

Simplify

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Jesus is always looking out for your spiritual, emotional, and physical health.

Jesus knows what it is like to be YOU!

³² Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." ³³ When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. ³⁴ And he said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." ³⁵ Jesus wept. ³⁶ So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" (John 11-ESV)

The next time you are crying, down or disillusioned, remember Jesus wept!
Edakrusen Yeshua! Edakrusen Yeshua!

Overwhelmed. Overscheduled. Emotionally drained. Physically exhausted. Spiritually flat. **If any of these descriptions apply to you, perhaps it is time to SIMPLIFY.**

As your pastor, it would be spiritual malpractice if I did not address what ails you. Now, you don't have to pay big money to a counselor, coach or therapist, nothing wrong with that, God's word can help you unravel perhaps the mystery of why you are unhappy. Unfulfilled. Unsatisfied.

One of the clues, is identifying if you are giving in to activities that do nothing to help you fulfill God's purpose and plan for your life. Scrolling social media. Neglecting your health. Instead of putting racing fuel into your engine, you digest too much junk food.

Now, looking inside can be a little threatening, who wouldn't rather look outside and judge others, be impressed with others or just daydream.

To look inside and simplify, means you are willing to acknowledge what is going on right now is not working. If we are willing to admit we are running on empty, emotionally drained, and spiritually flat, only then will we find hope.

In order to simplify your life, you have to be willing to take a close look at your emotions.

Your feelings. Sneaking suspicions.

Intuitions. Sentiments.

Premonitions.

Your hunches.

And inklings.

All of those words simply refer to your emotions!

For many of you, it's not too late to make the changes before they become destructive habits, and for those in the destructive habit zone, because your emotions are toxic and broken, today can be a new beginning. I challenge you today, to take a fierce emotional inventory and take stock of your emotions and feelings. Emotions and feelings do not happen in a vacuum. Events and experiences that impact your emotions can be real or imagined.

All of God's servants expressed a full range of emotions, good and bad. Elijah depression. David-Lust. Jesus' anger. Gideon-fear. Joshua-anxiety. Timothy-fear. Joseph-loneliness. Ruth-depression.

Let's go to the tomb of Lazarus for a few minutes. He has been dead for 4 days, and the text tell us Lazarus stinks. In John's gospel, he has been there four days.

Isn't it true that an artist often visualizes the picture of what the final product on the canvas will look like?

Some artists see the end even before he or she starts. Artists often know what they will create with just a few initial strokes of paint on the canvas.

We do not see what is happening on the canvas until some trees, houses and rivers begin to take shape. I suppose some of us feel like our life is a canvas with little or no distinguishing features. We are not sure how the various pieces fit together.

Wait for it. Wait for it. Then suddenly, painting magic and the artist fits the pieces together. The artist defines and explains what is going on. Through paint the artist tells us a story. Through the providence of God, God the artist tells us a story. Through fifty-seven verses God has been showing us there has been artwork placed in...

Two villages of Bethany.

Two sisters.

And two imperatives at the tomb.

"Come forth! Remove the grave clothes!"

All throughout our story Jesus has been hinting that His Father's plans are unfolding by a providential hand. See if you do not agree with these observations:

"This sickness will not lead to death; it is for the glory of God."

Jesus stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

Now, when Jesus came Lazarus had been dead now four days.

“Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

Every event those days playing out in Jericho and Bethany below sea level and Bethany above sea level is filled with Our Heavenly Father’s artistic work of sovereignty. Providence. “God-ccidence”.

In fact, I would go so far as to say that God knows what billions of humans could do and would do at any moment in eternity. Yet, He is in full control of every possible outcome to accomplish His eternal plan.

God is the artist. You are his workmanship. God sees the big picture. That is why we trust and wait.

When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled (John 11:33).

We arrive at the home of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, in John 11, as Lazarus’ wake is fully under way. Wailing. Weeping. Memorializing of Lazarus, “what a good brother, he was!” The house was full. The food was refreshed every few hours. And professional mourners fanned the flame of sorrow when the embers died down. Martha and Mary’s house was full of shrieking and screaming.

