



## The Way Forward Series Guide

### Oct. 4: Through Sorrow and Grief

#### Welcome for the group and Check-in

"I am feeling..."

#### Psalm 23 Rhythm

Slowly read as a group twice

Observe: What part resonates or creates an allergic reaction within you as we read the Psalm today?

Group Prayer:

"Good Shepherd, thank you for pursuing us, being with us, and taking good care of us. Continue to refine our thoughts of you. We open our lives to receive your care in the midst of our sorrow and grief. Help us to acknowledge any sorrow we are experiencing, confess who we know you to be, and walk by faith when our knowing of you must grow for what is needed in the situation we are in. Amen."

#### Group Discussion about The Way Forward: Welcoming Jesus into our Grief

Overview of ideas the sermon explores:

1. Knowing God (Father, Son, and Spirit) is eternal life.
2. Knowing God is the way forward in our sorrows and grief.
3. Jesus and his ways bridge the gap between our sorrows and our God.
4. The way forward in our sorrow and grief is practiced in fellowship with God and others through lament (*confession of sorrow, remembering God, asking for help, and proceeding with faith in God*).

Reading of passages from the sermon: John 11.35; Luke 13.34; Matthew 26.36-41; Psalm 22.1-2, 23-24; Lamentations 3.19-24; Hebrews 4.15-16; Isaiah 53.3-4

Group Discussion:

1: Is sorrow or grief something that you feel freedom to acknowledge or share? If so, how have you expressed sorrow and grief to others before?

2: Lament turns us toward God when in sorrow we are tempted to run from Him. Take a moment to think of your life and when your knowing of God did not easily connect with the sorrow or grief that you were experiencing. How did you navigate the gap between your sorrow and your knowing of God in that situation?

3: How have you expressed your sorrow and grief to God before? What was that experience like for you? Looking back, how did your knowing of God change in that situation?

4: How does engaging in your faith and joy in God help to move you through sorrow and grief?

5: Take action: This week, write a lament about your sorrow and grief related to Union Center. In this way we will move forward in faith, connecting our faith in God with real life - which is a faith that is able to experience joy and engage in repentance and reconciliation. Use the categories below to help you.

Articulate your sorrow or grief related to Union Center

“Heavenly Father, I am sad that I \_\_\_\_\_ at Union Center.”

Examples: lost this meaningful relationship with \_\_\_\_\_, experienced injustice when \_\_\_\_\_ happened, did not experience \_\_\_\_\_ that I long for

Remember who you know God to be

“Father, I remember from the Bible and my own experience that you are the God who \_\_\_\_\_.”

Examples: heals, reconciles, comforts, offers justice, pursues, convicts of sin

Ask God for help

“Emmanuel, I need \_\_\_\_\_.”

Examples: comfort, faith, wisdom, strength, love, protection

Place your faith in Jesus

Examples:

“Jesus, I believe you are God’s Son, that you died on the cross for my sin, and that you rose on the third day. I feel really inadequate in this situation. Help me know and experience you here.

“Jesus, I give you my sorrow, I rest in the love and presence you give, I trust you with my future. You are my great treasure. Amen.”

Closing Prayer: Heavenly Father, we remember our troubles and wanderings, the bitterness and the sorrow that have grown along the way. The sorrows of our nation, our community, and our church are well remembered, and our souls are downcast within us. Yet this we call to mind and therefore we have hope: You, our Sovereign Lord, offer great love that causes us not to be consumed. Your compassions never fail. They are new every morning. Great is your faithfulness! So, we say together, “The Lord is our portion; therefore we will wait for him.”

Additional Resources for Lament:

Songs of Lament: <http://www.unioncenter.org/resources/worship-song-playlists/>

Scriptures: Psalms 10, 13, 60; Nehemiah 9; I Samuel 1.11-20