

# Grief

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[ 0 : 00 ] As we think about grief, we're going to base ourselves here. Last Sunday evening, I was saying when it comes to thinking about emotions, they show something!

We quoted the Lord Jesus last week who says, where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Our emotions are sort of windows into our hearts.

They show us what our hearts love, what our hearts treasure. And I don't think that's any less true when it comes to thinking about grief. Because grief is the experience of intense sorrow when you lose something or someone you love.

And this evening, as we think about grief, we're particularly thinking about losing people in death, but it can be more than that.

We'd be losing a role, a position, a hobby, maybe a use of a part of our body. Something we love or someone we love.

[ 1 : 23 ] And particularly when we're thinking about death, we treasure those that we love. We treasure parents and spouses and siblings and friends.

And if they're gone, that is a grief to us. Tearing apart of what we love. And so it's helpful that the Bible helps us in grief.

Lamentations is a book full of grief. Some of us at our Church Away Day earlier this year looked at this and were really helped by it. And in some ways, I'm not really going to say much new.

But let me give you just a little bit of context of Lamentations. If we just read the book before, Jeremiah 52, verse 4.

Lamentations, by the way, is written by Jeremiah. He's known as the weeping prophet. Jeremiah chapter 52, verse 4 says, So in the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign, on the tenth day of the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, marched against Jerusalem with his whole army.

[ 2 : 36 ] They encamped outside the city and built siege works all around it. The city was kept under siege until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. So that just gives us a little bit of the context of Lamentations.

The Babylonians came and marched against Jerusalem. They got hold of Jerusalem and its people. And in Lamentations, we see a few things about their context.

We see in chapter 1 and verse 11, a scarce supply of food. All her people groan as they search for bread.

They barter their treasures for food to keep themselves alive. It's a desperate situation, desperate to get food. And if you are starving, you're not going to last long against your enemies.

And so chapter 1, verse 7 says, In the days of her affliction and wandering, Jerusalem remembers all her treasures that were hers in days of old, when her people fell into enemy hands.

[ 3 : 48 ] They fell into enemy hands. And there was no one to help her. Her enemies looked at her and laughed at her destruction. So her people fell into the hands of the enemies.

And they found themselves under the rule of brutal masters, brutal Babylonians. Chapter 1, verse 5. Her foes have become her masters.

Her enemies are our ease. The Lord has brought her grief because of her many sins. Her children have gone into exile, captive before the foe. They were under brutal masters.

People were taken off into exile, into Babylon. Perhaps children and parents were separated. And so the place is full of grief, having lost what it once was and lost the people it once loved.

Chapter 1, verse 1 and 2. A city full of grief. How deserted lies the city. Once so full of people. How like a widow is she.

[ 4 : 59 ] Who once was great among the nations. She who was queen among the provinces has now become a slave. Bitterly she weeps at night. Tears are on her cheek.

Among all her lovers there is no one to comfort her. All her friends have betrayed her. They have become her enemies. So it's a city full of grief.

This is an appropriate book for us to attend to when we're thinking about grief. And we see first of all tears. This is a book full of tears.

Jeremiah himself, as I said, known as the weeping prophet. Chapter 1, verse 16. Just to show you a few verses that shows tears in this book.

This is why I weep and my eyes overflow with tears. No one's near to comfort me. No one to restore my spirit. My children are destitute.

[ 6 : 01 ] Because the enemy has prevailed. Chapter 2, verse 11. Chapter 2, verse 11. My eyes fail from weeping.

I'm in torment within. My heart is poured out on the ground. Because my people are destroyed. Because children and infants faint in the streets of the city.

They are weeping. 3, verse 48. Chapter 3, verse 48. Streams of tears flow from my eyes.

Because my people are destroyed. My eyes will flow unceasingly without relief. Until the Lord looks down from heaven and sees. What I see brings grief to my soul because of all the women of my city.

Tears aren't just at the beginning. They are throughout the book of Lamentations. Showing us that tears are a reality and grief.

[ 7 : 08 ] And we can't plan for our tears. I think something to point out from here. I know that when I've been grieving someone or something.

I've burst into tears at the most ridiculous of times. I remember when I moved from Hove up to London. And experienced the loss of a church.

