



“Jesus Was Deeply Moved In His Spirit And Troubled”

The Significance of Grief

John 11:33

Introduction

John 11 is the account of Lazarus who was sick, who'd died and was raised to life.

John 11 is the only account in the Gospels of Lazarus being raised from the dead.

Last week we discovered the Significance of Courage.

Five Lessons We Learn About Courage

It takes Courage to Ask for Help

It takes Courage to Face Persecution

It takes Courage to Follow Jesus

It takes Courage to Endure Criticism

It takes Courage to share the Good News about Jesus

Luke 9:26 “For whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and that of the Father and the holy angels. CSB

Today as we continue to examine **John 11** we are going to discover the Significance of Grief.

Scripture

“When Jesus saw her crying, and the Jews who had come with her crying, he was deeply moved in his spirit and troubled.” CSB

Quote Of The Day

“So it’s true; when all is said and done, grief is the price we pay for love.” — E.A. Bucchianeri

Grief is a feeling of deep sorrow, especially caused by a significant loss:

The death of a dearly loved person

Our health

Dreams, hopes and ambitions

Job

Divorce

Empty nest syndrome

Retirement

Author Edgar Jackson describes grief in a powerful but touching way. Grief is a young widow trying to raise her three children, alone. Grief is the man so filled with shocked uncertainty and confusion that he strikes out at the nearest person. Grief is a mother walking daily to a nearby cemetery to stand quietly and alone a few minutes before going about the tasks of the day. She knows that a part of her is in the cemetery, just as part of her is in her daily work. Grief is silent, knife-like terror and sadness that comes a hundred times a day, when you start to speak to someone who is no longer there. Grief is the emptiness that comes when you eat alone after eating with another for many years. Grief is teaching yourself to go to bed without saying good night to the one who has died. Grief is the helpless wishing that things were different when you know they are not and never will be again. Grief is a whole cluster of adjustments, apprehensions, and uncertainties that strike life in its forward progress and make it difficult to redirect the energies of life. Citation: Robert Slater, Moscow, Idaho. Leadership, Vol. 5, no. 1.

John 11 17-44 describes the grief people experienced when Lazarus died.

John 11:33 there is one small phrase and one word we need to understand.

“**deeply moved**” comes from the Greek word “**Embrimaomai**” meaning an intense feeling of concern, to have strong feelings about something or someone.

“**troubled**” comes from the Greek word “**Tarasso**” meaning to cause great mental and emotional distress.

John 11 teaches us that Jesus who was fully God and fully man felt the emotions of Mary, Martha, the Jews who had come to comfort them and He grieved the death of Lazarus.

In **John 11** we discover six lessons about grief:

Grief Begins With Shock

Grief Is Real

Grief Is Difficult

Grief Is Personal

Grief Will Test Our Faith

Hope In Jesus Is Greater than Grief

Lesson One:

Grief Begins With Shock vv.1-3

Now a man was sick—Lazarus from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ² Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair, and it was her brother Lazarus who was sick.

³ So the sisters sent a message to him: “Lord, the one you love is sick.”

CSB

The word translated “**sick**” in **John 11:3** comes from the Greek word “**Astheneo**” meaning to suffer from a debilitating illness or disease. To experience pain or weakness, to be helpless and in dire need.

There are at least five stages of shock:

Anticipatory grief— Grief before the loss
Denial/ Disbelief
Outbursts of emotion
Disappointment
Frustration/ Anger

Lesson Two:

Grief Is Real vv.17-19

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. ¹⁸ Bethany was near Jerusalem (less than two miles away). ¹⁹ **Many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them about their brother.** CSB

It is natural to experience grief when dealing with the loss of someone we love.

As we deal with our grief there are two issues to consider:

The emotional Process of Grief

Those who are grieving have much to process.

Feelings of despair, fear, helplessness, guilt and anger are common.

A grieving person may yell to the sky, obsess about death, lash out at loved ones, or cry for hours on end. Those who are grieving need reassurance that what they feel is normal.

Everyone expresses grief in their own way.

The Preparation for a new normal

After experiencing the loss of a loved one, we quickly discover the world around us doesn't stop, it keeps moving. That seems cold and harsh, but it is true. Often times in the loss of a loved one the memorial service brings some sense of closure, and with closure comes a new normal.

The new normal is different, and not pleasant, but none the less it is the new normal that we must live in.

Lesson Three:

Grief Is Difficult v.19, 31

Grief is difficult for those who are experiencing grief.

The Shock, the Reality, the Acceptance, and Depression that comes with losing a loved one is very difficult.

Grief isn't over in a few days, weeks or months— grief can last for years, even the rest of our life.

Grief is difficult for those who seek to comfort those who are grieving.

There are two words we need to pay attention to— comfort and consoling.

