

I JUST WISH THAT...

WK TWO - 12.03.23
THEY WERE STILL HERE

INTRODUCTION

When you were a kid at Christmas, you made your "wish list." Remember what was on it? As adults, we've still got our wish lists; they just look a little different. During the Advent season, we're going to talk about a few things that are probably on yours – and what Jesus has the power to do with them at Christmas. This week, Pastor Chip shared how we can grieve the loss of a loved one well this holiday season.

DISCUSSION

1. The holiday season is full of memories and sentiment. Does this tend to stir up different emotions in you than other times of the year? Take some time to describe how the holiday impacts your perspective, memories, pace, and emotions (both positive and negative).
2. With the help of Brene Brown's definition, Pastor Chip describes grief as "Processing several emotions as you attempt to reaffirm or reconstruct a world of meaning and purpose after the loss." Grief is often more complex than we make it out to be. Take several minutes to share a few of your journeys with grief and the different phases or shapes they've taken during different seasons.
3. **Revisit and read John 11:17-38.** What could you relate to in this story? What does it mean to you to know Jesus experienced grief and loss just like you?
4. Jesus can handle your emotions, questions, and doubts. He even grows us through our suffering and grief. Is Jesus the first person you run to when you encounter grief in a significant loss? Does he feel like a safe person to share with? Do believe he listens and cares for you? Why or why not? Share any examples you have of God growing you through your grief.
5. How can navigating grief and recognizing different emotions well in your own life help others in your Little Iowa navigate similar feelings during the holidays? What do you need to do now so you're ready for the loved ones who need your empathy and presence?

APPLICATION

- **Everyone grieves differently.** You have permission to feel what you're feeling, and it may be different from everyone else. Be careful not to make the mistake of comparing your grief journey to those around you or assume you know how others are feeling in their grief.
- **Push through the awkwardness of grief.** One of the most common experiences of grief is awkwardness. It can be difficult to navigate conversations around a loss, but love the people around you enough to acknowledge the grief and ask them questions. Don't be afraid to call out the awkwardness in a way that gives people permission to share.
- **The empty chair will be filled again.** Because of Jesus' sacrifice, grief is only temporary. We can grieve with hope because Jesus has conquered death. Remember and return to 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 when you need reminders and encouragement of this truth.