They were bellowing. And blubbering.

They were sniveling and snorting.

They were weeping and wailing.

Twin complaints by Martha and Mary were still ringing in Jesus’ ear, *“Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died” (John 11:32 ESV).*

Suddenly you are ushered right into the soul and spirit of our Savior. Jesus Christ the savior of the world. We are about to see what it looked like to experience full humanity without sin.

What would it be like if I were to experience humanity without sin? Now, you can see through the eyes of Jesus.

Jesus was without sin and fully human but also God. Eternal. All- Knowing. All- Powerful. All-Loving. Jesus possessed the same outer shell of emotions, just like each of us. It is easy to gloss over this part of the text in order to rush to the resurrection of Lazarus and removal of the grave clothes.

Jesus offers hope for you when you are hurting and emotionally spent. When your feelings are fried. When your emotions have emulsified. Alarmed with anger. Sacked by sorrow. And whacked by worry. Tucked away in the pages of John 11 is the greatest reveal of Jesus' humanity. Jesus' feelings. Jesus' emotions. A forensic exegesis will uncover the emotions that Jesus faced and help you understand and appreciate the simple truth:

Jesus knows what it is like to be YOU!

I call this the **garden experience at Lazarus' tomb**. We know that Jesus was so emotionally moved in the Garden of Gethsemane, that he bled what seemed like drops of blood as he agonized over the hold Satan had on his Father's creation.

And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground (Luke 22:44).

Now, don't drift or wander with your thoughts; we are just getting started. Before Lazarus comes out of the tomb, John shines floodlights on Jesus' humanity. Jesus groaned in the spirit. And here we see an expression of Christ that is seldom seen in the Bible. In fact, this word for *groan* means "to snort."

It was an expression of anger that brought Jesus to an emotional place where he looked on the tragedy that had befallen, not just to Lazarus, but to all of mankind, and he reacted. He groaned.

When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved (snorted) in his spirit and greatly troubled (John 11:33 ESV).

Groan is a word that is used for a strong rebuke. Literally the snorting of a horse. In the cartoon world, we know this emotion as grrrrrrr! Jesus groaned. Jesus grrrrrrr! Jesus snorted!

Deep from within the soul of Christ a volcanic eruption began to take place and the snorting of Jesus' emotional lava caused him to shake and shudder.

Why?

Why did Jesus' groan? Why did Jesus' snort? Why did Jesus grrrrr! in the spirit?

Jesus was angry at death. Jesus was looking at all that was going on around him. The sisters brokenhearted. The village filled with mourners. Lazarus' decayed body. From the opening of his public ministry, as he defeated Satan in the wilderness, to the wilderness of suffering where Jesus stood knee-deep. An Adamic creation gone awry: He groaned. He shook. He wept. He agonized.

Jesus was watching what never should have happened in the first place, had it not been for our parents-Adam and Eve. Death was never in the original plan of God. Life. Life. Life. Life.

God is angry at sin that brings this type of deep loss. Death makes us angry. No, this should not have happened. This often raises questions. Why did you do this God?

I got ripped off.

I am totally confused by this.

Jesus agrees with you. He enters your pain. Your loss. We are powerless to do anything about it. But Jesus will do something.

Before Jesus does what only Christ can do, he immersed himself in your pain. He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. He shook. He convulsed. The natural response to emotional bankruptcy, even for Jesus.

And he said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus wept (John11:34-35).

Asked to be taken to the tomb, which was outside of the village, Jesus now stood outside Lazarus' tomb. Flanked by Martha and Mary and the townspeople, Jesus wept. The shortest verse in the Bible.

The other rival shortest verse? *Rejoice always (1 Thes. 5:16).*

You don't read this verse; you sit down in this verse. You feel this verse. The next time you are sad. The next time you are depressed. The next time you are crying, just announce, "*Jesus wept!*"

Jesus wept! Edakrusen Yeshua! Edakrusen. Yeshua!

Jesus was just minutes away from raising Lazarus from the dead, and yet he stopped to place himself in the shoes of all who have ever ached because of death.

