The Eyes of Grief — Delivery Transcript

John 19:21–27 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Sunday, March 24, 2024 · *Through Their Eyes*

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All right, well thank you to the band for leading us in our time of worship. You did a great job as always. And I must say you guys were singing loud today. Man, I could actually hear you from where I was standing. Some of that is, you know, no bass, no drums. Sometimes you can hear the voices a little bit better. I do want to point out that Tim Bosley, who typically plays bass, is in the hospital and has got some serious health situation going on, so please be praying for Tim as he navigates that health crisis and pray that God brings him back to us safe and sound.

But I'm so thankful for our band and our team. They're so gifted and lead us in worship week in and week out. And I don't want to take that for granted. If you have your Bible, you can open it to John's Gospel, John chapter 19. If you're new to Broadview, we typically go through books of the Bible, and we had been going through the book of Genesis. But we're pressing pause as we sometimes do when we take a big book of the Bible like that to take a little break. And since it's Easter week and Easter is typically focused on the final episodes of Jesus' life, I thought it would be good for us to pick a gospel and go through those final episodes of Jesus' life in the Passion Week over the next three weeks.

And the big idea of the series is what you've got on your worship guide on the very front there, which is that Jesus changes everything. Everything Jesus touches, Jesus changes. Whether it's your life as an individual or anything in your life that is worth anything. It changes your relationships, changes your marriage, changes your children, changes your approach to parenting, he changes the way you spend your money, he changes the way you think, he changes the way you feel, it changes the way you love, he changes literally everything about you, everything Jesus touches, Jesus changes.

But over the next three weeks, what we're going to do is look at the way Jesus changes our relationship with three particular things that often bring about negative emotion in our life. The week after Easter we're going to look at how he changes our relationship with failure. All of us who've lived any length of time have probably experienced an episode of failure. And

how am I to make sense of that, and how does Jesus have anything to do with my failure? Next week on Easter, we're going to look at how Jesus changes our relationship with doubt, because anybody who's walked with the Lord for any length of time has seasons of doubt and discouragement.

Is it all true? Can I take this to the bank? But today we're going to look at an issue that all of us have experienced to one degree or another, and that is the way that Jesus changes our relationship with grief, particularly grief as it's associated with loss. Now, the first thing that comes to people's minds when they think about loss is typically the loss of a loved one in death. And our church, for whatever reason, this year, since January, has seen a lot of loss associated with death. I've done more funerals in the last three months than I think I did the last eight months of last year.

It was crazy how many people in our church family or directly associated with our church family have experienced loss. So there's a lot of people hurting in our church right now. For some of us it's not the loss of a loved one in death. It's the loss of something precious to us even in life. It may be for you it's the loss of a child that you thought y'all were on good terms, but all of a sudden you're persona non grata—you know, they turn 13 or whatever, and they can't stand you anymore.

Or 18, or whatever the case may be. Some of you it's the loss of a marriage, something you thought would last forever. But because of the actions of one or the both of you, now you don't know anymore. Maybe the loss of a job, maybe the loss of a certain reputation because of foolish decisions on your part. How do you navigate loss? How do you navigate grief? And how does Jesus transform the way that you grieve? That's what our passage is going to be about. Now let me situate our text, John chapter 19, in the big scheme of things.

This is the Passion Week of Jesus. The passion I used to wonder why do they call it the Passion Week of Jesus no one's passionate about dying, but that's just the rube talking, okay? I didn't know what the word passion means. It's actually a Latin word, passio, which means to suffer. So it's talking about the suffering of Jesus. The last week of his life was full of suffering. He comes in on—this is Palm Sunday, right? Today is Palm Sunday. So on Palm Sunday Jesus comes into Jerusalem. Everybody's pumped, right? They've heard the stories.

