

NAVIGATING GRIEF & TRAUMA

Scriptures used: [Job 2:11-13 \(NLT\)](#), [Matthew 27:45-46 \(NLT\)](#)

OVERVIEW

This week we have a special standalone sermon focused on grief, which is relevant to all of us, since we are either grieving about a loss or supporting others who are grieving. Some of us are doing both at the same time!

KEY POINTS

- 1. Job lost his health, family, and wealth. His friends offer us clues about what to do and also what not to do.**
 - a. Show up.** As soon as Job's friends heard about what was happening, they came to be with them. They didn't wait. They didn't send flowers or a letter. They knew that the most important thing they could do was to show up. If we aren't sure our presence is welcome, we can ask, but our inclination should be to be present to the fullest extent possible.
 - b. Acknowledge their pain.** Job's friends showed extreme emotion. They weren't worried about whether it was manly to cry. They mourned deeply with Job, so he knew they empathized.
 - c. Sit with them.** Job's friends didn't show up for a brief visit and then left. They stayed with him in his pain, sitting quietly, for seven days. Their gift of time was an expression of care.
 - d. Don't follow bad examples.** Job's friends should not have used cliché phrases and platitudes. Even if these are true, such statements aren't helpful. Don't try to explain something that can't be explained. Second, they should not have compared Job's suffering to others. It never helps to invalidate someone's grief. Finally, don't avoid the topic. We want the people who are grieving to know that we haven't forgotten about what they're going through.
- 2. Jesus is the model when we are grieving ourselves.** Jesus cried out on the cross, quoting scripture that captured His despair. He drew on His faith at His darkest moment, in the middle of terrible trauma.
 - a. Faith is an indispensable resource.** We can go through difficult journeys with or without God. It makes no sense to go it alone. That's why we attend church and pray. We build up the foundation on which we rely in traumatic times.
 - b. Recognize that grief is a process that can't be hurried.** We have no control over the speed of this process. It may take months or decades. It is different for everyone. Even Jesus' death on the cross was a process. Grief that isn't processed becomes poisonous.
 - c. Decide to go through the grieving process.** We have to work through the challenges of grief and not give up. We will encounter a variety of emotions, including shock, denial, confusion, forgetfulness, anger, guilt, and depression. At some point we will reach some kind of acceptance of our loss and begin to build new life around our grief, even if it never goes away.
 - d. With faith, face the darkness.** Jesus faced the darkness at noon while He was crucified. For many of us, the light goes out in our hearts. Even in darkness, our faith will guide us with God.
 - e. Go on a journey with Jesus.** Jesus died for our sins. He suffered with and for us. Even though He triumphs over death, He still takes the time to grieve, as in [John 11:32-35 \(NLT\)](#) before He raises Lazarus from the dead.

DISCUSSION

- 1) HEAR** - What have been the most significant experiences of grief in your life? When have you had the opportunity to walk with others through their grief? How has God changed you through grief?
- 2) UNDERSTAND** - Consider [John 11:1-44](#). What dynamics of grief do you notice in this passage? What does it mean that Jesus enters into grief so deeply and so personally? Consider the landscape of grief in your own life right now. Who needs you to show up for them? What's stopping you from going to their house right now, or reaching out and finding a tangible way to care for them? If you are grieving, where are you in your journey with Jesus?
- 3) DO** - Whether it's you or a loved one who is grieving, go to NBCC's online resource page. Maybe you need to cry, journal, revisit memories, share stories, or just pray. If God calls you to reach out to another person, do it! Join us next Sunday as we start a new series, "Character Matters!"