The change of a church. I missed the church back in Hove. And the first four Sundays at church. By the time the service at my new church ended.

At some point I was weeping. I couldn't plan for it. But it happened. Because I missed my old church family. It was great to have a new one. But I missed the old one. When losing my nan.

I remember visiting the dentist. And remembering she used to work there. And bursting into tears there. You can't plan for your tears in grief.

[ 8 : 12 ] And Lamentations helps us to see that tears is a right response to grief. Tears are God-given. A God-given blessing in our broken world that has grief.

They are known to release emotion. A sort of a healing thing to help us in grief. They can relieve stress.

They can create a sense of calm. Crying can even increase bonds between people. And people will vary in their tears.

Some will experience lots. Whilst others may experience very little. But it doesn't mean they're not feeling grief. I've been reading a few different books about grief.

And in one of them it has the example. A real life example. Of this couple called Lyle and Sue. They lost their 18-year-old son.

[ 9 : 14 ] Very suddenly. Just before Christmas time. In a car crash. And their loss. Placed an enormous strain. On their relationship.

But by the grace of God. They've emerged with a stronger and deeper faith. In God. And love for one another. Like many other couples.

Lyle and Sue have different strengths. Lyle is a quiet. Steady and rock solid kind of man. And Sue is intense. Insightful.

And articulate. Looking back. And articulate. Looking back. Sue can see the strength and stability Lyle displayed. While she was asleep. He made phone calls.

And did what needed to be done. Lyle had difficulty with the wise words of a counselor. Who said to him. Let your wife see that you are grieving.

[ 10 : 11 ] Lyle had a feeling. Lyle had a feeling. Because Sue had misread. Her husband's lack of tears. And mistakenly assumed she wasn't grieving. And she ended up reflecting on it in this way.

Men and women grieve differently. And I struggled with this. But I came to see that my husband was the only other person on the planet who loved our son like I did.

And was a part of him. As I was. We were bound together in our grief. And however different our ways of coping. He was one with me in it.

As no one else could ever be. It's helpful. To just think about the different ways. That we grieve.

And it often is the case. That the men and women grieve differently. And when it comes to tears and grief.

[11:11] And how God sees it. There's a precious verse in the book of Psalms. Psalm 56 verse 8 says. Record my misery. List my tears on your scroll.

Are they not in your record? God. Some versions go as far as putting it. God puts our tears in his bottle.

In other words. It is saying to us. That God sees. And he knows our tears. Colin Smith, a pastor in America, says, Other people will only see a small part of your sorrow, but none of it's hidden from the Lord.

He cares. And one day, when we're thinking about tears, it's good to remember that one day there will be an end to tears.

Revelation 21 verse 4 says, 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.

[12:29] Often, on our Sunday evenings, we like to be a little bit more interactive with one another. And just so you can have a little break from me talking and process some of this together, just for a few minutes, I've suggested about five minutes in groups, just a few questions to chat together about.

Why might a Christian believe they should hold back their tears? What would you say to them? Maybe in light of what we've heard. The Bible tells us Jesus wept. What's your reaction to that? And what does it mean to you to know that none of our grief is hidden from God? Let's just turn to one another, sort of where we're sitting, and have a chat for a few minutes.

Yeah, sure. And then Mark's got the microphone. Pop up your hand. We were just discussing that in some church cultures, to show anything less than being happy at all times kind of denotes something deficient in your walk with Christ.

And we were talking about there can be almost a kind of prosperity gospel where if you're not fully healthy, if you're not fully happy, something's wrong, and that might lead to something deeply unhealthy and kind of suppressing what's really going on and not speaking about emotions like grief or sadness.

[14:06] Yeah. Yeah. It's a kind of superficial Christianity. Christianity. Yeah. Which, just reading Lamentations would show there's something wrong about that.

Thanks, Doreen. Just to add to that, I was once in discussing with a pastor who was basically taking this line, and I pointed out that Jeremiah was a grieving prophet.

There's a lot of grief in Jeremiah and Lamentations. Yeah. And he actually said, this is Old Testament. In the New Testament, we should always be rejoicing. Huh. I was gobsmacked.

I thought, what New Testament are you reading? We were told to mourn with those who mourn.

