life. God created seasons in life. There is a time for mourning and a time to dance (Ecclesiastes 3:4). Christians feel a need to defend God, which makes the griever feel guilty so that they are not allowed to grieve. God cares more about you than His reputation. Jesus modeled this for us when on the night he was betrayed he revealed that his soul was “exceedingly sorrowful” (Matt. 26:38). Jesus was honest with God and honest with those closest to him.
3. **Allow Yourself to Feel...** Grief is an opportunity from God to identify with the “man of sorrows”. Jesus said that grief, like childbirth, has the potential to pave the way to a greater sense of joy (Jn 16: 20-23). Grief is not just sadness. There is pain, anger, relief, hope, and even joy. But first, one must allow for

honesty with regard to feelings. Grief is not something to be cured or fixed. It is a process.

4. **Invite Jesus into the Grief...** Grief is designed by God to heal the broken-hearted therefore He wants to enter into the process. Jesus is described as a great high priest who can fully sympathize with humanity (Hebrews 4:14-16). Job's friends were good at empathy, but short on compassion and sympathy during his time of loss and grief. Jesus will sit with us and ultimately walk us out of sorrow. He is intentional about always working out all things for the good of those who love Him (Romans 8:28).
5. **Choose to Believe God's Perspective...** Jesus said that He is the truth and the truth will set us free, but what many forget is that He precedes this statement with a condition, "if you hold to my teaching" (John 8:31-32). Neither hearing nor studying the words of Christ set us free, we must make a choice to believe them. Truth is whatever Jesus says is true. Understanding does not necessarily precede belief in Christian spirituality, but belief is the pathway toward an accurate perspective (John 6:69). Therefore whenever you experience pain in your grief, get Jesus' view of it and choose to believe it. This is the path to intimacy with Christ and the fellowship of his sufferings (Philippians 3:10).
6. **Seek Others to help you bear up the burden of your loss and bring You Hope...** Admittedly, the disciples (Peter, James and John) sort of blew this opportunity on the night Jesus was betrayed. However, Jesus was strengthened by an angel sent from God (Luke 22:43). The Christian life is not intended to be lived in isolation. It may feel like our natural desire to self-heal, but it is ultimately the enemy's goal to isolate us. Both the devil and God know that we are vulnerable alone. We need each other to speak God's truth in difficult times. Alone we are susceptible to demonic lies about our self, God, others, and life in general. Depression and suicidal thoughts fester in isolation. The body of Christ is a gift to us. A brother is born for adversity (Proverbs 17:17). Christians are to be ever ready to bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2). If you are in grief, be around other believers who can support you with their faith. Resist the temptation to feel as if you are a burden, it is the joy of believers to be in use for our Lord, and you will be called on to comfort others in the future (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).