

**Remnant Life Church**  
July 23, 2023  
**The Importance of Grief**  
John 11:32-37

God created each of us a multi-faceted beings  
Sociologists call it the 5 Dimensions of Wellness

- Each of them is important
  - Each of them is necessary
  - And none of them can be neglected
  - Each of them have been placed by God in our lives as a part of the His perfection of creation
1. We are physical
    - The external, solid, part of our existence
    - Not only does that describe who we are
    - But also what we interact with all around us every day
  2. We are spiritual
    - This is our connection to God and the part of us that is in communion with Him
    - It is what allows us to surrender our lives to Jesus and ask Him to be the Lord of our lives
    - It is the source of what is good, kind, compassionate, and loving
  3. We are intellectual
    - We have the capacity to think, reason, and make decisions
    - Our intellect allows us to process information and react to it
  4. We are social
    - We were created to be around others
    - The level of that involvement is different
    - But isolation is used as a punishment because it is so important to us
  5. We are emotion
    - We are joy, sorrow, anger, fear, hate, and love
    - All of these and others were created and placed in us by God
    - It is why emotion is never right or wrong – it just is

Not one of these five should ever overwhelm the others

- In order for there to be wellness there needs to be a measure of balance
  - For instance, if you are overly or too emotional, your life is off-kilter and troubles arise
- The same if any one area is neglected
  - If you ignore your physical needs the rest of you will suffer because of it
- But these 5 dimensions do ebb and flow depending on what is going on in your life at the time
  - If your health is not good for some reason, your doctor may prescribe an exercise program that requires a lot of extra effort and time
  - If you are attempting to achieve a particular academic degree, your intellect is going to get a lot of attention as you study and work your way through the course

And so, in a time like our family and this church is dealing with right now, our emotions are certainly at the forefront of who we are.

And of course right now, we are all dealing with grief to one degree or another

- Grief is a very powerful emotion
- It can be crippling if not handled in the right way
- So I would like to take a few minutes this morning to look at what we see in the Bible regarding grief

Two accounts

- The first is found in **Gen 23:1-2**
  - *Sarah lived to be a hundred and twenty-seven years old. She died at Kiriath Arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan, and Abraham went to mourn for Sarah and to weep over her.*
  - I have always tended to picture these biblical figures, particularly the patriarchs, as very stoic, stone-faced, serious men
    - No – they were men, people, just like you and me
    - They were filled with emotion
      - Emotions that many times got the better of them
      - Many time we read of great anger even with violence being displayed
  - Abraham was the father of the Hebrew people
    - It was his 12 great-grandsons that comprised the twelve tribes of Israel
    - But Abraham was not perfect
      - When under pressure he was prone to distort the truth.
      - When he and Sarah went into Egypt Abraham, fearing that he would be killed and his beautiful wife taken, said she was his sister instead of his wife (**Gen 12:11-15**)
      - He then did the same thing when they encountered Abimelech the king of Gerar in **Gen 20**
    - So, we would expect that this man like you or me would also be a man of emotion and he certainly was
      - **Gen 23:3** says that he wept over Sarah when she died
      - That word wept in the original Hebrew means to wail, shed tears, and cry out bitterly
    - Abraham did not ‘keep a still upper lip’ or hide his emotions
    - He wept bitterly in his grief

Then turn to **John 11**

The miracle of Lazarus’ resurrection is a very familiar story even to those who don’t go to church

- Lazarus, along with his 2 sisters Mary and Martha, are Jesus closest friends outside of the 12 disciples

- Their home in Bethany, a town about 2 miles outside of Jerusalem, serves as Jesus' home base during the final week of His life
  - And I have no doubt Jesus was likely a frequent visitor to their home
- So the death of Lazarus would have been very personal to Jesus
  - Yet when He got word that Lazarus was dying He was in no hurry to get there
  - As a matter of fact, he did not arrive until approximately 5 days later
  - At which time Lazarus had been dead for 4 days

**READ - John 11:32-37**

- Notice the emotions Jesus was dealing with
  - Verse 33 tells us that He was “deeply moved”
    - Those words in the original Greek means to be profoundly impacted to the very depths of your heart and soul
    - It encompasses grief, anguish, to be troubled or in distress
  - Jesus was not coldly standing by while all those around Him were in pain
    - He participated and empathized with them
    - His grief, however, was witnessing the sorrow of his friends due to the consequences of sin – in this case death
  - You see one the surest signs of God's work in our own lives is when we begin to recognize the sorrow, and suffering around us because of sin
    - We cannot ignore what sin does
    - We cannot ignore the pain in people's lives
    - How ready are you to respond in the way that Jesus did – with love and compassion?
- But then notice what Jesus does next
  - It is the shortest yet one of the most powerful verses in all the Scriptures
  - **John 11:35** – *Jesus wept*
    - Like in the Hebrew, the Greek word for wept means to cry out loud and then continue weeping silently
    - This is what Jesus did!
    - Should we be expected to suppress our own grief when Jesus freely displayed His?
- Grief, tears, intense emotions are all a part of how God created us
  - He would not have given those aspects of our emotional lives if we were not to express them
  - The key is to surrender (not stifle) your emotions, and allow them to control you

Three things to keep in mind regarding grief...

1. Your situation is not unique
  - a. IOW – you are not alone

- b. In all of the lies satan tells you, one of his most effective is that nobody else is dealing with what you are
    - i. **I Cor 10:13** - *No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.*
    - ii. That word temptation can also be defined as adversity, affliction, trouble, or trials
  - c. No trial or struggle that you are currently in is unique
    - i. You are not alone
      - 1. When God created Adam He said it was not good for him to be alone
      - 2. God continued with His creation - **Gen 2:18**
    - ii. Brothers and sisters in the Lord can and ought to be a source or comfort and encouragement to you
    - iii. But you cannot isolate yourself during these times
      - 1. If you remove yourself from others when going through a difficult time you are playing directly into the enemy's hands
      - 2. We need each other during these times
      - 3. And don't shy away from offering yourself to those who are hurting
2. Your situation is temporary
- a. Clarify this
    - i. One of the worst things that you can say to someone who is hurting is 'you need to get over it'
      - 1. There are pains of loss in our lives that we will never 'get over'
      - 2. But we will get on the other side of it
    - ii. The loss Abraham dealt with was physically permanent
      - 1. But the depth of his grief was temporary
      - 2. Why? Because when we cry out to Him, God brings healing to our hearts
    - iii. Part of that healing is that knowledge that, for the Christian, even death is temporary
      - 1. The Bible promises that the dead in Christ will rise again at His coming (**I Thess 4:16**)
      - 2. Paul rights of keeping all things of this world in perspective when compared to the eternity of God's kingdom
        - a. **Rom. 8:18** – *I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing to the future glory that will be revealed to us.*
        - b. **2 Cor. 4:17** – *For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.*
    - iv. When you are in the midst of the grief, you are not sure it will ever lift or end

1. But we are promised that it will
2. Light and momentary
- v. Persevere through those moments and do not deny who you are and what you are dealing with
  1. Expressing grief is a very important part of the healing process
  2. But God is present and ministering to us even in those darkest hours

Your circumstances are not unique

Your situation is temporary

3. God is not the source of your grief
  - a. We do see in the Bible that God disciplines and even punishes His children
    - i. But He is not the source of sorrow
    - ii. Sorrow and grief only entered this world with sin and satan
      1. Paul calls satan the 'god of this world' in **I Cor 4:4**
      2. Notice that is a small g not capital G
    - iii. What happens many times is that we blame God for the things a fallen world or even our sinful actions cause in our lives
  - b. But while God is not the source of our sorrow and grief that does not mean He is not caring of our pain
  - c. **Psalm 30:5** - *For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing (or joy) comes in the morning.*

We are not alone when we are experiencing grief

The depths of that grief are temporary

God does not send grief, but He cares for us while we walk through it

Powerful emotions are a part of how God made us

- Emotions need to be expressed
- They need to be vented
- But they must never be permitted to run unabated causing damage and anguish to others as well as ourselves
- Jesus experienced the same emotions we do but He never sinned even in His anger

Surrender your emotions, your will, your mind all of yourself to Him

- Weeping may stay for the night, but joy comes in the morning
- The joy of a loving, merciful, and healing God