Yeah. Yeah. And doesn't, well, we've said, noted here, Jesus wept.

That's in the New Testament. Any other reflections, anyone to share? It's okay if not. I was saying, when my mum discovered she had cancer, and my dad started to cry, mum said, none of that now.

[15:16] And I think that's a sort of generational stiff upper lip, going through the wartime. You can't afford to be weeping all the time. We've got to get on with life. And, I mean, my mum and dad weren't Christians in any sense that we would recognise.

But I think there is a culture thing. Yeah. Perhaps a generational thing as well. I suppose nowadays, if you don't weep when you've won an Oscar or something, you didn't really win it.

Yeah. No, there's definitely a cultural thing to that. I mean, we noted in our first week on Emotions how culture impacts our emotions.

Cool. Shall we move on? It's good to talk. And the next thing is talking. When it comes to grieving, talking. So, yeah, as we grieve, we're processing painful loss, either of a person or it could be our health or hobby role or position, as I said.

And God has provided tears to help us in our loss, and he's also provided other people. He's made us for relationships. And one of the things we can do with other people is talk.

[16:34] And lamentations, they are words of grief. They are talking to us about grief. It sort of feels like, as you read through lamentations that I did the other week, you sort of go round and round in circles.

And I think that happens. I think that happens when we're in grief. We do sort of go round and round in circles in some ways. And in lamentations, it speaks of the horrific situation that God's people

were in.

Chapter 3, verse 19 to 21. I remember my affliction and my wondering, the bitterness and the gall. I remember them well, and my soul is downcast within me.

Yet this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope. Or in chapter 4 and verse 10. And this is as graphic as we'll get this evening.

Chapter 4, verse 10. With their own hands, compassionate women have cooked their children, who became food when my people were destroyed.

[ 17 : 46 ] God's people had been through awful things, awful violence, witnessed awful torture, horrific things. But these are words which are expressed in their grief.

And God's caused every word of this to be written. Nothing glossed over. Colin Smith, again, speaking on grief and talking.

Healing comes when you face the darkest corners of your pain and trauma and grief and loss and bring it into the light of God's healing presence in the company of those who love you.

Another pastor called Donald Howard wrote a little booklet on grief following his wife's death from cancer in her early 40s.

And he said this, Let the bereaved speak. Often the opposite happens, he says. Remarking on a conversation he had with a widow where he held back from telling the story of her husband.

[ 18 : 58 ] He said, Had I told the story, she probably would have laughed. Perhaps there might even have been a tear or two shed. But she would have thought it wonderful that he was still remembered.

It's good to talk. It's good to talk about those we have lost. Those who have gone before us. And he also said this, A part of the congregation's task as time goes by is to help keep the memory of loved ones alive.

And so it's okay to talk about those we have lost in the past. Talking is a part of grieving together.

It's okay to, thinking of us as a church since I've been here, it's okay to share a memory of Maureen or of Enid and of others who go back beyond my time.

Romans chapter 12, verse 15 tells us, Rejoice with those who rejoice and mourn with those who mourn. Join one another in grieving.

[ 20 : 14 ] The Bible shows us we can and we must grieve together. Draw alongside the grieving together.

Talk to one another. And even more, we can share our grief with God. And as we do, we can see that in the Bible, he knows what grieving, what suffering is like.

Can't help but read Lamentations chapter 1, verse 12 in the light of Jesus on the cross. Is it nothing to you all who pass by?

Look and see. Is any suffering like my suffering that was inflicted on me, that the Lord brought on me in the day of his fierce anger?

Chapter 1, verse 12. It's surely a verse that points us to the cross, that points us to Jesus who experienced suffering like no other, where he experienced God's wrath on our sin.

[ 21 : 27 ] So, so far, we've seen God cares about our tears. He sees our tossings and turnings on the bed at night when we can't sleep because of our griefs.

He knows our darkest thoughts. He knows our deepest fears in grief. We can't hide it before him.

So talk with one another, but also it's good to talk to God who understands grief.

We'll look at it a little bit more, but firstly, let's sing another song together. We sang this a few weeks ago. Goes to the tune of Be Thou My Vision or Lord Be My Vision.

Guilt, grievance, and then hope in our suffering.

