

ADVERSITY GOSPEL #3 – GOOD GRIEF

Sermon by Todd Lester

February 19, 2017

THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT GRIEF

1. LOSS IS _____ BUT GRIEF IS A _____
There's no growth w/o _____, no change w/o _____, no loss w/o _____.

2. GRIEF IS _____

John 11:33-36

Grief is the _____ healthy response to a loss.

3. GOD GRIEVES _____

Psalm 34:18

"God _____ your grief."

4. GRIEF IS HEALED _____

Galatians 6:2, Romans 12:15

God made us to be in _____.

5. GRIEF _____

Ecclesiastes 3:1,4

You never get _____ major losses, you get _____ them.

STEPS TO MOVING FORWARD

1. IDENTIFY WHAT I'VE _____

Matthew 5:4, Psalm 23:4

2. HAVE THE COURAGE TO _____

Lament = "passionate expression of grief to God"

Psalms of Lament: Psalm 3-7, 9, 10, 12-14, 17, 22, 25-28, 31, 35, 36, 38, 39, 41-44, 51-61, 64, 70, 71, 74, 77, 79, 80, 82, 83, 85, 86, 88, 90, 94, 102, 109, 137, 139-143, 145

Psalm 88:18

3. ASK JESUS TO _____

Psalm 103:13-14, Luke 4:18 (NKJV)

Good Grief, Charlie Brown!

How have you tended to handle major losses in your life? Use the characters from 'Peanuts' below to help you think about how you might identify with some of the ways they interact with others and with problems.



Lucy

Can be very sweet and protective, but has an explosive side.



Linus

Good thinker and helpful but relies on his 'blanket' for comfort.



Peppermint Patty

Very able physically, but a bit clueless with relationships.



Pigpen

Seems a mess but is actually confident and comfortable with others.



Schroeder

Easily rattled by others and retreats to the arts for peace.



Marcie

Quiet, insightful, and a faithful friend.



Charlie Brown

Usually level-headed, but tends to react dramatically to problems.



Snoopy

Good friend but runs from trouble into a fantasy world

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THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT GRIEF

1. LOSS IS UNAVOIDABLE BUT GRIEF IS A CHOICE

There's no growth w/o change, no change w/o loss, no loss w/o pain.

2. GRIEF IS HEALTHY

John 11:33-36 When Jesus saw her weeping and saw the other people wailing with her, a deep anger welled up within him, and he was deeply troubled... Then Jesus wept. The people who were standing nearby said, "See how much he loved him!"

Grief is the only healthy response to a loss.

3. GOD GRIEVES WITH ME

Psalm 34:18 The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed.

"God enters into your grief."

4. GRIEF IS HEALED IN COMMUNITY

Galatians 6:2 Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ.

Romans 12:15 Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep.

God made us to be in relationship.

5. GRIEF TAKES TIME

Ecclesiastes 3:1,4 For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven... A time to cry and a time to laugh. A time to grieve and a time to dance.

You never get over major losses, you get through them.

STEPS TO MOVING FORWARD

1. IDENTIFY WHAT I'VE REALLY LOST

Matthew 5:4 God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Psalm 23:4 Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me. Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me.

2. HAVE THE COURAGE TO LAMENT

Lament = "passionate expression of grief to God"

"Life isn't all roses and rainbows and my little pony and unicorns." Todd Lester

Psalms of Lament: Psalm 3-7, 9, 10, 12-14, 17, 22, 25-28, 31, 35, 36, 38, 39, 41-44, 51-61, 64, 70, 71, 74, 77, 79, 80, 82, 83, 85, 86, 88, 90, 94, 102, 109, 137, 139-143, 145

Psalm 88:18 (A psalm of Heman the Ezrahite) "Darkness is my closest friend."

3. ASK JESUS TO HEAL MY BROKEN HEART

Psalm 103:13-14 The Lord is like a father to his children, tender and compassionate to those who fear him. For he knows how weak we are; he remembers we are only dust.

Luke 4:18 (NKJV) He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted.

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Icebreaker/Introduction

The 'Good Grief, Charlie Brown!' activity uses the characters from Peanuts comics to get people thinking about how they handle stress or loss. Have participants read through the description to see what might resonate with them, noting that they may identify with more than one character. Take time to share some of their responses.

Discuss Todd's statement that when you go through adversity these are some of the best opportunities to grow in your faith.

Can you recall the 5 stages of grief? (Shock, Struggle, Sadness, Surrender, Sanctification). Discuss them.

We often immediately think of death when considering grief and loss but Todd said that there are lots of losses we experience that involve grief. Can you recall some of them? (health, job, friend, finances, divorce, breast, fertility...,) Can you add any?

THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT GRIEF

1. LOSS IS UNAVOIDABLE BUT GRIEF IS A CHOICE

There's no growth w/o change, no change w/o loss, no loss w/o pain.

Does it surprise you to hear that grief is actually a choice? Would you agree with Todd that many people choose not to grieve? Why do you think they do that?

Todd said that all living things change. What (major?) changes have you had in your own life? Have they been difficult?

2. GRIEF IS HEALTHY

Focuses on [John 11:33-36](#)

Grief is the only healthy response to a loss.

Todd used the example from John 11 of Jesus crying to emphasize that crying is not a sign of weakness. How comfortable are you with crying? What kinds of things make you cry?

Discuss the idea that people can get emotionally 'stuck' at certain ages if they don't properly grieve losses (leading to anxieties, phobias, fears, low self-esteem).

3. GOD GRIEVES WITH ME

Focuses on [Psalm 34:18](#)

"God enters into your grief."

Do you agree with Todd's statement that animals don't grieve?

What does the phrase 'God enters into your grief' mean to you? Have you felt God's nearness when going through a loss or tough time, or did He seem far away, as Todd mentioned often happens?

4. GRIEF IS HEALED IN COMMUNITY

Focuses on [Galatians 6:2](#), [Romans 12:15](#)

God made us to be in relationship.

Have you experienced the support of a community when facing a major loss? Have you helped others?

5. GRIEF TAKES TIME

Focuses on [Ecclesiastes 3:1,4](#)

You never get over major losses, you get through them.

Todd pointed out that the 'time of mourning' in the Old Testament (for example, with Moses) was 30 days. Do you know of other times or cultures where more time was given for grief? Do you think we tend to rush through this process in North America?

STEPS TO MOVING FORWARD

1. IDENTIFY WHAT I'VE REALLY LOST

Focuses on [Matthew 5:4](#), [Psalm 23:4](#)

Have you experienced losses that you now realize you have never really grieved?

Todd gave some examples of losses from our past (parents divorcing, family moving a lot, an alcoholic parent) and possible things you may have lost from that (security, identity, encouragement, trust). Do these examples trigger any memories for you?

Do you see value in examining our lives and grieving over things we may have stuffed down and just 'moved on' from?

2. HAVE THE COURAGE TO LAMENT

Focuses on [Psalm 88:18](#) (and 64 other Psalms!)

Were you surprised to hear that 65 (almost half) of the Psalms are laments?

Can you share an example of a time when you expressed anger to God?

Do find it encouraging to know that God is not afraid of negative emotions?

3. ASK JESUS TO HEAL MY BROKEN HEART

Focuses on [Psalm 103:13-14](#), [Luke 4:18](#) (NKJV)

When has your heart been broken? Did you find comfort from God or His people? (ie. how can these healing come?)

Is there something from your past that you should deal with this week by following these 3 suggested steps?