

Equipping Night  
The Emotional Life of Jesus: A Deeper Look at How He Bore Our Grievs

## Introduction

For the last 2 Equipping Nights of the semester, I'd like to discuss the topic of emotions. Tonight, is the emotional life of Jesus, and on May 1, it will be the emotional life of the Christian.

Why emotions? Emotions are a part of being human. They are gift from God, but like all of God's gifts, Satan loves to twist them for his own purposes. And, like all of God's gifts, our flesh loves to either dismiss the gift, or worship the gift instead of the giver. A month from now, we'll talk more about the emotional life of the Christian, but tonight, I want our eyes fixed on Jesus

Have you ever experienced a time when you had way more in common with someone than you first realized. Maybe you liked the same band, or rooted for the same team, or even shared the same struggles. Maybe one of your parents have told you about their high school years and you're like, "wow, we are more similar than I ever thought we were."

In high school, I played on the offensive line on the football team. Everyone on the o-line was so different. **We were ethnically different:** I was one of 2 white guys, 2 others were African american, and one was half-latino, half-italian. **We were culturally different:** I lived in Raleigh, and the other white guy was from the deep south of Mississippi. But over time, we realized that we had so much in common.

1 - we all loved to eat. One guy says, "hey, I'm going to Golden Corral," and the rest are there in a heartbeat." A

2 - Also, **we all had weird senses of humor and made eachother laugh often.** This led to us making a bunch of youtube videos together.

But there was one thing that bound us more than anything: **the shared experience of blocking in the trenches**. On the o-line, you don't get any glory. No touchdowns, no tackles, just blocking. And we knew what it was like to be overlooked, we knew what it was like to leave every game bruised, and to have our feet stepped on every other play. Our shared experiences bound us together, and made us realize, we had way more in common than we first realized.

If someone asked you, how much does Jesus have in common with you, how would you answer that question? It's a hard question, because in some ways Jesus is entirely different from us. He is God. And as a human he was sinless. And yet, Jesus is even more like us than we often give him credit for. He became fully human. Jesus' human nature consists of everything essential to being human, and that *includes human emotions*.

Just like me and my o-line buddies, Jesus has been in the trenches with us and our emotions. He's felt everything that we feel, with one exception, he's never sinned.

**Our main point tonight is that Jesus, as a full human, has experienced the entire spectrum of human emotions, but without sin.** And just so you know, this isn't some niche topic that isn't that important to Christianity. This actually strikes at the core of our faith, because it has to do with the real humanity of Jesus.

**Let me put it this way: the Emotional life of Jesus was part of how he saved us.** By the end of tonight I hope you see that.

On this topic I have two recommended resources.

The first is *The Emotional Life of Our Lord* by B.B. Warfield. This is not an easy read, but it is a short read. This is the most influential thing ever written on Jesus' emotions.

Second is an article from Desiring God: "To Groan is Human – and Christian: Learning from the Emotions of Jesus" <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/to-groan-is-human-and-christian>

**The first step in understanding the emotional life of Jesus is this: We have to understand that Jesus is truly God, and truly man.**

Today, we have to convince people that Jesus was really God. But in the early church, some of the first heresies were people saying that Jesus wasn't really a man. He just looked human...but he wasn't really human.

2 John 7 - For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist.

As Christians we have to remember, the humanity of Jesus is just as essential to our salvation as his divinity. If Jesus was a human but not God. We wouldn't be saved. If Jesus was just God but not a human, we would not be saved. Do you realize that?

Sometimes, in the American Church today, we're so not used to talking about the humanity of Jesus, that it can make us uncomfortable. Look at this quote from Sinclair Ferguson:

"I have watched people carefully when saying something like, "If the Jesus you believe in was not able to grow wiser and also to grow in favor with God, he is not the Jesus of the Gospels (see Luke 2:52). I usually see some startled faces. Somehow, many Christians have not been able to take in that our Lord's humanity is as *real* as that.

"The result is that they have not yet fully discovered Christ as he was and is in experiencing the complete range of our human emotions. Without an appreciation of his emotional life, Christ will always seem to be at a distance from us."

**There are two pitfalls to how most Christians think of Jesus' emotions:**

1 – A stoic Jesus. One who was always serene, as if that's what perfection looked like.

