

Sadness: Losing What Matters, Finding What Lasts

“Why does God allow suffering?” This question doesn’t hold any weight if suffering isn’t felt. It’s one of the most common complaints or arguments against the idea of a loving God. “If God is good, why does He allow me to feel so bad?” We all experience sadness. There are some who, for example, who recently lost loved ones. Or maybe your house isn’t as busy as it used to be, and the quietness that took over the laughter has given you the blues. Maybe something didn’t pan out like you’d thought, and it’s left you questioning your future and what you’d hope that would look like. The examples go on and on, and for some, so does the sadness.

So, let’s dig in. Let’s consider some negative and positive examples of sadness. Then we’ll turn our attention to Jesus. Finally, we’ll ask, “what is sadness saying to me”, and then look for application.

Negative Examples:

- Elijah Over Jezebel (**1 Kings 19**)
- Rich Young Ruler (**Mark 10:22**)

Positive Examples:

- Job’s Loss (**Job 1:20-22**)
- Israel’s Suffering (**Exo. 2:23-25**)
- Hannah Prayed and Wept Bitterly (**1 Sam. 1:9-11**)
- David Wept Over Saul & Jonathan (**2 Sam. 1:17-27**)
- Jeremiah Over Israel (**Jer. 8:18-22; Lam. 1:16-17**)
- Paul & Ephesian Elders (**Acts 20:36-38**)
- Mary At The Tomb (**John 20**)

Jesus:

- Did Jesus experience sadness? Several times!
 - Lazarus’ Death (**John 11:35**)
 - Jesus Over Jerusalem (**Luk. 19:41-44**)
 - Man Of Sorrows (**Matt. 27:45-46; Isa. 53:3**)
 - “Jesus did not come merely to remove sadness eventually. He first chose to enter it personally.”

What’s Anger Saying To Us?

- If fear says, “something threatens me”, and anger says, “something is wrong,” then sadness says, “Something valuable to me is gone” or “I’m experiencing a loss.”
- This could be people, relationships, innocence, hopes, health, opportunities, identity, meaning, closeness, security, time, or even imagined futures.
- At its deepest it says: “This world is broken.”

- "Fear experiences a threatened loss. Anger experiences violated values/standards. Sadness experiences actual loss. Fear anticipates. Sadness absorbs. That's why sadness feels heavy instead of urgent.
- **THIS LOSS DEFINES EVERYTHING! I'M LOST!**
- **What we can acknowledge:**
 - This is understandably valuable to me.
 - This doesn't define me.
 - I can take this to God.
 - God will use this to shape me.
- Sadness isn't wrong. Sadness is evidence of valuing something, and that's not bad. Healthy sadness says, "This loss matters, and I must bring it honestly before God." Unhealthy sadness says: "This loss defines everything." The first leads to lament, compassion, dependence, tenderness, reflection, and deeper love. Unhealthy sadness becomes despair, isolation, bitterness, hopelessness, paralysis. "Sadness becomes dangerous when pain is all we can see. Healthy sadness grieves what was lost while still trusting what remains. The goal is not to avoid sadness, but to avoid becoming ruled by it." Realistically, we do need to pray and get about God's work. When you isolate and have too much time on your hand, sadness will consume you.
- **What can we do to navigate this emotion?**
 - Turn to God in prayer.
 - Find comfort in His word.
 - Reach out to wise counselors.
 - Seek to serve others around you.
 - Don't fight the lesson, fight for joy.
 - Believe that God is loving and faithful.