

Trusting The God Who Shares My Feelings
A Bible Study On John 11:17-36
3rd Step - Lesson 11

A lot of people are afraid of emotions. It's pretty common to hear it said that it's wrong to get "too emotional." Listen to one woman's experience:

"When my little brother died all of us kids cried for him. We cried for three days, until the day of the funeral. That's when Dad told us, "That's enough crying. No more." So we stopped. We didn't dare cry for our little brother after that."

Experiences like that make it easy to think that it's a weakness to have emotions, and that having no feelings is an ideal to strive for. Very often people even think that God is like that: he never gets angry or sad or happy, that he doesn't have feelings. That makes it hard when a person has some strong feelings, such as anger over abuse, or sadness and loneliness because of death: how can I talk to God about how I feel, when he doesn't experience those same feelings?

The Bible doesn't present a God who has no emotions, but just the opposite: the God of the Bible is a God who gets angry, sad, and happy. That's especially easy to see when you look at Jesus: God who became human. He knows your feelings, shares your feelings, and can be trusted with your feelings.

THOUGHT QUESTION: Think of something you have strong feelings of anger or sadness about. What would it feel like to know God was angry or sad along with you?

John 11:17-36 – On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home. "Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask."

Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; 26 and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

Yes, Lord," she told him, "I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world."

And after she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. "The Teacher is here," she said, "and is asking for you." When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there.

When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. "Where have you laid him?" he asked.

"Come and see, Lord," they replied.

Jesus wept.

Then the Jews said, "See how he loved him."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What feelings do you see Martha expressing? What feelings do you see Mary expressing? What feelings do you see Jesus expressing?
2. Notice how Jesus doesn't scold or reject Mary and Martha for the feelings they express. What does that tell you about Jesus?
3. Verses 25 - 26 are often read at funerals, when people are feeling a lot of intense emotions. What do you see Jesus promising you in these verses? How would believing these promises make a difference when you're in the middle of intense grief?
4. Look at verse 35. What does the fact that Jesus himself cried tell you about him?
5. Do you find yourself hesitating to tell God how you really feel? Why, or why not?
6. Does it make a difference for you to look at Jesus crying at Lazarus' grave, and know that you're praying to an *emotional* God?

CLOSING PRAYER: What are some things that you are angry or sad about that you would like to get real with God about?