Jesus was not weeping because Lazarus was dead. He was about to raise him. Jesus was entering into the humanity at the tomb that all humans face. And as our great high priest, as the author of Hebrews wrote, **Jesus is relatable**. This is one of the many characteristics that separates Jesus from all other phony, fake and fraudulent gods.

Mohammed does not cry with his submissive servants.

Hinduism does not cry with its followers who are classified in caste systems. Why try another round of reincarnation?

Atheism literally has no god that can comfort in your hour of need.

Christianity is unique in that we are encouraged like Christ to rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep. *Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn (Rom. 12:15 NIV).*

How inappropriate it would have been for Jesus to raise Lazarus without first sitting with Martha and Mary in their pain. No god ever classified amongst the Greeks, Romans, Orientals, not mystics, not voodoo workers or Shaman dancers feels your pain, hurt, guilt and shame like Jesus.

I love Jesus as my great high priest and my hope when I hurt.
The hope of lost humanity is: Could there be a God that can relate to imperfect me?

...Does He feel my pain?

...Can He really understand my hurt?

...Is He aware that I cannot go another step?

...Would He still love me even if my head was not screwed on, right?

...Can He comprehend the torment that I face from unconfessed guilt and shame?

...Does He really understand the daily temptations with which I wrestle?

Yes friend, yes. He can understand. He has already become like you. It is no longer a question of what if God were like one of us? The truth of the gospel is that He has already become like one of us.

Christ reminds us he knows what it was like to be a thief, an abortionist, an outcast, even gay and lesbian. Jesus did not choose to become these things...he was on the cross out of obedience to His father.

...He felt what it was like to relapse back into alcohol.

...He felt the fear of a student driven to get the grades to please a perfectionist dad.

...He felt the strong pull of the Christian man attempting to reject internet pornography.

...He felt the rejection of divorce after a painful custody battle where all you are left with are the memories of what it was like to be a little girl.

He became sin. Many point their fingers at Christ and raise their voice in willful defiance when they ask the question, "How can Jesus ever identify with my pain and brokenness, since He never sinned?"

What response does heaven make? *Jesus wept! Eda-krusen Yeshua!*

Jesus is superior to Islam because to Islam Jesus never came in the flesh. Which means he did not weep. He did not feel your pain on the cross.

Jesus is superior to Buddhism; he gets it right the first time. Nirvana says you have up to 547 chances at reincarnation; then your candle is snuffed out forever.

Humanists do not acknowledge a creator of life. Jesus lived life to the fullest as the Son of God and Son of Man.

Palm readers read your palms, tea leaves and emotions. Jesus reads your mind.

Hindus believe that God is impersonal. Could a world religion be more dead wrong about our Great God and the fact that even the Jews declared: So, the Jews said, "See how he loved him!"

Jesus knows what it is like to be YOU!

Simplify your emotions by living in the day.

If you are stuck in your past; and fearful-worried about your future; experiencing God in the moment is almost impossible.

Say it with me out loud, "I renounce the hold that yesterday's hurt and hang-ups have on me." And now say out loud, "I reclaim from anxiety, my God-given future, He has for me." How does that feel?

Today you can put a stake in the ground. Today is a landmark day. Today you reclaimed what is rightfully yours, a day the Lord has made.

Moses reminds us that reclaiming each day, is a learning process. And we see this in *Psalm 90:12*, "*Lord, teach us to number our days, that we gain a heart of wisdom.*"

Jesus taught us to pray, "*Give us this day our daily bread.*" (*Matt 6:11*) God is ready to give you His strength, authority, and power for today only, to win the day, to live in the day.

God wants you to know, in spite of the mistakes you make about your past and present, and even those you have yet to make, He will give you new mercies every day.

*The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases;
his mercies never come to an end;
²³ they are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness. (Lam 3:22-23-ESV)*

The apostle Paul reminds us to, *make the most of every opportunity (every day), because the days are (becoming increasingly) evil. (Eph 5:16-NIV).*

Simplify your emotions by giving up control.

¹⁵ When a man is gloomy, everything seems to go wrong; when he is cheerful, everything seems right! (Prov 15:15-TLB)

Whether you are aware of it or not, or like it or not, all humans are control freaks. Ouch! Control is what we all want. It is woven into our DNA, on the biological and personality levels of our being. When we perceive that we are losing control of what we want, expect, or need, our lives become exhausted, overextended, chaotic and empty.

Now, those are not the only reactions, we can also slip into fear, anger, and discouragement friends who show up also, in the life of one trying to control.

Who has not sulked because you did not get your way?
Who has not pouted because you did get your way?
Who has not manipulated because you did not get your way?

What if I could show you how this truth, the personality challenge of wanting to control, is clearly seen in scripture? Would you be convinced? Would you let Jesus take the wheel? Perhaps, the negative effects that depression and anxiety have on your life, would diminish.

Control is always about selfishness. Control is about me. James 3:16, reminds us, "Wherever there is selfishness, you find disorder and every kind of evil sin." God did not create you to live for yourself. God created you to love God and then love others.

Simplify your emotions by taking every thought captive.

⁵ We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. (2 Cor 10:5-NIV)

Every day, in order to Live In The Day, and Give Up Control, you will have to learn to take every thought captive. (2 Cor. 10:5).

Many who struggle with emotions and feelings that are toxic and painful are held captive by undisciplined thinking. People will often say, "what you did depresses me." Or "what you said, makes me anxious." These statements and hundreds like them, are false. What happens to you, or what someone might say to you, does not make you depressed or anxious.

As Gary Smalley reminds us, "there is a step between the event and the emotion that is the true cause of how you feel." Gary Smalley reminds us there is a famous ABC Model of a three-event sequence that comes into play when you experience an emotion like depression and anxiety. (Smalley, Change Your Heart, Change Your Life, pg 22.)

A=the **event** that happens to you-good or bad.
B=what you **think** about the event that happens to you.
C=the **feelings** that result from what you think of the event.
(Dr Albert Ellis, ABC Model)

Your emotional reaction is not because you lost your job or received a notice of possible cancer. Your emotional reaction is caused by your thinking about your potential job loss or possibility of cancer.

Another way to say it using the ABC Model is Emotion C, is not caused by Event A; it is caused by thinking B. Wow! Do me a favor. Go back and read that again. Go to the top of the page. And this time, put your own examples into the ABC Model. In fact, if you repeat this practice every day, you will know how to Live In The Day. Give Up Control. And Take Every Thought Captive.

Changing the way you THINK puts you in control of your emotions and feelings. If you begin to Live In The Day, with emotions that are under control by the Holy Spirit, you will experience a significant breakthrough, reduction and discipline over your emotions and feelings.

What if a person knows how to think correctly about an event, but simply cannot control his or her thinking when the event happens? Then that person is likely preconditioned and vulnerable to thinking that originates in their subconscious and so they must learn to think differently about any and every single event in life.

Simplify your emotions with the correct firing order.

²³ Now may the God of peace himself make you completely holy and may your spirit and soul and body be kept entirely blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Thes 5:23-NET)

Another way to say it is, you must consider whether you emotions and feelings reflect the Kingdom of God. Or are they governed by worldly patterns?

Jesus tells us that he has given us authority and power to stop the harmful effects of dysfunctional emotions and feelings.

¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” (Matt 16:10-NIV)

God’s Firing Order: Mind > Will > Emotions

Worlds/Evil Firing Order: Emotions. > Will > Mind

All of God's servants expressed a full range of emotions, good and bad. When your emotions work correctly, you are a better listener, a more generous person, a more loving parent and spouse, and you will be caught up in times of unending joy in worship. God created each of us as deeply emotional and feeling beings.

However, for emotions and feelings to function correctly, you must bath yourself in God's word. As you take communion today, why not dedicate some of the time to self-analysis. Allow the Holy Spirit to place a spotlight on your inner self.

During communion, prayerfully ask God to reveal what is the underlying feeling and emotion about an event or experience you want to heal from. Why not take a positive step forward toward greater emotional, spiritual, and relational health.

Or just SIMPLIFY!

²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Cor. 5:21)

Jesus knows what it is like to be you.