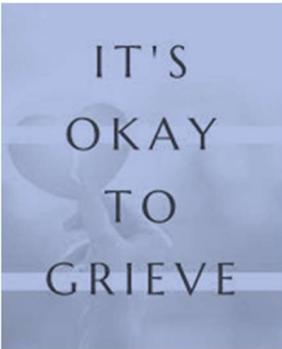


Daily Bible readings, a memory verse and a prayer for individual contemplation
Weekly worship song, reflection and small group questions

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| Sunday 26 Sept | Week 4 | It's ok to grieve |
| Sunday 3 Oct | Week 5 | When all is gone, we remain hopeful |



BIBLE READING:

Sunday 26 September It is okay to grieve **John 11: 31-37, Proverbs 1-6, Romans 8: 1-8**

PRAISE AND WORSHIP:

 Hymn: MHB 238 "My faith looks up to Thee" <https://youtu.be/oGKLmThF2to>

Reflection by Tony Matthee

In this passage Jesus is confronted by the death of his dear friend Lazarus. I find it rather ironic that Jesus weeps because he knows that he is going to raise Lazarus from the dead. It would seem that he purposely delayed coming to his sick friend for 4 days in order that a greater purpose could be served, but he nevertheless showed grief – Jesus wept!!

The question confronting us from this passage is how we react, or how we should react, when confronting loss. But it is very important that we understand what grief is. Grief is normally associated with death, but grief can also come with any loss that impacts us such as divorce, being fired at work, retrenchment, child leaving home, even retirement, etc. Is the correct response for a Christian to weep or have a stiff upper lip – hide one’s feelings. The psychologists tell us that burying hurtful feelings deep inside us is very unhealthy and will eventually manifest itself in some physical form. Jesus chose to weep and revealed that God is capable of feeling pain and grief.



In Genesis 6:6 we read *“The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain.”* This was in response to seeing how great the wickedness of people had become and that every inclination of their heart was to do evil all the time. In 1 Sam. 15:11 we read that *“I am grieved that I have made Saul king, because he has turned away from me and has not carried out my instructions.”* Isn’t it amazing that the God who created the whole universe can feel grief?

When David heard of the death of King Saul and Jonathan we read *“Then David and all the men with him took hold of their clothes and tore them. They mourned and wept and fasted till evening for Saul and his son Jonathan.”* 2 Sam. 1:11, 12. This response was a time-honored tradition to express grief. Even today we have methods of expressing our grief and from the title of our devotions *“It’s ok to grieve!”* We must be open and honest when the bottom of our lives drops out. However, there is a healthy grieving process and an unhealthy process of grieving.

“Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or who grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope.” 1 Thes 4:13. For those who have no hope, a sense of loss and separation is intense. Death is final. There is also such a thing as protracted grieving where people will not let their sadness go – in fact they nurture and feed it. These are examples of unhealthy grieving.

The foundation of our Christian faith is the resurrection of Jesus. We give expression to our grief, but our grief is not intense or prolonged because we believe in an eternal life with Jesus when we are called home. We also believe that *“in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purposes.”* Rom. 8:28. Our lives are in his hands and nothing can separate us from His love – even death!

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS:

1. “There are many things that would grieve God.” Discuss as many of these things as you can.
2. Discuss how people express grief in their culture today. Is it healthy or unhealthy?
3. What would be your preferred method of expressing grief?
4. How long do you think a person should grieve over a loved one?
5. Excluding death, how do you think a Christian should respond to life’s tragedies?

DAILY BIBLE READING:

MONDAY

Memory Verse: John 16:20,22 *“Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy... Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy.”*

Prayer: Lord, thank you for the inexpressible hope we have of looking forward to being with you when we are called home. Amen.

TUESDAY

Memory Verse: Revelation 21:4 *“He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death, or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”*

Prayer: Gracious God, help us to cope with the pain we endure and tears we shed as we look forward to the new order you have created. Amen.

WEDNESDAY

Memory Verse: Isaiah 53:4 *“Surely, he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.”*

Prayer: Dear Lord, words cannot express our gratitude for all you did for us on Calvary. Please accept our lives, our devotion and our love as a token of that gratitude. Amen.

THURSDAY

Memory Verse: Psalm 31:9 *“Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am in distress; my eye is wasted from grief; my soul and body also.”*

Prayer: *“Almighty God, I ever with Thee, Thou with me, Lord; Thou my great Father, I thy true son; Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one.”* Amen

FRIDAY

Memory Verse: Romans 12:15 *“Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.”*

Prayer: Our Father, as your sons and daughters, help us to help and support each other in joy as well as in pain. Amen.

SATURDAY

Memory Verse: Psalm 34:18 *“The Lord is near to the broken-hearted and saves the crushed in spirit.”*

Prayer: O Lord, help us to see others through the eyes of Jesus that we may become His hands and His feet as we minister to those in need. Amen.



It is important for parents to take time to lead the conversations of family time and to be honest with their children in these conversations.

BY JENNY BLAKE – CHILDREN’S PASTOR
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Sunday 26th September

Pray daily:

Set up family time for prayer and devotions and stick to this arrangement. All devotions should always begin by with a prayer. Ask a family member to pray or one of the children.

Scripture Reading: Psalm 34:18 Allow children/teens to read out loud for the family.

Activity/Family Moment:

Game: Make a circle. Each person will take turns whispering an emotion in each other’s ear for them to act out for the others. They can use their bodies and facial expressions, but no words. Everyone else will try to guess what emotion they’re acting out.

Here are some of the emotions you might use:

- fear
- joy
- worry
- misery
- anger
- grief
- excitement
- embarrassment
- anticipation

Questions:

- Was it easy to guess the feelings, why?
- Do you think you would have acted out an emotion differently?

Our faces and body language tell a lot about what we are feeling, but they don't tell everything. We are all different.

People show their emotions in different ways, it's sometimes hard to understand what they're really feeling. Think about anger. People may show that they're angry by their face getting red or clenching their fists and shouting. But other people may show anger by being silent or not eating.

- How do you know when your parents and or siblings are very mad?

Emotions of loss can be even harder to understand. Sometimes we don't even understand our own feelings of grief. Grief is the sadness that comes from loss, such as not getting to see your friends because of lockdown or having someone you love to become sick or die. Emotions like grief and loss are often some of the most difficult to identify immediately.

Explain to your children that when we lose someone or something important to us, it's natural to grieve. Some people cry at first. As time goes on, we may sometimes try to ignore our emotions, but they don't go away. Ignoring our grief and emotions is bad for us because it doesn't help us heal.