So first of all, guilt. Because grief can bring with it feelings of guilt. Maybe as we look back over someone's life and realize, if only I'd said this to them.

[ 22 : 55 ] Or if only I forgave them for that. Or if only I said this. Or even in the moments leading up to someone's death, maybe we feel like, if only I'd called the ambulance sooner.

If only I hadn't left the house then. And we can be wracked with guilt at the if-onlys and the what-ifs.

Maybe we even wonder if it's some sort of punishment of God to take away someone from our lives.

Maybe we have these questions when it comes to grief. Or maybe we will have in the future.

Lamentations is rightly a book of guilt in grief.

They were suffering, because of sin. Chapter 1, verse 18. The Lord is righteous, yet I rebelled against His command.

[ 24 : 04 ] Listen, all you peoples, look at my suffering. My young men and women have gone into exile. They rebelled against the Lord. Or verse 20.

See, Lord, how distressed I am. I am in torment within and my heart is disturbed, for I have been most rebellious. So in Lamentations, there is a right sense of guilt in their suffering.

But if you look at another book of the Bible, the book of Job, it shows us a man who is very clearly blameless and upright. He wasn't suffering at all because of his sin, even if that's what his friends unhelpfully told him.

There's also the example in the New Testament, in John's Gospel, of the man who was born blind. His disciples asked Jesus, Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? And Jesus says, it wasn't because of sin that this man is suffering. He says, neither this man nor his parents sinned. But this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him.

[ 25 : 21 ] And so the Bible shows us clearly, suffering comes upon the upright and the blameless, rebellious, as well as the sinful and rebellious.

Those what-ifs and if-onlys that may weigh heavily, heavily even, on our conscience, there may be something right about them and we need to confess genuine sin, but it may also just be some false guilt, which is weighing on our conscience.

Whichever it is, and maybe it's hard for us to really tell, the Bible speaks about our consciences and they can be cleansed.

Hebrews chapter 9, verse 14, it says, how much more then will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, how much will he cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death?

So that we may serve the living God. So whether those what-ifs and if-onlys are sin we have done or something we have failed to do, or whether it's a false guilt, we know that our consciences in Christ can be cleansed, we can be forgiven, made washed clean because of the blood of Jesus Christ.

[ 26 : 56 ] Whether our conscience has the weight of true guilt because of something we've done or false guilt, taking responsibility for something we have not done, we can still confess that and find the blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin, even the ones that are on our conscience in some way.

Fourthly, grievance in guilt. See, guilt relates to, sorry, grievance in grief. So guilt relates to what you did or failed to do, whereas grievance is different.

It relates to what other people did or failed to do, or even, maybe in our minds, what God did or didn't do. I don't know if the name Simon Thomas means anything to you.

He was a former Blue Peter presenter, and more recently presents sports, particularly football, coverage for Sky. A few years ago, he lost his wife, Gemma, to leukemia.

It was all very sudden. They had three days between the diagnosis and the death. Tragic. Leaving him with a seven-year-old boy, Ethan.

[ 28 : 23 ] In the days after, when everything felt like it was crumbling, he had a massive grievance with God. He's a Christian man.

He said, if the God I believed in was a God of love, how had he stood by and done nothing? When I cried out to him time and time again, why have my pleas not, pleased to not leave my boy without a mum fallen on death ears?

I have to believe that the God I believe in heard my pleas. That's to be pleased without an E on the end. But I have a massive question as to why he let it happen and my anger reverberated into the night.

Why God? Why? He had a grievance with God. Why did you let this happen? Did you not hear my cries? When an atheist loses someone, they can say it's just a cruel world.

When a Christian loses someone, we ask why? Why has God allowed this? In Lamentations, we find that they don't minimize God's involvement in the griefs they're feeling.

[ 29 : 45 ] In chapter 2 from verse 1 it says, How the Lord has covered daughter Zion with a cloud of his anger. He has held down the splendor of Israel from heaven to earth.

He has not remembered his footstool in the day of his anger. Without pity, the Lord has swallowed up all the dwellings of Jacob. In his wrath he has torn down the strongholds of daughter Judah.

He has brought her kingdom and its princes down to the ground in dishonor. In fierce anger he has cut off every horn of Israel. He has withdrawn his mighty hand at the approach of his enemy.