2 – A hyper-emotional Jesus. This one is less common, but sometimes when people talking about Jesus turning tables in the temple, they describe him as if he was a loose cannon.

But the Jesus that the Bible presents us, is not stoic – he groans, he sighs, he's amazed, he experiences full joy and love, he's angry, he weeps. And yet, he's not hyper-emotional, because he doesn't blindly follow his emotions. He's led by the word of God and the Spirit of God

Jesus shows us that there is no such thing as a “bad” emotion. Joy isn’t always good. Grief isn’t always bad. Sometimes we have joy for the wrong reasons. Sometimes we grieve for the right reasons. Jesus felt the positive emotions, and the negative emotions, all for the right reasons.

**Tonight, I want to do an exercise. I want us all to divide into groups of 3-5, give and take, and each group will be assigned a passage with some questions to answer. We’ll come back at 7:10 (or earlier) to share our findings.**

### **Group 1 – The Joy of Jesus**

Read these passages

- John 15:11
- John 17:13
- Hebrews 12:1-2
- Matt 11:18-19

Discuss these questions

- What would you say was the source or the reason(s) for Jesus’ joy?
- What can Jesus’ joy teach us about joy in the midst of suffering?
- We think of Jesus as “a man of sorrows,” (Isa 53:3) and so he was, but does this mean Jesus was constantly sorrowful all of the time? Would Jesus’ have this reputation in Matthew 11:18-19 if his demeanor always appeared to be sad? Flesh out your thoughts together as a group.

### **Group 2 – The Compassion of Jesus**

Read these passages:

- Matthew 9:35-36
- Matthew 23:37-39

Answer these Questions

- What is “compassion” in your own words?
- Why was Jesus compassionate according to Matthew 9:36? Who are some people that fit this description today?
- How is Jesus’ displaying compassion when he weeps over Jerusalem in Matthew 23?
- How might frustration (or even righteous anger) be related to compassion?

### **Group 3 – The Tomb of Lazarus**

Read this passage:

- John 11:32-44

Answer these questions

- What emotions do you see from Jesus in this passage?
- Verse 33 and 38 both say Jesus was “deeply moved.” A better translation would be “indignant” or “angry.” What do you think Jesus was mad about in this situation?

- V. 33 says Jesus was “greatly troubled.” This means that Jesus was “disturbed.” What do you think Jesus was disturbed by in this situation?
- V. 35 says “Jesus wept.” If Jesus was about to raise Lazarus...why did he weep?

#### **Group 4 – Gethsemane**

Read these passages:

- Matthew 26:36-46
- Luke 22:44

Answer these questions

- What emotions does Jesus experience in this passage?
- In what way do Jesus’ emotions have an impact on his physical body in this passage? Why is this physical impact significant?
- What is significant about Jesus sharing his emotions with Peter, James, and John. Why do you think he did this?
- Why do you think Jesus prayed three times, instead of just one?
- Why was Jesus afraid of “the cup”? What exactly was “the cup”?
- Early Church martyrs occasionally went to their death with joy and singing hymns. Here, Jesus is much more afraid. Why is that? Is Jesus’ faith weaker than the early church martyrs?

#### **Group 5 – the cross**

Read these passages:

- Matthew 27:27-50

Answer these questions

- What do you know about the physical suffering of crucifixion?
- In what ways does Jesus experience emotional suffering in this passage? List all of the instances you see
- To be more specific, what are some factors that contributed to Jesus’ experience of shame?
- Why did the Father forsake Jesus at this moment? Flesh out what this means with our group.
- Why do you think the passage doesn’t seem to emphasize the physical suffering of crucifixion as much as the *emotional* suffering?

**Let’s come back together and discuss our findings**

#### **Group 1 – The Joy of Jesus**

- John 15:11
- Hebrews 12:1-2

What would you say was the source or the reason(s) for Jesus’ joy?

Rel. with Father, then us.

- **Matt 11:18-19**
  - ]We think of Jesus as “a man of sorrows,” (Isa 53:3) and so he was, but does this mean Jesus was constantly sorrowful all of the time? Would Jesus’ have this reputation in Matthew 11:18-19 if his demeanor always appeared to be sad? Flesh out your thoughts together as a group.

## **Group 2 – The Compassion of Jesus**

Read these passages:

- **Matthew 9:35-36**
- **Matthew 23:37-39**

### **Answer these Questions**

How is Jesus’ displaying compassion when he weeps over Jerusalem in Matthew 23?

(He doesn’t delight in their perishing, his heart breaks when sinners remain unrepentant)

How might frustration (or even righteous anger) be related to compassion?

(He still cares about them, even as they are deserving of judgement)

## **Group 3 – The Tomb of Lazarus**

- **John 11:32-35**
- **John 11:38**

### **Answer these questions**

Verse 33 and 38 both say Jesus was “deeply moved.” A better translation would be “indignant” or “angry.” What do you think Jesus was mad about in this situation?

(Death, Satan, Fall)

V. 33 says Jesus was “greatly troubled.” This means that Jesus was “disturbed.” What do you think Jesus was disturbed by in this situation?

(The heartbreak that comes from death)

V. 35 says “Jesus wept.” If Jesus was about to raise Lazarus...why did he weep?

(Hates death. Temporary, but painful)

## **Group 4 – Gethsemane**

**Matthew 26:36-39**  
**Luke 22:44**

## Questions

In what way do Jesus' emotions have an impact on his physical body in this passage? Why is this physical impact significant?

(Sweat blood, or like blood. As a human, he was a physical, psycho, spiritual, social beings)

"Even unto death" – my heart is breaking, it feels like I could die

Why do you think Jesus prayed three times, instead of just one?

(Anxious, earnest)

Early Church martyrs occasionally went to their death with joy and singing hymns. Here, Jesus is much more afraid. Why is that? Is Jesus' faith weaker than the early church martyrs?

(The difference was the cup. The wrath of God Physical torment vs. the spiritual/emotional torment)

Ligon Duncan – "Jesus knows what its like for his Father to say no."

## Group 5 – The Cross

Matthew 27:39-46

## Questions

In what ways does Jesus experience emotional suffering in this passage? List all of the instances you see

Shame from mocking, Naked, wine mixed with gall as a prank, "abandoned" by the Father. Like a nightmare when you're cast our by your own family

Why did the Father forsake Jesus at this moment? Flesh out what this means with our group.

I once heard a pastor say, what Christ experienced is the opposite of Aaron's blessing: "The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you..."

Instead, Jesus experiences "may the Lord CURSE you, may he hide his face from you, and abandon you."

**Let me put it as simply as I can: Jesus experienced Hell on the cross**

Why do you think the passage doesn't seem to emphasize the physical suffering of crucifixion as much as the *emotional* suffering?

This was the greatest pain of Hell.

#### 4 Big Reasons Why this Matters

1. The Emotional Life of Jesus is essential to his existence as a full human being
2. In Jesus, we see an example of how to navigate hard emotions

But he's not only our example, most importantly, he's our savior! And that leads to the final, most important thing.

#### 3. Every emotional hardship experienced by Jesus contributed to our salvation

Jesus' work of redeeming us was *finished* at the cross...but It did not start at the cross. Jesus experienced the fullness of the curse at the cross, but before that he also lived 33 years in a fallen world.

Isaiah 53:4, prophesying about Jesus says, "Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows;" This verse is quoted in the gospels. Without knowing, what scene or what story do you think this verse would be quoted in?

Would you believe me if I told you this was quoted much earlier in Jesus' life?

Matthew 8:16–17 (ESV)

<sup>16</sup>That evening they brought to him many who were oppressed by demons, and he cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick.

<sup>17</sup>This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: "He took our illnesses and bore our diseases."

**This verse is quoted not at the cross, but after an episode of healing and casting out demons. This is what I'm getting to, Jesus did not only carry your griefs at the cross, he carried your griefs his whole life!**

So as you read the gospels, and you see Jesus emotionally suffering, at any point of his life, know that it directly contributed to his atoning work. Jesus emotionally suffered...for you.

#### 4. Jesus is still human today, and will be forever. Therefore he is our sympathetic High Priest

Heb 4:15 - For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

I hope that tonight has helped you see that you can come to Jesus with anything, and that's what the next verse tells us to do...

Heb 4:16 - Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.