

# Jesus' Really Difficult Day

## Dealing with Grief and Loss

### Lesson 10

#### Introduction

In many ways, Jesus lived an ordinary life. He was not immune from the stress of life or its pain and sorrow. Although the Gospels give no details, we know His earthly father, Joseph, died sometime during Jesus' early life. What the Gospels do record is the day Jesus learned of John the Baptist's death and how that affected Him.

#### Background

1. The miracle births of John and Jesus forever tied them together in God's history. John's parents Zachariah and Elizabeth and Jesus' mother Mary learned of their pregnancies from an angel of the Lord. Using Luke 1:26-28, 39-40 & 56:
  - How much older was John than Jesus?
  - How long did a pregnant Mary stay with pregnant Elizabeth?

#### John's Ministry

2. What was John's ministry as given by the Lord? (Matthew 3:1-3)
3. When it was time for Jesus to begin His public ministry, He went to John at the Jordan and asked to be baptized. Using Matthew 3:13-15:
  - What did John say to Jesus' request?
  - What was Jesus' understanding of why this must take place?
4. Using Luke 3:1-3, 18 and Matthew 3:1-3:
  - Where did John's ministry primarily take place?
  - What was his message?
5. What did people wonder about John? (Luke 3:15)

6. How did John answer that question? (Luke 3:16)
7. From Matthew 14:3-5 & Luke 3:19, 20:
  - Why did Herod the Tetrarch have John arrested?
  - Why didn't Herod kill John immediately?
8. While John was in prison, his disciples brought him news of Jesus' ministry. After some time had passed, what did John do? (Luke 7:18, 19)
  - Why do you think John did this?
9. How did Jesus reply? (Luke 7:20-23)
10. How did John's life end? (Matthew 14:6-11)
11. How did Jesus hear the news of John's death? (Matthew 14:12)

**Reflect**

12. As you read over this story of John, what do you think his relationship was with Jesus?

**Jesus' Difficult Day**

13. What did Jesus do when He heard the news of John's death? (Matthew 14:13a)
14. Jesus needed time and space to process what He had just learned. What did the crowds do? (Matthew 14:13b)

15. Jesus was in shock, grieving over John's death. But, huge crowds kept pressing in. Using Matthew 14:14 -15a:
- What did Jesus feel toward this crowd?
  - What did He do?
  - For how long?
16. According to Matthew's Gospel, it was after this very long and difficult day that Jesus fed 5,000 men plus women and children. (Matthew 14:15-21) When the day was finally over, what did Jesus do? (Matthew 14:22-23a)
17. Using Matthew 14:24-27:
- Just before dawn, what predicament were the disciples in?
  - Realizing the situation, how did Jesus get to them?
  - What was the reaction of the disciples?
18. Jesus assured them that, "It is I. Don't be afraid." What was Peter's reaction? (Matthew 14:28)

### **Reflect**

19. Try to imagine being in the boat at this time. Read Peter's statement closely and comment on your observations.
20. How did that turn out for Peter? (Matthew 14:29-31)

21. What happened when Jesus got into the boat?

- Matthew 14:32

- Matthew 14:33

22. The boat eventually landed at Gennesaret. It had been a very long and difficult day followed by a sleepless night. Jesus just needed some time to rest. What happened when the boat landed? (Matthew 14:35, 36)

### **Putting Feet to Grief and Loss**

Dealing with grief and loss is something we all must face at some time in our lives. Although we often think of grief in relationship to loss of a loved one, it also comes from many different situations including loss of a job, friendship, divorce, empty nest, retirement or a dream. It is important to recognize and to understand recovery from grief and loss takes time. The best medical minds have identified five stages to grief.

- **Denial, numbness and shock:** This stage protects the individual from the intense pain of the loss. This is not a lack of caring, but a way of coping until the individual is slowly able to acknowledge the impact of the loss.
- **Bargaining:** This is when the individual goes to all the "what ifs" and if not dealt with can lead to remorse or guilt that can interfere with the healing process.
- **Depression:** This stage can occur in some people after the realization of the true and full extent of the loss. This includes coping through sleeping, excessive crying, inability to eat (or over eating), lack of energy or the ability to concentrate. This can lead to isolation and self-pity.
- **Anger:** This stage occurs when there is a sense of helpless and powerlessness. Anger can come from the feeling of being abandoned through death, or through the loss of something because of someone else's decisions, like a job.
- **Acceptance:** In time, acceptance will come. And once acceptance is reached, the individual can move on with a healthy life.

Not everyone will experience all five stages, but these are the most common emotional stages for grief and loss. Time is required for healing; there is no shortcut. But, to stay in any stage without moving to acceptance usually requires outside help to move forward to resume a normal life.

As we look at the life of Jesus, we recognize that He was deeply affected by John's death, but was able to move from shock to acceptance quickly because of His relationship with the Father. But, Jesus still needed time to be alone and pray in order to work through His grief. For us, that relationship with God is key to healing. For in Him, there is hope!

It is important to take the time needed to grieve and to spend time alone in prayer, but it is also important to be with people. For Jesus, His ministry didn't stop. He had to continue meeting the needs of others. He was not isolated but surrounded by those who loved, cared for and encouraged Him. We too need to be surrounded by caring people and to be there for others going through a time of grief and loss.