He has burned in Jacob like a flaming fire that consumes everything around it. In verse 5 it says, The Lord is like an enemy. He has swallowed up Israel. His people take their grievances to God. God, why has he done this? Even Jesus on the cross cries out to God, why?

[ 30 : 53 ] He says, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? But there is no hint there of an answer given to him. And so if it wasn't given to Jesus on the cross, then that question of why God?

Why have you allowed this to happen to me? Actually, maybe we shouldn't expect an answer to that. Job, in his loss, he still looks to the Lord in trust.

Even though he will have many questions, he says, The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. May the name of the Lord be praised.

And yet his wife had a very different outlook on all this. She says, Are you still maintaining your integrity? Curse God and die. Two very different responses to the Lord.

Scripture, I think, does give us permission to tell God our grievances, to say, why? Though we may have a grievance with him in our grief, we have to come back and remember his character.

[ 32 : 19 ] We saw his character this morning. We see it again in this book of Lamentations, chapter 3 and verse 32. Though he brings grief, he will show compassion.

So great is his unfailing love. We saw this morning the Lord, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.

And we see his unfailing love and compassion mentioned here again. He brings grief. But remember, he will show compassion. He will show his great unfailing love to his people.

And so the Christian, even in grief and even with the grievances we may have, we can say this is true of us in verse 22 of chapter 3.

Because of the Lord's great love, we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning. Great is your faithfulness.

[ 33 : 31 ] I say to myself, the Lord is my portion, therefore I will wait for him. Even the grieving Christian can say that.

God be sure. And in all this, we can be sure that if we belong to Christ, we are not under the rod of his judgment.

Simon Thomas, who I mentioned earlier, later on in his book on grief, he described a December morning, thinking about Christmas without his wife, and his son Ethan without a mom at Christmas. He felt real deep darkness, and he shouted, no, this shouldn't be happening. But then in the midst of his tears, he said this, the Jesus I have read about in the Bible, and know from my faith, understood more than anyone what true darkness felt like.

When he died on the cross, the darkness he experienced was so profound that the light died with him. As he breathed his last, he came to know what it was like to feel the agony of separation, of being cut off from his father.

[ 34 : 55 ] The Jesus I have followed throughout my life is a man who understands sorrow and suffering that death brings. In that most desperate of mornings, I could feel him right beside me.

His presence was tangible. In that one powerful moment when my darkness had closed in, the image of Ethan and Jesus shone two rays of light into the pervasive gloom of that morning.

Thank you. And that brings us on to the final point, hope and healing.

The Bible doesn't leave grieving people without comfort and without help for daily life. Lamentations is a whole book of grief that the Lord has given to us, showing us that God himself understands.

And we've seen in Jesus, God himself has done something about our griefs. Jesus has done something. Jesus, the resurrection and the life who not only raised others from the dead, but he himself was raised from the dead.

[ 36 : 20 ] And it'd be great to turn to these words in 1 Thessalonians that we know so well. 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 verse 13 to 18.

1 Thessalonians 4 13 to 18. Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind who have no hope.

For we believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep.

For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so, we will be with the Lord forever.

[ 37 : 46 ] Therefore, encourage one another with these words. These are words to a church that had wondered if those who had died and were Christians, were they gone forever?

What happened to them? Well, Paul could wonderfully tell them, no, they are not gone forever. You will see your brothers and sisters in Christ again.

We will be reunited with them in the air one day when the day of the Lord comes. They are wonderful words of hope and words that we can use to encourage one another.

That's what verse 18 says. Therefore, encourage one another with these words. Encourage one another with the great hope that we have in Christ. See, we can keep looking to Christ in the midst of the deep pains and sorrows that we feel.

We may well tell ourselves or tell other people to hold on to Christ, but surely it's true that Christ holds on to us.

[ 39 : 04 ] Colin Smith again in his book on Greece says, your faith holds on to Christ, but the greater truth is that Christ holds on to you. Old hymn says it well, when I fear my faith will fail, Christ will hold me fast.

Christ died to save you and his love will never, never let you go. And final thing, when we think about hope and healing and grief, people may ask, are you getting better?

