

SADNESS

Psalm 42

(from *The Message* version)

I want to drink deep draughts of God. I'm thirsty for God-alive... I'm on a diet of tears - tears for breakfast, tears for supper. All day long people knock at my door, pestering, "Where is this God of yours?"

These are the things I go over and over, emptying out the pockets of my life. I was always at the head of the worshipping crowd, right out in front, leading them all, eager to arrive and worship, shouting praises, singing thanksgiving - celebrating, all of us, God's feast!

Why are you down in the dumps, dear soul? Why are you crying the blues? Fix my eyes on God - soon I'll be praising again. He puts a smile on my face. He's my God.

When my soul is in the dumps, I rehearse everything I know of you ...

Sometimes I ask God, my rock-solid God, "Why did you let me down? Why am I walking around in tears, harassed by enemies?" ...

Why are you down in the dumps, dear soul? Why are you crying the blues? Fix my eyes on God - soon I'll be praising again. He puts a smile on my face. He's my God.

Over to you!

What does Sadness usually feel like in your body?

Over to you!

Highlight any words that make you think the writer felt sad.

What was she / he sad about? Do you ever feel sad without really knowing why?

Do you think it's OK to suggest that God has let us down?

How is the writer trying to bring Joy back into her / his life?

My job is to help you deal with, and get your brain used to, loss. I will come and help if you lose something you love; a toy, a best friend or even a grandparent. Loss isn't always about things, we also sometimes lose hope or Joy.

I often make you feel tired and low in energy. Sometimes I will make you feel droopy - it's your body's way to stop you from distracting yourself with activity. Instead, it's time to reflect.

If you force yourself to cheer up when you're feeling sad, I will just pop up at another time. You need to spend some time with me before things will feel better.

Jesus is Sad (retelling of John 11:1-44)

Mary, Martha and their brother Lazarus were some of Jesus' very best friends. They had shared many meals, laughs and chats together. But one day Lazarus became seriously ill. The sisters knew that Jesus loved Lazarus and would want to know of his sickness. They also knew that Jesus had the power to heal him. So they sent a message to Jesus letting him know that his friend was ill. At the time, Jesus had left his friends' area, Judea, to escape people who wanted to harm him. Despite this, Jesus took a couple of days to think about it, and then told his disciples that they were all heading back to Judea. His disciples were not happy, it would be dangerous to go back!

Now, Lazarus died and had been dead for several days by the time Jesus got near to his home. Martha went out to meet Jesus in private.

"Jesus, if you had been here, my brother would not have died!" Martha exclaimed, *"But I believe that you are the King, sent from God."* Jesus spoke to her about life and death and that believing in him meant rising again, even if our bodies die. Then Martha went to fetch her sister.

Mary was very upset, she fell down in a heap by Jesus' feet and cried: *"Jesus, if you had been here, my brother wouldn't have died!"*

When Jesus saw Mary weeping, he felt so sad too, and he wept. Both of them crying, Mary showed Jesus where Lazarus' body had been buried in a cave.

"Open the grave," Jesus asked the people around him. *"But Jesus,"* Martha objected, *"Lazarus has been dead for several days!"*

"If you believe in me," Jesus replied, *"you'll see the amazing things God can do."*

Then Jesus prayed a prayer out loud, and shouted his friend's name: *"Lazarus! Lazarus, come out!"* Suddenly Lazarus, fully alive and well, came walking out of the grave, and all those who watched couldn't help but believe that Jesus was God's Son!



Over to you!

Underline or circle any words that show emotions.

How did Martha and Mary express their Sadness differently?

Why do you think Jesus wept even though he knew Lazarus would come back to life?

Emotions are contagious. We often start feeling the emotions that we see others expressing. Jesus wept with Mary, and when we are sad, we can trust that he weeps with us too.

How do you reflect?

Sadness tells us that it's time to think and reflect. How do you do that best when you feel sad? Different people in the family will have different ways to be sad and to reflect, for example crying, going for a walk, sitting outside alone, journaling, singing or listening to sad songs, having a cuddle, drawing and so on.

Talk about how each of you can express and reflect on Sadness best and write or draw it here:



The Bible verse below tells us that God is with us when we feel sad. Colour in and decorate the verse, and while you do that talk about what it might mean for God to be with us in our Sadness.

“The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed.”

(Psalm 34:18 NLT)

Riding the waves of Sadness

When we feel sad, we often feel sad in waves. It starts with a really strong feeling, that comes back time and again, but after a while, the feeling becomes less strong and further apart. This is how our brain gets used to the thing that happened to make us sad.

It's important to remember that in between the waves, it's good to allow yourself to feel happy or excited. It's normal to then feel sad again later, but at least your body has had a little break from Sadness.

Thankfulness – an anchor in the waves

When we're bobbing on high waves of Sadness, we can throw down the anchor of thankfulness to stop us losing our way.

We are sad because we *don't* have something anymore, but we can be thankful for something we *do* have. For example, I'm sad that my holiday got cancelled, but I'm thankful for my lovely home. Psychologists tell us today how important thankfulness is for feeling well, but God, of course, already knew that! The Bible is full of encouragements to thank God for everything in our lives (look, for example, at Psalm 118, 1 Thess 5:18 and Phil 4:6).

Use these circles to help you pray "thank you" prayers:

God, I feel sad about:

...but I also feel thankful for: