

“Grieving?”

Over the past couple of months it has been very evident that people are grieving, especially those who have lost loved ones who have died because of Covid-19. At the same time, the grief in peoples’ eyes and voices has been evident because of loss in other ways. Losing the ability to freely interact with friends and family; losing your job; losing trust in others; the loss of numerous activities which involve being around others—all can elicit feelings of grief in you.

Thinking of grief connected with the death of a loved one, behavioral experts throughout the years have analyzed the characteristics and dynamics of grief. One thing is for sure: Grief comes in the midst of death and relationship. People all over the world are dying within seconds of each other and yet you’re not grieving all those deaths. Only those with whom you have a relationship causes grief for you.

John 11:35 says, *Jesus wept*. While it may seem natural for Him according to His human nature to do so at the death of His good friend Lazarus, it is also very strange in light of the context. Having received word of Lazarus’ illness Jesus confidently stated: *This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.* (cf. John 11:4) From the outset He knew He would raise Lazarus from the dead. So why the grief?

Because death is just wrong. From the moment God created human beings it was all about life, physically and eternally. The sin which Adam & Eve brought upon all mankind and creation because of their disobedience to God’s command brought death, spiritually and physically. Death is just wrong. It goes directly against that for which we were created—life now and eternally (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:5). Thus, we grieve because of our love for the one who has died.

When *Jesus wept* it was because the death of His good friend Lazarus was evidence of sinfulness, the sinfulness which He would have to take on Himself. He wasn't feeling sorry for Himself but rather feeling grief for all mankind being held under the power of sin, the devil and death. He encountered *the sting of death* that comes with sin (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:56).

God also experienced grief—grief over the death of our perfect relationship with Him in Adam's fall into sin. But for Him it's still all about life! *God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for all live to Him* (cf. Luke 20:38). In fact, His love for you and desire to live in your presence physically is so steadfast that He sent His only Son, Jesus, so that *whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life* (cf. John 3:16). Jesus knew that He came to die to pay the penalty which your sins deserve and rise again to give you new life, physically and eternally in “the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come” (The Nicene Creed).

Grief at the death of a loved one is natural because we are all about living, sustaining and desiring life. At the same time, grief at the death of a loved one who is a Christian is different because we do *not grieve as other do who have no hope* (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:13). We grieve knowing the certainty of “the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come” (The Nicene Creed) for all who trust in Jesus' atoning work for their sins.

As we are trying at this point in time to regain life it will still be different than we knew it before Covid-19. But then, it would anyway because life is always in change and flux. That doesn't mean that we don't experience a certain amount of “grief” in the midst of that change and flux when we have to give up a part of that which goes into making up our life. Hopefully your life will be

different as you repent of your sins and trust in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus your Savior. He *is the same yesterday and today and forever* (cf. Hebrews 13:8). In such faith you can confidently confess: “Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!” Amen.

— *Pastor*