This is the miracle worker. This is the man. He's so awesome. He's the Messiah. People are saying he's going to overthrow Rome. Finally free. And so they're literally laying down palm branches. That's why they call it Palm Sunday. They are pumped. They are excited. Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Come on, Jesus. But then Jesus actually does what he does and not everybody is super excited about it. So he goes into the temple, he sees a bunch of people buying and selling and ripping people off, and so he throws over a bunch of tables.

He says, You dumb-dumbs, you've made God's house, which is supposed to be a house of prayer, you've turned it into a den of thieves, a den of robbers. And so that upset a lot of people. The next day he goes into the temple and he starts teaching and preaching about the kingdom of God, but a lot of his teaching and preaching was framing the kingdom of God in a way that wasn't super political and wasn't like I'm going to destroy Rome and it was much more spiritual and based on faith and love and grace and so that upset a lot of people.

And then when he would say things like, I am Lord of the Sabbath, or, I and the Father are one, or some of these phrases that the religious leaders go, I think this guy's claiming to be God. I think this guy's claiming to be something blasphemous. And so they partner up with the Roman government and they say, we've got to end this. This guy's causing problems. He's making a ruckus. And you know, you Romans, you like law and order. He is upsetting the apple cart. We need to get him gone.

And so they work out a deal. Judas betrays Jesus. I think he decides to betray Jesus on Wednesday, the same day that Jesus is anointed with oil on his feet, maybe for burial. Thursday, they have their Last Supper. They're all seated around the table. Jesus says, one of you guys are going to betray me. And then Judas, being that man, he gets up, he goes and betrays the Lord that same night, Thursday night. Maundy Thursday, which we're going to celebrate this week at our church. I hope you'll come. Six o'clock.

They're having the Lord's table. They finish supper and they go out to the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus is so agonizing over what's about to happen that he's sweating drops of blood. He's crying out to God, If this is possible, Lord, would you let this cup pass from me? He's suffering. Not my will but yours be done. As he finishes the prayer, the Romans come in, they arrest him. Judas betrays him with a kiss. They take him, they put him through a mock trial on Friday, and Friday after his trial, even though Pilate looks at him and says, I can't find anything wrong with this man, the people cry out, Crucify him, crucify him, crucify him.

And so Pilate says, well, he's not going to die for his sins. He's going to die for the sins of another. So they release Barabbas. And Jesus is beaten and tortured within an inch of his life. He's whipped with a cat-o'-nine-tails. He got blood and guts going everywhere. He carries that wooden cross on his back through the roads of Jerusalem. And he goes outside the city, uphill, to a place called Golgotha. And they take that wooden beam and they lay it across another beam and they put nails in his hands and in his feet.

And they put a crown of thorns on his head on Friday. And for him to breathe, he had to pick himself up on those nails and push himself up on those nails in his feet just to get air, a breath in edgewise. And as he's hanging there, the events of our passage take place. There are seven final sayings of Jesus from the cross. And one of those seven sayings is words that

Jesus speaks to his mother. And what I want us to do this morning is to zoom in on that conversation.

I want you to see it through their eyes. I'm not so concerned about the events of Passion Week as I am the eyewitness experiences of those events because Jesus' conversation with his mother, I believe, utterly transformed the way that she thought about grief and can utterly transform the way we think about grief as well. So let's pick it up. John chapter 19, starting in verse 21. Pilate had a sign written above Jesus' head to put on the cross that said King of the Jews. It was written in Aramaic, Latin, and Greek.

And so the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate in verse 21, Don't write, The king of the Jews, but that he said, I'm the king of the Jews. They don't want to give Jesus any more influence than he already has. But Pilate again thought Jesus was innocent, so he says, No—what I've written. So when the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and they divided it into four parts, a part for each soldier, so there was four soldiers. They also took a tunic which was seamless, woven in one piece from the top, and they said to one another, Let's not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who gets it.

And all of this was so Scripture might be fulfilled, that says they divided my clothes among themselves, and they cast lots for my clothing. This is what the soldiers did. Here's our text this morning, focusing in verse 25. Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother, his mother's sister, Mary, the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple he loved standing there, he said to his mother, Woman, here is your son. And then he said to the disciple, Here is your mother. And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.

Now to give you a little bit of context for those who are not super familiar with this story, you've got four women around the cross and one guy, which is interesting to me. Where are all the other guys? They're hiding, they're fearful for their lives. This Messiah that they thought was going to overthrow the Romans had just been crucified, so they're thinking to themselves, if he's gone, I'm next. They're all afraid, but Jesus has these women and one disciple surrounding the cross. Now, who were these women? One of them is his mother, right?

Mary, the mother of Jesus, wife of Joseph. That's a for sure. The other woman we know for sure is the second Mary named Mary Magdalene. Mary Magdalene was a disciple of Jesus, very devoted to Jesus because she had a life of demonic oppression before meeting Jesus. You think she was probably in some kind of sex trade or addiction or alcoholism. There was some kind of demonic activity that had her under its grip and Jesus meets her, casts those demons out of her life and heals her, and so she's grieving. Now this is not what they looked like, okay?

They're much less white than this. But this is just kind of give you an idea of what it might have looked like. You got Mary here in the blue, Mary Magdalene over here. Devastated because her Lord, who changed her life, is now dead. And then you've got two other women. Now some say there's not two other women, some say there's just the two women, some say there's three women, there's all these debates. But the traditional view: two other women. One of them is named Mary's sister. Now Mary's sister we know is probably a woman named Salome, who is John the Disciple's mom.

Okay, why doesn't John say, hey, mom was there? Because John doesn't even say he was there. He says the disciple Jesus loved was there. So John was kind of like that. He didn't make a focus on himself. He didn't make a focus on his mom. So it's likely John is there with his mom, Mary Magdalene, and then one other woman named Mary, wife of Clopas. Now who knows who that is? Nobody. I didn't even know who it was. Nobody knows who it is. Everybody debates about who it is. I don't think it really matters.

My best guess is it is the wife of Joseph's brother. Sounds like a Jerry Springer episode, but it's not. Mary had a husband named Joseph. Joseph was dead, but Joseph had a brother. Joseph's brother got married. The wife of his brother is Clo is Mary, wife of Clopas. That doesn't help anything. Just the point is to say it's Jesus' aunt, okay? You got Jesus' aunt, you got Jesus' mom, you got Jesus' super close friends and disciples, which is very common during a crucifixion that close family and friends were going to be there.

Notice who isn't there, the other disciples of Jesus. Jesus' other brothers, they're not there, all that's important. But I want you to feel what they would have felt. I want you to see it with their eyes. What would they have seen? What would they have heard? What would they have smelled? Smelt. The conversations that they would have overheard while they're standing by the cross. And again, that's very important. I don't think it's just a geographical description. I think it's a theological point in addition to a geographical description. It's not until you stand at the cross that you truly see the truth about Jesus.

For Jesus to change the way you grieve, you can't relate to Jesus as some wise teacher. You can't just kind of embrace his moral ethic, the Sermon on the Mount. No, for you to really have Jesus change your life and change your grieving, you've got to stand near the cross. You've got to encounter him as you see him standing near the cross, because the cross is fundamental and central to everything about Christianity. That's not an overstatement to say you can't understand Christianity unless and until you understand the cross. Remember the passage we read in 1 Corinthians, the cross is foolishness to the Greeks.

It's a stumbling block to the Jews, but to those who are being saved, it's the wisdom of God and power of God. Everything about Christianity, understanding how do I endure, how do I forgive people, how do I have hope of eternal life, how do I have contentment in the midst of difficult circumstances, all of that centers around the cross of Jesus Christ. When you stand

near the cross and you see him, that is when he changes you, especially the way you grieve. And as they stand near the cross, what would they have thought?