Are you getting over it? The reality though, is that perhaps we never will get over it here. In his book, C.S.

Lewis writes in his book A Grief Observed, to say the patient is getting over it after an operation for a appendicitis, is one thing. After he's had a leg off, is quite another.

After that operation, either the wounded stump heals or the man dies. If it heals, the fierce continuous pain will stop. Presently, he'll get his strength back and be able to stump about on his wooden leg.

[ 40 : 23 ] He has got over it. But he will probably have recurrent pains in the stump all of his life, and perhaps pretty bad ones.

And he will always be a one-legged man. There will hardly be any moment when he forgets about it. Bathing, dressing, sitting down and getting up.

Even lying in bed will all be different. His whole way of life will be changed. And C.S. Lewis, by writing that, is telling us that that's what grief is like.

it will stay with us. And in a way, our whole way of life has changed. So in grief, there is hope and there is healing in the Lord Jesus.

But not all our questions will be answered, nor will all our sorrow be gone, but God's word helps us to see that Jesus understands that God's mercies to us are new every morning, that his faithfulness to us really is great, that the Lord is ours, he is our portion, he is ours and we are his.

[ 41 : 45 ] And he will hold on to us. And one day we'll live in the new creation where there will be no more grief, no more tears, no more suffering, no more pain.

But for now, God gives us the resources that we need in our Saviour, in his word, in other Christian brothers and sisters to walk alongside us in the road of grief in this fallen and broken world.

I'm going to stop there. in a moment, a time where we can ask a question or two or make a comment, just to help one another to process what we've heard.

But firstly, let us take an opportunity to reflect and there's a really helpful, lovely song written. Some of us at Bible by the Beach a couple of years ago heard Emu Music.

And there's a really great song that would be good just to listen to, which is also written from a place of grief. It's called Take Heart. So the song should work.

[ 43 : 01 ] Don't apologize. We've asked for it. That was a beautiful song. I don't need to imagine. I'm sure that one of the deepest griefs of the human heart is the need to be known and to be understood.

And people, they may feel that they're reached, but people can't quite reach deep enough. and they can't even understand themselves.

They can't understand what's going on around them, but they really need to be known and understood. And that is truly a blessing of being God's children, is that we are completely known

and understood.

Far more than we can ever understand ourselves. and that is beyond it. Thank you, Michael. Yeah, indeed. We are made to be known and made to be known by God as well. Thank you, Michael.

[ 44 : 21 ] Any other thoughts, comments, questions? Aaron?

I just realised I'm in the wrong powerpoint. So, something that I found helpful when I was doing bereavement care awareness facilitates the training, it's a ridiculously long name, but it's fairly simple, was a really helpful model of grief that I come across, which I think I told you about, don't you?

I think it's called the Tompkins model, I don't know if anybody's ever heard of it, but the idea is a way of visually picturing grief, and a person has three glasses, one is a very small glass, one is a kind of medium-sized glass, and one is a very large glass, and the person has a ping-pong ball, and the ping-pong ball doesn't fit in the first glass, and the idea is this ping-pong ball represents grief, and as time goes on, we represent the glass, and as time goes on, eventually, the grief stays the same size, the grief is always present, but the glass grows to encompass the grief, and to deal with the grief better, and I found that was a really helpful way of picturing it, because in fact, certainly my experience of grief is that God does grow you around the grief, grief, and instructs you, and comforts you, and it really does,

I thought it was a very helpful model, so I just thought I'd share it. Yeah, it was helpful, and I was thinking about illustrating it at a point with it earlier, but I didn't, so I'm really glad you did.

Thank you, Aaron. Thank you. Jerome, and then Julie. Just been thinking about the whole kind of connection between grief and loss, and we thought about the obvious losses in terms of death, but I think it got me thinking about for many of us, loss can have so much of a wider meaning.

[ 46 : 43 ] There can be losses for people who, like you said, around physical health, it can be around children that are no longer walking with the Lord, can be loss of many years due to an addiction, mental health, a loss of the mental stability that one had, so I think as a church it's helpful for us to be mindful of that, that we all experience a number of different types of losses.

Yeah. Thank you. Yeah, it is good to, it's not not just about death, it's all sorts of losses that people are experiencing.