The words translated “**comfort v.19 and consoling v.31**” come from the same Greek word “**paramytheomai**” meaning to give comfort, to encourage, to provide relief from distress. To console, to listen to and empathize with the suffering of another.

Grief isn't something that is fixed by an eloquent phrase, or mindless cliché. In the initial phase of grief, there is nothing we can say to make grief even a little bit better.

What NOT Say To Someone Who Is Grieving

By Litsa Williams

“I know how you feel.” — A griever thinks: *No you don't*

No two people are the same. No two losses are the same. It is useless comparing grief. I get it, you just want them to feel like you relate. But at this moment they cannot imagine anyone knows how they feel.

“He/she is in a better place now” — A griever thinks: Who cares!? I want him/her to be here.

Though many people find comfort in the belief their loved one is in a better place, immediately following a loss is not always the right time to say it.

“It will get easier” — A griever thinks: That seems impossible or I don't want to forget the person I love.

Realistically, things probably will get easier. However, when someone is in the unimaginably deep, dark hole of grief, they don't want to hear it will get easier.

“At least she/he lived a long life” — A griever thinks: Is that supposed to make me miss him/her less?

Living a good, long life does not diminish the pain of the loss. Regardless of the deceased's age, the hurt and pain may be unbearable.

“It was God's will”, “God has a plan”, or “Everything happens for a reason” — A griever thinks: Why is this God's plan? Why would God make us suffer? I don't care if its God's plan, God's plan has wrecked my life.

Though many take comfort in a greater plan, a death can cause many people to question God, their understanding of God's omni-benevolence, and their faith in general. This can be the case even for people who have

extremely deep faith. For those who don't, it can feel distant and alienating. So, better safe than sorry – steer clear.

“God never gives us more than we can handle” – A griever thinks: Oh yeah? How do you know? Oh yeah? Easy for you to say. Oh yeah?

“Don't cry” or “You need to be strong now” – A griever thinks: I can't stop. I want to cry. I need to cry. I can't be strong right now.

We all grieve in our own way – There is no right or wrong way, and however someone is grieving they should feel supported to cry as much or as little as they want to, and not feel they are being judged for it.

“It could be worse. I know this person who . . .” A griever thinks: I don't care! I am in the worst pain imaginable, why are you talking to me about someone else?

Grief is not a time for comparisons. Each person's grief is unique and excruciatingly painful. Knowing someone has it 'worse' does not change the severity of the pain and it doesn't make someone feel this loss any less.

Ten Ways To Help A Grieving Friend by Kriston Wenzel, LBSW, CT

How to Help a Friend Who is Grieving

- 1. Give your friend permission to grieve.**
- 2. Accept the person's feelings.**
- 3. Encourage the person to accept help from others**
- 4. Do something for your grieving friend**
- 5. Encourage the grieving person to verbalize his or her feelings out loud**
- 6. Don't worry about saying the right thing**
- 7. Listen without judgment**
- 8. Avoid using clichés**
- 9. Encourage the person to reminisce**
- 10. Remember the value of presence**

10 Ways to Help a Grieving Friend

by Kriston Wenzel, LBSW, CT

We struggle to know what to do when a friend loses a loved one through death. We want to say the right thing and hope in so doing, we'll be able to "take the pain away." However, that's not how grief works. There are no "right words," and the pain cannot "go away."

There is no work-around to grieving—you can't go under it, you can't go over it, you must go through it. The grief journey can be difficult for both the grieving person and his or her friends who bear witness to their friend's grief.

Grief is a normal and natural response to loss, including death of a loved one, job loss, divorce, loss of a home, a move or any other losses we may face in life.

Working through grief involves accepting the loss, experiencing the pain of that loss and creating a different bond or relationship with the person you have lost.

How to Help a Friend Who is Grieving

- 1. Give your friend permission to grieve.** Grief is the hardest emotional work someone will ever do. Our society often rushes people through their grief. One of the greatest gifts you can give to a grieving friend is to sit silently by his or her side and listen to "the story." For someone who is grieving, the need to tell the story of what happened is intense and can be healing. Sitting silently does not mean listening without interest, but it does mean listening without rushing the person through a story you may have already heard. The value in telling the story is not to inform the listener of something; the value is to the storyteller. In sharing the story, the storyteller affirms what has happened and gives voice to his or her emotions.