What would they have felt? If you put yourself in Mary's shoes, when I did that this week, I would get teary-eyed just thinking about it. And I'm not one of those cry guys. I don't cry a lot. I cried during the Batman movie and the Hardball movie. That was it. But something about thinking about what she would have felt, it got to me. This is her son. So at a physical level, no mother wants to bury their child. Right? It's backwards. It's unnatural. It shouldn't happen that way. But at a spiritual level, this is her Savior.

She believed Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. All of her hopes, all of her ambitions about Messiah coming and fulfilling the prophecies of the Old Testament, now she's second guessing all of that. I wonder if in that moment she thought to herself the words of Simeon. You remember Simeon when Jesus was born, she takes Jesus to see Simeon. He had been hoping and waiting for the Christ his whole life. He's almost about to die. The only reason he's not dead is because God promised him, I'm going to let you see the Christ before you die.

So he comes, he sees Jesus. And he goes, This is the one, this is the Christ. And he makes this prophecy. Listen to what he says. He says that this child is destined to cause the fall and rise of many in Israel. He is a sign that will be opposed. And a sword will pierce your own soul, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. I wonder if she thought about those words. That Jesus is being opposed, my son. That these soldiers who are making bets on his clothes, their hearts are being revealed?

These people who cried out, crucify him, crucify him, even though they just said, Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Their hearts are being exposed. And I wonder if when that spear went through Jesus' side and those thorns went through Jesus' head, if she didn't think to herself, this is a sword pierced through my heart. The agony she would have felt. And the doubt she would have felt. And the uncertainty. It's natural, right? That's what grieving does. Grieving makes it easy to doubt God's goodness. Grieving makes it easy to doubt God's promises.

There's another passage right here, Luke chapter 1, verse 33. This is the message of the angels. Mary, you are blessed and highly favored. You're going to have a baby, even though you haven't been with a man, it's a supernatural birth because God is going to use you and the Messiah is going to be born through you, and he will be King of kings and Lord of lords, and over his kingdom there will be no end. I wonder if she's thinking about that while looking at her son being killed by the Romans, wondering how can he reign over a kingdom when this world's kingdom executed my son?

I wonder if she doubted. I imagine she did. Because that's what grieving does to people. Grieving makes it easy to doubt God's goodness and doubt God's promises. And you don't need to feel guilty about feeling doubt when you grieve. It's just part of the process. God, how could you let this happen? I wonder if in her mind's eye she's thinking about her other sons, Jesus' brothers, who are not there. Why are they not there? Because they don't believe in Jesus. Which, you know, you think about it, if your brother claimed to be the Son of God, you'd probably say, pfft, you know, no you're not.

You know, you'd probably think he's crazy. They thought Jesus was crazy, but Mary didn't. Mary believed, but she likely might have been ostracized by her other sons. You know, she's with the crazy one. Cuckoo for Cocoa Puffs Jesus, she's with him. So Jesus was the firstborn. He was supposed to provide for his mother, and now all that financial provision is being lost. I wonder if she thought to herself, maybe his brothers were right. Maybe I was wrong. It's easy. It's easy. It's easy to doubt the goodness and promises of God when you grieve.

But it's not just Mary. You've also got Mary Magdalene, out of whom Jesus cast seven demons. I wonder what she would have thought. You know, am I destined to go back to my life of addiction? Are the demons going to come back? Is it going to return? Am I going to be selling my body for sex again? Am I going to be you know hooked on whatever the things that she was hooked on, whatever demonic oppression looked like in her life? I'm sure she thought to herself, now that Jesus, who kept my world together, who healed me of all these things, now that he's gone, I guess I'm doomed.

Or John who followed Jesus and left his pretty prosperous fishing business. I wonder what he thought. You know, now that Jesus is gone, I left everything for him. What am I going to do? How am I going to make ends meet? I wonder if he thought back all the conversations with Jesus about the hour drawing near and if he was kicking himself saying, I wish I would have seen this coming. I wish I could have done something to prevent this. That's the other thing grieving does. When you're grieving, not only does it make you doubt the goodness and promises of God, grieving makes you so consumed on what you've lost that you become blind to what is.