Yeah, thank you, Jerome. Julie. Yeah, it's been very helpful.

Yeah, many of you know, or don't know, we lost our first daughter, and on my, lost it now, my darkest day was going up to Guy's hospital and hearing what, you know, the outcome was and things, and we came back, and it was a Wednesday, and Roger said, let's go to the meeting, and I kind of, I don't know whether I've got anything in me left, and he said, no, you don't want to be at home on your own, and I said, yep, being with God's, sorry, God's people is the right thing, and Phil kind of came, and he was doing the meeting and said, I've had one of those days, I haven't had time to prepare anything, I don't know that this is what we're going to do, so he read from Jesus' walks in the water, I can't remember which gospel, but, but, Peter walked in the water, took his eyes off Jesus, and went under, and sort of, and Peter said, Lord, help me, and Jesus did, and basically, well, what I got out of it was, my eyes had been taken off Jesus, because of everything that had gone on, which was understandable, but just actually focusing on Jesus, and going forward, was what I needed to do, and that was, yeah, an answer to prayer, really, as well as, yeah, lots of people praying, and helping us through things, so yeah, so I wanted to say it, and then I didn't know whether I could.

[ 49 : 40 ] No, thank you so much for sharing that, that comes from a real experience that many of us have known bits about, so thank you. Michael, Daniel, I'm sorry, I just wanted to add one more thing to what I said, completely known, completely understood, and yet, completely loved.

Thank you. Steve, maybe final comment as well. I think you made a very good job of it, actually, Daniel, I think it's been very helpful what you said, but I might ask all of the people here, why are you here, why are you guys here this evening?

If you wanted to find out about grief, you could have read a book, or you could have listened to the sermon, it's been recorded, so you didn't have to make the effort to be here. I think the real reason we're here this morning is because we want to share.

It's a place where we feel loved and accepted. accepted. And the people who would have liked to have been here this evening or people who just couldn't be bothered have missed out.

It's not that it wasn't worth making the effort to come. I think we need to understand our church and our assembly together as a place where people are safe and accepted and loved.

[ 51 : 11 ] And that means we can share the grief that Julie is years ago now and yet it's still a grief that we remember and we shared with her at the time and we still share now.

I think we come here not really. If we don't get here we miss it. Not that we could have been doing something else.

We come here because that thought was the best thing we could be doing this evening. Yeah I think it is. Perhaps we need to think more generally about church in those terms.

We're here because it's a place where we feel loved and accepted. Yeah it certainly should be. And to do things like this to talk about grief and to share griefs with one another is a really important thing.

It is that rejoicing with those who rejoice and mourning with those who mourn. understanding how we can walk that road of grief together. Yeah thank you.

[ 52 : 17 ] On that note is there any final comments? David. Yeah and then we'll one more thing to say and then a song.

I might just be drawing attention to something you said earlier but I think when you mentioned that Blue Peter guy who was talking his first reaction was in a sense it was why God?

And I think maybe some Christians when they've had a serious loss they think it's wrong to complain and yet actually when you look hard at the Psalms quite a few of them are full of why have you allowed this?

But slightly linking it to what Aaron said I don't think it kind of stays there. Initially it's my world was this and you hit it hard and why why why but as you move on you become aware of a larger story that God is telling although it still hurts you see it in a slightly different perspective but it is okay to have those bursts of why why you know yeah thanks David and talking of that book so just a few books which you may like to go away and find out about so there's the Simon Thomas book Love Interrupted just that personal testimony there's a little book that I remember reading and can't find anywhere now but a little short read Tossings and Tears and Tossings which would be a good book to get hold of think about grief and then another book by Colin Smith which I've quoted from a few times for all who grieve all helpful resources as we think more about this but let's sing together we'll just sing the one song

Abide With Me a song often sung at funerals but it's good to sing it throughout our Christian lives it's written with Luke the last chapter of Luke the road to Emmaus in mind with the resurrected Lord Jesus walking alongside those two disciples so let's stand and sing it with that in mind with the resurrected Jesus in mind and then we'll say a prayer to close ending ending

[ 55 : 18 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 57 : 48 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

In death, hope and grief, hope and tears, hope and suffering, hope and pain. Would we know more of him as we walk through this world this week?

And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen.