

Introduction: Pg. _____

September 19, 1982. The emoticon was born when Dr. Scott Falhman, a young professor at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, typed out a simple : -) to communicate humor electronically.

Emoticons... symbolize our emotions...

What does your use of emoticons reveal about your emotional state?

**“Emotionally Healthy like Jesus”
John 11:17-44**

Holistic vitality: God cares about every aspect of our lives. He has made us to not just honor him spiritually and physically (next week’s sermon!), but also with our relationships and emotions.

To follow Christ is to pursue holistic health.

When I first started following Jesus, I unintentionally reduced Christianity to... acting like Jesus acts...
But then I started to understand that in order to act like he acts I must... think like he thinks.

But that’s not enough if our hearts are not engaged... so further I went into the heart... loving what he loves (affections), wanting what he wants (desires), but I still paid little attention to ...

Feeling what he feels.

God’s goal for you... Become like Jesus

Testify.. EQ? What’s that?

Matthew Elliott says, “Everything we do, say, and think is, in some sense, emotional. We enjoy it, we dislike it, or we just don’t care. We describe our experiences and ourselves by describing how we feel. Life without emotions would be in black and white”

The Point: Pursue emotional health by pursuing Christ.

John 11:17-44 (whole text displayed)

This morning, we are going to focus on the emotions of Christ. This is part of what it means to experience him as “the resurrection and the life.”

What does this story teach us about the emotions of Jesus, and consequently, our emotions?

1. Emotions reflect God himself.

What are emotions?

Emotions are complex and not easy to define. Our word emotion comes from a latin word that means “to move.” Emotions move us internally, igniting specific feelings that can even be felt physiologically. Emotions also move us externally, propelling us toward specific action.

Our emotions are complex responses to life's experiences that reveal what we care about.

There are two ends of the spectrum when it comes to how people relate to their emotions.

1. Suppress & Isolate: Some people ignore or hide their emotions. Maybe assume they are bad or evil (at least the negative ones). "Let's move on!" "Just get over it!" Expressing emotion is for weak people.
2. Express & Dominate: Others are very, very, very "in touch" with their emotions. They not only express them freely ("wear them on their sleeve"), but they focus on them so intensely, that their lives can be dominated by their feelings.

How do you relate to your emotions? P

But here's another, more foundational question...

Why do we have emotions?

- Because we are made in God's image. We experience emotions because God experiences emotions.
- Emotions are a gift from him. Let's say this together: "Emotions are not bad."
- Let's say this together: I will not judge you for your emotions. I will help you with your emotions. Say it with me: "Emotions are not bad." Say it with me: "I will not judge you for your emotions!"
- [["Scripture not only speaks about emotions, it also speaks to and through our emotions. The Bible is emotional literature, filled with emotional expression and designed not just to communicate with our rationality but also to stir us emotionally, thus affirming our emotionality." - D. G. Benner]]

T: Verses 33-38 reveal the emotions in the heart of Christ.

Jesus in the story...

- Have you felt what it's like to lose a loved one? Do you remember the pain, the grief, the heartache? Have you seen the dynamics at a wake or funeral as wave after wave of emotion fill the room.
- Verses 33 says: "When Jesus saw [Mary and the others] weeping...he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled."
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- These two phrases, "deeply moved" and "greatly troubled," are like windows into the heart of Christ.
- The words "deeply moved" carry the idea that Jesus was greatly agitated, disturbed, or upset. Jesus did not suppress his feelings
- But then the phrase "greatly troubled" takes it to the next level. Words associated with this word are displeasure, indignation, and anger. The verb originally meant: "to snort with rage." It can mean that "he shook with emotion and rage."

Why?

- The best explanation is that Jesus was furious at the effects of sin and death.
- Death has a way of unraveling us. It brings a certain sense of finality. Our lives will never be the same without the person we lost. That's why we see Mary falling at the feet of Jesus distraught and undone. That's why verse 35 says, "Jesus wept."
- In the words of B.B. Warfield, "he burned with rage, an inextinguishable fury" because "his heart was crying out against our greatest enemy, the enemy of death."

But wait... this doesn't make sense. Why would Jesus weep, why would he shake with emotion and rage, when he knows he's about to raise Lazarus from the dead? He's about to turn their turns to astonishing JOY!

Why? Because he's perfect! Jesus Christ: fully and perfectly God, fully and perfectly man! (Scholars call this the hypostatic Union)

As the perfect Son of God, he carried the power to reverse the effects of sin and raise Lazarus from the dead, but as the perfect human being he felt the pain and sting of death, and expressed his emotions with righteous anger and real tears.

"It's impossible to be spiritually mature while remaining emotionally immature." - Pete Scazzero

"It's impossible to be spiritually mature [like Jesus] while remaining emotionally immature [unlike Jesus]." - Pete Scazzero

When is the last time you wept? Shed tears. It's healthy... Want to see people free!

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T: Emotions reflect God himself. #2.

2. Emotions respond to perceived values.

This is clearly what is happening in the life of Jesus.

- Did you notice that it says in v. 33: "When Jesus saw... he was deeply moved and greatly troubled."?
- We saw this with the compassion of Christ in Matthew nine we saw this with the deliverance of God in Exodus three.
- Our emotions are a response to what we love, value, and worship. "What [we] care about shapes what [we] feel." (Groves, Smith)

Think about what Jesus valued and loved in the story:

- He loved these people. He loved Mary and Martha. He felt their pain.
- He loved Lazarus. His heart ached personally at the loss of his friend.
- He loved life and hated death! He shook with rage and emotion.