2. **Accept the person's feelings.**—No feelings are wrong, they simply are. Feelings of grief can sometimes overwhelm the person. Feelings of anger, guilt, sadness and loneliness can be upsetting and uncomfortable for both you and the grieving person. One of the important messages to convey is a wide range of feelings is normal and your friend is not alone in his or her experience. Remind them of your support and willingness to listen to their feelings.
3. **Encourage the person to accept help from others**— He or she doesn't need to do this alone. We pride ourselves in being self-sufficient but it's helpful to remind your friend that we all need help from time to time. This is especially true during a time of loss.
4. **Do something for your grieving friend**— Offer specific assistance, such as mowing the lawn, shoveling snow or making a meal. Remember the person is flooded with emotions and practical things to be done. His or her ability to prioritize and reach out may be stretched to the limit, so being specific in how you can help is a great way to support the person. Instead of saying, "call me if you need anything," say "I'd like to bring a meal over, would tonight work for you?"
5. **Encourage the grieving person to verbalize his or her feelings out loud**— Writing letters to the person who died, journaling or visiting the gravesite are all ways to allow feelings to have a voice. That voice is healing in the grief process.
6. **Don't worry about saying the right thing**— Simply showing up for the person can be much more powerful and meaningful than the words you say. There are no magic answers or words. You can't take the pain away or keep the person from suffering, but you can help them feel less alone.
7. **Listen without judgment**— Remember that every loss is unique, and the experience is based on a variety of factors, including who died, how, what the relationship was with the deceased, religious and cultural background, gender and other stresses in the grieving person's life. All of these factors will influence your friend's grief and

may be unknown to you. Listen without judgment and criticism. We all need a friend who's understanding.

8. **Avoid using clichés**— Most cliché phrases unintentionally suppress the grief response. Sayings like, “It was God’s will,” don’t encourage people to voice their feelings. Without a voice, grief work is delayed. If you feel helpless, admit you don’t have the answers: “I’m not sure what to say or do, but I want you to know that I am here and I care about you.” Your vulnerability and transparency speak volumes to your friend and may reassure them it’s OK to share their feelings.
9. **Encourage the person to reminisce**— Sharing stories and memories is healing and helps the person process their grief. If appropriate, share one of your stories of their loved one who died. Often saying the deceased person’s name out loud is comforting to the person who experienced the loss.
10. **Remember the value of presence**— You may leave the house of a friend feeling like you said and did very little, but your presence spoke volumes. Your physical and emotional presence is more help for your friend than you’ll ever know.

Lesson Four:

Grief Is Personal vv.35-36

When Jesus saw her crying, and the Jews who had come with her crying, he was deeply moved in his spirit and troubled. ³⁴“Where have you put him?” he asked. “Lord,” they told him, “come and see.” ³⁵Jesus wept. ³⁶So the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” CSB

Jesus saw Mary crying, He saw the Jews who had come with her crying and He was deeply moved and Jesus wept.

Two words we need to pay attention to “**Crying**” and “**Wept.**”

The word translated “**crying**” comes from the Greek word “**Klaio**” meaning to weep and wail with emphasis on the volume and intensity of the crying.

Imagine a blood curdling scream— Funeral home illustration of lady whose husband was killed in a motorcycle accident.

The word translated “**wept**” comes from the Greek word “**Dakryo**” meaning to shed tears, Jesus was fully God and fully man. He was filled with intense emotion and He wept real tears of sorrow.

I am glad Jesus recognizes and feels our sorrow!

“Each person's grief is as unique as their fingerprint. But what everyone has in common is this: no matter how a person grieves, they share a need for their grief to be experienced and witnessed. The need is for someone to be fully present to the magnitude of their loss without trying to point out the silver lining.” — **David Kessler**, Finding Meaning: The Sixth Stage of Grief

Lesson Five:

Grief Will Test Our Faith v.26

Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. **Do you believe this?”** CSB

The grieving process will lead us to the place where we must trust our faith.

John 14:1-7 “Don’t let your heart be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ²In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? ³If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, so that where I am you may be also. ⁴You know the way to where I am going.”
⁵“Lord,” Thomas said, “we don’t know where you’re going. How can we know the way?” ⁶Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷If you know me, you will also know my Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him.” CSB

Lesson Six:

Hope In Jesus Is Greater than Grief vv.25-26

Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me, even if he dies, will live. ²⁶ Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die . . .” CSB

Our body dies but our spirit lives on.

2 Corinthians 5:1-8 “For we know that if our earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal dwelling in the heavens, not made with hands. ² Indeed, we groan in this tent/ body, desiring to put on our heavenly dwelling, ³ since, when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. ⁴ Indeed, we groan while we are in this tent/ body, burdened as we are, because we do not want to be unclothed but clothed, so that mortality may be swallowed up by life. ⁵ Now the one who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave us the Spirit as a down payment. ⁶ So we are always confident and know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. ⁷ For we walk by faith, not by sight. ⁸ In fact, we are confident, and we would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.” CSB

In times of loss and grief, it is important to give ourselves time and space to mourn and heal. Without the opportunity to grieve, there is little room for personal growth or recovery. Embracing the process of grief is a vital step towards finding peace and renewal while navigating the challenge's of life. As we suffer through grief and loss, remember, we have the presence of the Holy Spirit in us and we are not alone.