

Where is Jesus in Grief?

Matthew 5:4

OPEN

We've just finished the Christmas season, which promises us hope, peace, joy and love. Sometimes, though, after the party is over we feel a kind of crash, and the reality of January and, in some cases, the unexpected struggle of the Christmas season is a reminder that some things haven't changed. One of those things can be the journey that is grief. Let's start with some myths: Myth # 1 - Grief and Mourning are the same experience. Myth # 2 There is a predictable and orderly stage like progression to grief. Myth # 3 It is best to move away from your grief instead of towards it. Myth # 4 Tears expressing grief are a sign of weakness. Myth # 5 The goal is to get over your grief. Myth # 6 Faith makes us exempt from our feelings.

READ

- **Read John 11:33-35** - In what ways can you identify with Mary and Martha as well as Jesus in this passage?
 - In your grief experiences, when has it felt like Jesus is weeping with you? When have you felt alone?
- **Read Job 1:1- 2:13.** What things about Job's response to his loss in ch 1:21 can you understand? What is hard to comprehend?
 - Job's three friends arrive. What is something we can learn from Job's friends response to Job's loss?
- **Read 1 or 2 of the following Psalms - 13, 22, 25, 31, 44, 69, 86, 89, 140**
 - Lamenting has been described as crying with words.

REFLECT

- **As you read some of the Psalms of Lament.** In what ways can or have you identified with the Psalmist?
 - Can you think of some tools or models in scripture that might be useful for lamenting? In your grief experiences, have you experienced any epiphanies of hope?
- **What are some things we can say when we are with someone grieving?** How can I help when you feel overwhelmed? Are you eating and taking care of yourself? Can I make you something for dinner? What's your favourite memory right now? Is there something I can do that might be comforting right now? What has helped you in other tough times? Can we do that together now? Would you like to have coffee or lunch today? We can talk about something else other than grief if you want, or we can talk about grief - whatever you think. I'm here to help with some chores. Can I take out the garbage, or backyard work or clean up.? Very practical matters like these seem trivial but are hard to do for grieving people. Do you want to talk about anything at the moment?. Lastly - avoid advice giving. By all means if you've found something helpful in your grief experiences offer it as a suggestion, by saying "something that helped me was" but don't prescribe things. Healing in grief comes from the journey, not the instructions other people give you.
- If you have or are going through a time of grieving what has been or would be helpful?

APPLY/PRAY

- What myths of grieving can you identify with?
- What things has grief helped you discover in your faith?
- As a church, we are in a season of waiting for a new lead pastor to be identified. Continue to pray for the Board of Elders, pastoral staff members, and other leaders for wisdom, unity, and grace, as we wait on the Lord for direction in the future.