This is true for all of us... when what we love gets threatened, we respond emotionally.

- This is not just true for the greatest issues of life and death. It is true down to the smallest, everyday moments of life.
 - Does anyone ever get emotional over food?
 - Does anyone ever get testy when plans changed or plans should have been planned better?
 - How about commuting to work? Fear. Anger. Anxiety. Road Rage! Oh no she didn't just jam her leg into the closing train door again... the train car is already packed and we're all going to be late for work!
- Consider a test case in my house: Titus and the remote control!
 - When Titus gets the remote, we get happy Titus!
 - When Titus does not get the remote, we get angry Titus!
 - When Daddy takes the remote, we get jealous Titus!
 - When Daddy hides the remote, we get grieving Titus!

What we care about shapes what we feel.

Consider the emotions of Jesus throughout the gospels:

- We've seen his grief, sorrow and anger, as well as his deep abiding affection for his friends. (Luke 19:41; John 11:35; Mark 14:33ff; Heb 5:7; Mark 3:5-6; 10; John 11:33-38)
- What about his? compassion (Matt 9:36; Matt 20:34; Luke 10; 15) or exuberant joy (Luke 10:20-21; John 15:10-11; 17:13), or consuming zeal (John 2:13ff)

God actually commands us to express godly emotions, all over the Bible

- "Rejoice in the Lord always..." (Phil. 4)
- "Give thanks in all circumstances." (1 Thess 5:18)
- "Grieve, mourn, and wail..." (James 4:9)
- "Be angry and do not sin." (Ephesians 4:26)

Mixed Emotions

- The life of Christ teaches us that it is right to experience mixed emotions.
- **"Mixed emotions are the right response to a mixed world."** *Untangling Emotions*
- In the same moment, Jesus is experiencing grief, anger, affection, and probably others like disappointment, frustration, and even hopefulness.

T: That our emotions respond to perceived values demand that we... #3) engage our emotions.

3. Emotions require engagement.

Emotions are to be engaged. Let me show you how this works.

Chair... Avoid on one side (Ignore their feelings). Avoid on one side (Dominated by their feelings)

What does Jesus do? He takes a seat!

I want to give you a simple from work for engaging your emotions from this excellent book, *Untangling Emotions*. Four steps in the process...

1. Identify

- So many days or moments of our day, we are experiencing things emotionally, but we don't stop long enough to even recognize them.
- You might say: "I feel off." But not know why.
- Or a friend might come up to you and say: "Are you okay? You don't seem like yourself." And then we get defensive, deny it, and can't even see what our defensiveness just said about us! Lol "You seem a little stressed." I'M NOT STRESSED!
- Even with the classic question: "How are you?" There are times we don't know how to respond. That's ok. That's natural at times, but we don't want to stay there.

2. Examine

Individually

- Be curious about yourself (in a non-judgmental/non-condemning way). There is always stuff under the surface.
- Ask questions like: "Why am I feeling this way? Why is this hitting me so hard? Why isn't this affecting me the way it usually does?" (Groves & Smith, *Untangling Emotions*)

Community

- But here's an even better way to grow in self-awareness: Ask the people closest to you how they are experiencing you. Ask them how they feel (about their mixed emotions) when you walk into the room? Or they see your name pop up on their phone or inbox?
- And here's the beautiful thing: sharing our emotions is part of what it means to be in relationship.
 - When we rejoice with those who rejoice or weep with those who weep, what happens? We get closer!
 - AND... when we enter in with one another emotionally through curiosity, vulnerability, and attentiveness, what happens? We get closer!
- Enter their emotional experience.
- Understand their emotional experience.
- Bring the hope of the gospel (speaking truth) into their emotional experience.
 - (Because the devil will be shouting lies... We must be aware of his schemes.
 - Righteous anger can be a temptation toward bitterness and resentment. Sadness can be followed by feelings of worthlessness or hopelessness. Joy can be followed by pride.

3. Evaluate

- Why? Because our emotions are not morally neutral. They are either sinful or righteous. They are either helping us love God and the people around us more or pulling us away from God and those same people.
- Think back to your own emotional health and you will be able to see how they have been either constructive or destructive to every relationship in your life!
- The goal is to express and experience emotions like Jesus, always righteous, always leading to appropriate actions, always guided by the Holy Spirit!
- {{Listen to this important truth: God's emotions are not anthropomorphic; human emotions are theomorphic (Sam Williams).}}
- We need to repent of ungodly emotional responses, celebrate godly emotional responses, and look forward to the day when the resurrection and the life perfects our emotions!

4. Act

- Feed godly emotions through your daily pursuit of God. How do we get God's heart? We go after his heart in daily worship! (Acts 13:22)
- Starve ungodly emotions through your daily pursuit of God.
- Word & Prayer
 - The truth tells us: "We are not our emotions. We don't always need to act immediately. We do not need to feel condemnation for our feelings."
 - Prayer strengthens us and comforts us, because God cares for us (1 Peter 5:7)

T: Emotions reflect God himself, they respond to perceived values, and they require engagement.

Conclusion:

Engaging our emotions means taking them to God every step. One of the things I've learned to do is take a walk and pray! Story.

Point: Pursue emotional health by pursuing Christ.

Would you do that right now?

Pray...