You become blind to what is because of an undue focus on what was lost. It'll never be the same again. That person who was this for me is gone, so now that'll never be the same again. And I'm not saying it's wrong. It's a natural human response. I don't fault Mary for it. I don't fault you for it. It's a natural human response to grief, but you need to know that even when you stand near the cross, you're going to be tempted to doubt. And you're going to be tempted to be blind to what is.

But if you'll stay there and you'll keep looking to Jesus, you'll also see something else. One is pretty obvious, which is there's something seriously wrong with this world. You cannot look at the cross of Jesus Christ and think to yourself, You know, we're not all that bad. This is a

man who did nothing wrong. He was unjustly tried. He lived a sinless perfect life of love and obedience to his heavenly Father. He did everything the way he was supposed to do it. And he's being crucified by the Romans. Even Pilate, the head guru, finds nothing wrong, but to keep the peace politically, he says, okay, I'll do it for Barabbas.

That's not right. It's wrong. There's something wrong with the world. G. K. Chesterton has a famous quote that original sin is the only Christian doctrine that doesn't need any evidence. Because we read it on the newspaper headlines every single day. I love that quote. Now, we may disagree on how to fix what's wrong with the world, but nobody disagrees that something is in fact wrong with the world. The world is broken. This isn't the way it's supposed to be. And what's beautiful about Christianity, one of the reasons I think Christianity is true and other religions are false, is because other religions look at the problem of evil and suffering and they say the suffering is illusory or suffering isn't real.

Suffering is something you must transcend and arrive at nirvana, you just need to practice Zen, or suffering is kind of a counterbalance. You've got the dark god and the good god and the Force be with you and you could be the Sith Lord or the—I'm getting a little out of hand, but you get the idea. It's kind of like this counterbalance—you've got to have evil in the world, and Christianity comes along and says, nonsense, no. That is not necessary. It is not good. It is not illusory. It is real. Your pain is real.

Your tears are justified. That loss is wrong. The injustice committed against you is evil. You burying a child is not right. It's unnatural. The divorce shouldn't have happened. The things you feel in this world are wrong in this world, and sometimes it's going to make you want to get mad at God and say, God, how could you? It's a recognition that this is not discipline from God, it is not an attack by God, it is an attack on God. It is evil, it is wrong, it is not God's natural design.

It is brokenness that is a result of sin. And there's something healing and transformative about the fact that you can just call it for what it is. There's something wrong. And when you look to the cross, you see that. But the other thing you see is not just that there's something wrong with the world, it's that the God who created the world sees your suffering. I love those three words. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple he loved, again I think that's intentional. Here's the God of the universe. Jesus created everything that is.

Without him nothing was made. He is on the cross. Theologically, there is an exchange taking place. Jesus, who knew no sin, the Bible says he becomes sin. In other words, he takes on our sin. He didn't do anything wrong, but we did a lot of things wrong. So Jesus takes that on to himself and he pays the price for our sin. He kind of like takes our clothes of dirty, wicked rebellion against God, he puts it on to himself, and then he takes his sinless, spotless robe of righteousness and he puts it on us.

That is a bewildering, humbling, amazing thought, all that's taking place on the cross. But even though all that's true, even though he's the creator and he's doing a big important work, he slows down and he looks at his mother and he sees her and what a comfort for her, and what a comfort for you and I to remember that God is not up in heaven, distant and detached and disinterested, and unconcerned about what's going on in our day to day life, but he is a shepherd. Psalm 23 calls him the Lord is my shepherd Yahweh, the Creator God, knows my name.

He knows the number of hairs on my head. He knows my needs. He knows my wants. He knows my fears. He knows my griefs. And he gives me what I need. I'm not alone. He sees you. He sees your pain. He sees your suffering. But it's even better than that. He doesn't just see you. He sympathizes with you. Which means that he understands your pain in a way that you understand your pain. There's a passage in the New Testament, one of my favorite, I would commend it to you to memorize this verse.

It's in the book of Hebrews, chapter 4. It's talking about Jesus. It says we don't have a high priest who's unable to sympathize with our weaknesses. Now the high priest, again, in the Old Testament, if you're not familiar, think of a high priest like a preacher. A preacher is someone who's supposed to kind of walk with you through tough times and pray for you and help you connect to God and all that stuff, that's what the Old Testament priest would do. This author is saying Jesus is the great high priest, meaning he's better than earthly preachers.

Why? Because he's not unable to sympathize with us in our weakness. But he's been tempted in every way that we are, yet without sin. In other words, Jesus knows firsthand betrayal. He knows firsthand despair. He knows firsthand rejection. And he knows firsthand loss. He knows what you're going through in the same way that another pregnant woman knows what a pregnant woman is going through in the middle of her pregnancy because she walked it. She felt it. She experienced it firsthand. And that's what makes Jesus so amazing. He doesn't just see you, he sympathizes with you.

And this word sympathize comes from a compound word, sym and pathos, means with and suffer. So he's suffering with you. He enters into your pain. And that's what you see on the cross. You don't just see a man suffering on the cross. What you see is God suffering. The God who created everything entered into the mess, and not just did he enter into it and say, Ooh, that's gross. No, he enters in, he gets mud on him, and he takes the worst, dirtiest, painful reality that this world has to offer, which is mortality and death and cruel and unusual punishment, and he takes it on to himself so that he can say to you and to me, I get it.

I feel you. I know. I see you. And I understand. And you're not alone. And then it gets even better than that. He doesn't just sympathize with you, he supplies your needs. He looks at his

mom and he says, John, here's your mom. Mom, here's your son. And I don't know who was given to who, I don't know who the gift is for, right? It could be a gift for Mary, obviously. Jesus was the firstborn. He's supposed to provide financially. Jesus is going to go away. So Jesus is providing practical, concrete, material needs for his mother.

Because that's how God is. He's good. He meets your practical, concrete, physical, material needs. He supplies your needs. But he's also giving John something, right? John gave his life to Jesus. He left his practice for Jesus. He's probably thinking to himself, what is my life without Jesus? What am I going to do? How do I find meaning? How do I find purpose? And Jesus is saying, you can still serve me by serving my mom. Take care of my mother. He provides what they need. He supplies their needs. But it's even bigger than that.

Because again, what's taking place on the cross, as I mentioned earlier, is this divine transaction. Jesus who knew no sin is becoming sin so that we might become the righteousness of God. What is our greatest need in life? Our greatest need is forgiveness. Our greatest need is atonement. Our greatest need is what do I do with my guilt? I know I'm not good enough to go to heaven. I know God is angry with me in the way that I've lived. How can a God who's angry with me let me into heaven?

That's our greatest need, and Jesus is supplying that need on the cross as well because on the cross he's making atonement for sin. One of our greatest needs is what do we do when we die? How do I have hope of eternal life? How do I know that when my dad or my child died, death is not some endless chasm into which they have fallen, where I will never see them again. How do I have hope in the face of death? And then you look at Jesus on the cross and you're reminded death is not some endless chasm into which our loved ones fall.

Because Jesus has taken the sting out of death. He's taken the penalty out of death. In other words, he destroyed death through his death. That light overcame the darkness of death so that when you and I face death, it's not some endless chasm. It's instead a graduation. It's a transition to an even better life. He was stripped naked so that you and I would never have to feel naked and ashamed. He covers our guilt. He covers our shame because of what he does on the cross. He supplies our need materially, concretely, practically, spiritually, relationally, in every way.

He sees you, he feels you, he gives you what you need. I'm telling you, when you draw near to the cross and you see him, and you see him in that way, it changes the way that you grieve. You still grieve, obviously you're still going to grieve. Who wouldn't grieve? You're going to doubt, you're going to be blind, all that stuff's going to happen, but you will get through it. Because he's doing something in you and around you and through you that only he can do. But it's even better than that.

He doesn't just see you and sympathize with you and supply you all that stuff. He surrounds you with a new family. And that's the last part you see. So it says, from that hour the disciple took Mary into his home. I think this is kind of fascinating because remember, who's there? John is there, John's mother is there. I wonder if it was a little awkward when Jesus was like, yo, John, new mom. I wonder if—I almost called her Salami—I wonder if Salome was like, Yeah, I'm his mother. But she's like, No, not anymore?

What's he doing? Well, this gets to a bigger theological point that what Jesus accomplishes on the cross is he redefines family. Jesus was the Son of God. God is the Heavenly Father. Jesus is his Son. But the New Testament talks about how in Jesus Christ we all become sons and daughters of God. Jesus becomes our brother and we become brothers and sisters in the Lord. So Jesus literally transforms family. So do you have a biological family? Well yeah. Is your biological family important? Yes. But they're not ultimately important. In other words, they're penultimate.

The ultimate important family is your spiritual family. Now, God willing, your biological family becomes your spiritual family. That's amazing. And then in that case, when you lose your biological mom and she's in Christ and you're in Christ, you get to see her again when you die. Or when you lose a child in the Lord and you're in Christ, you can entrust that little baby to Jesus and see them again when you die. There is a sense in which your biological family can become your spiritual family, but even if they don't, is what I'm saying, even if they don't and you lose them, you're not alone.

You have brothers and sisters in Christ who can surround you and walk with you through incredible grief that otherwise you would not be able to persevere and overcome by yourself. This is why in church world we call each other like Brother Wes. Some people think it's like that's a cult, you know, that's weird. Brother Wes, Brother David. No, we're brothers and sisters in the Lord. Jesus talks about this in the Gospels, one example. He talks about it a lot, but one example, he's in the temple teaching and preaching. His mom and his brothers come and they're like, Jesus, we need to talk to you.

And Jesus gets interrupted and he says no. My mother and brother want to talk? Hmm. And he makes a point and he says, my mother and brother aren't out there. My mother and brother are the ones who do the will of my Father in heaven. That's my mother and brother. He's pointing out God has a family that's bigger and more important than our earthly families. Same thing a little bit later. In Matthew chapter 12, people who began to follow Jesus would lose their mothers and fathers because if you're going to follow Jesus—you're crazy, I don't want anything to do with you.

Even today, Muslims who repent of sin and put their faith in Jesus, they lose their father and mother. And Jesus would say things like, if you don't love your father and mother more than me, you're not worthy of me. You've got to hate your father, mother, brother, sister, even

your own life if you want to be my disciple. Yes, it's painful to lose those things. I'm not saying it's not painful, but what Jesus is saying, if you lose those things on my account, you will gain so much more. Anybody who leaves a father or mother or children or lands for my sake will receive one hundredfold and inherit eternal life.

So it's not just that you're going to go to heaven when you die. No, when you get in Jesus, he surrounds you with new family. And God's family is a forever family. Not only does it last longer, it's so much better. So, yes or no, for those of you who have biological family who was pre-Christ and post-Christ, which version of your family is better with Jesus or without Jesus? With Jesus, right? Because Jesus changes everything. So your biological family with Jesus is so much better, but even if your biological family never comes to Jesus, you have a new family in Jesus Christ who will walk with you through the valley of the shadow of death.

You don't have to be afraid and you don't have to be alone. He surrounds you with new family. Now, when you begin to see Jesus in those ways, it'll change the way you process your grief. I read that passage in Hebrews chapter 4 that says Jesus is a great high priest who can sympathize with us in our weakness. The verse right after that says, if that's true, or since that's true, let us draw near the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in our time of need.