

The Emotional Life of Jesus: An Overview (Part 2)

Chuck Vuolo | illbehonest.com

Brothers, I hope no one will be offended by the fact that I'm going to wear my hat. I don't have hair like Michael - close cropped - and I don't have much of it. And I think it would be more distracting to see my wispy hair blowing than it would for me to wear my hat. So, I trust nobody's offended by that.

Brothers, something I wanted to do last night but for the sake of time, chose not to do, but I'll take a few minutes now, is just to share my own personal testimony of God's grace. I've enjoyed getting to know some of you that I haven't known before. But still, I'm a stranger to many of you. And it's always good to hear from someone you know a little bit something about. So let me briefly just tell you my story. I was raised in northern New Jersey in a family that was nominally Roman Catholic. My father was raised Italian Catholic, and for him, it was enough that we made our first holy communion at about age 6, and after that, we were on our own to go to church. By my mid-teen years, I found myself asking some of the basic questions about life: Why am I here? Where am I going? What's going to happen to me when I die? And so I began going on my own to the Roman Catholic church about a mile away across our little mile square town. Walking to church in my mid-teens. Asking those questions. But I remember returning week after week as empty-headed as I went.

The Catholic church was a lot of ceremony. It was sit, stand, kneel. Sit, stand, kneel. Some monotone, dull prayers. Some reading of Scripture which seemed to be a far away world. And rather ironically, the Mass would end by the priest saying, "The Mass has ended. Go in peace." And the congregational response was, "Thanks be to God." And the way they all peeled out, took off for the parking lot, and took off, I interpreted that to be, the Mass has ended, go in peace, thank God it's over. I've done my 45 minutes of religion for the week and I'm done. And that's how people were viewing it. And that's how I was viewing it. No answers.

But in the kind providence of God, in those mid-teen years, I met a couple of young men at a pond where my friend and I used to ice skate and play ice hockey. And these guys were about my age and I love to fish, and these guys were not only fisherman, they were fisherman, hunters, and trappers in suburban north Jersey. It was like these guys should have been born in another century. But they became my friends and we began fishing together. And through them, I was exposed to a Baptist youth group. And even though I'm sure it was a bunch of immature kids, many of them not even converted, but there was something real and genuine about their faith that I had never seen before. When they prayed a simple prayer over a meal, it was as though God were a real person and that they knew Him. And that was different from what I had known in the Roman Catholic church. And I was intrigued by their lives. They had something that I didn't have and I wanted. Now they were friendly toward me, but somehow I had the sense that I'm on the outside looking in to something that I'm not a part of.

And I knew it was all about Jesus. But God didn't put it together for me right away. I went off to college at a young age of 16. My freshman year went OK. I was majoring in psychology,

simply because to me, people were more interesting than things. And so, let me major in psychology. I had no direction for my life. After that first year, we had taken a vacation up to Canada. I met a young French Canadian girl that I had an interest in, an infatuation with, and went up and visited her on my motorcycle. And then returned to college in Maryland for my second year of college.

And that year was the worst year of my life. I began to spiral downward in a deeper and deeper depression. One reason was that relationship with this girl in Canada wasn't working out, but more than that, I had no purpose and meaning to my life. Francis Schaeffer once described my life as you take a woman's bead necklace, and you cut the string, and all the beads roll around with no string to tie them together. And that was my life. If you looked at each bead, I had loving parents, though not Christian. I was a good student. I played sports. I had friends. I joined a fraternity. My life was together from an external standpoint, but there was no string to tie my life together. Why was I here? What was the purpose of my life? What was going to happen when I die? And so I began to spiral downward in depression.

I had been on the wrestling team. but that year, I had no motivation, no drive. And I started, but then I quit the wrestling team. And second semester, I actually failed a course. I had never come close to failing a course. I didn't even go to the final exam. And that was a sign that I was sinking into a deep depression. It was the hippie era. This was 1970. And people were running to California. I wasn't a hippie. I wasn't into drugs. But, I was so despairing that I was planning at the end of that year after the first week of May, to jump on my motorcycle, and run to California, which was unusual for me. I never did daring things. I didn't want to hurt my parents. I loved them. But I was so depressed, I just wanted to run away.

May 1st, 1970 was a momentous day in my life. I was going down to the Chesapeake Bay in Maryland to study for a final exam. I had a fraternity brother on my back, on the back of my motorcycle. We were going to go to the beach, just catch some rays and study. There was a gully, and I asked him to hop off and I'd meet him on the other side. And when I kickstarted the engine, flames shot out of the carburetors for some unknown reason, and within seconds ignited that foam rubber seat. Perhaps I could have put it out if I had thought quickly, but I didn't. I dropped the motorcycle. We watched it go up in flames until we were bold enough to throw sand and dirt on it and put the fire out. By that time, the motorcycle was ruined. It was a mass of melted rubber and plastic. Some friends came out from campus with a pickup truck, tooted us back to campus. And I remember wheeling my motorcycle down to one of those do-it-yourself car washes to begin to clean it off and take it apart. It was so long ago that it only cost 25 cents. But I remember thinking, maybe the God of my Christian friends in New Jersey has the answer for me. And all I can tell you men is that some time in that next week, Jesus Christ came into my life. I never remember making a prayer, but I pieced together enough of the Gospel, I knew it was all about Jesus. And all I can say is that God must have regenerated me, given me faith.

And in that first week, I was changed... forever. The depression lifted. The peace from God descended upon my life. I returned home to New Jersey a new creation in Christ 47-and-a-half years ago. And three of the things that marked the change in my life were these: Number one, I had the assurance that my sins were forgiven. I can remember driving down the New Jersey Turnpike on my motorcycle with tractor trailers and making vows to God. And I remember thinking after I got my motorcycle rebuilt, I still don't want to wipe out on a patch of

oil, but if I do, I'm going to heaven. I knew my sins were forgiven. Then, God gave me a hunger for the Bible. We didn't have a Bible in our home. We searched high and low, and I found my first Bible in the glove compartment of a Mayflower moving truck that I used to drive during the summers. I still have that Bible. A King James Bible with John 5 missing. It was a couple years before I got to read John 5, because for some reason, that was ripped out. But a hunger for the Bible, and if you look at that first Bible, it's highlighted and underlined, asterisks and stars and notes... it was just the hunger of that newborn babe for the milk of the Word. And the third change was I became a witness for Jesus. I was never a bold, in-your-face kind of person about anything. I had no strong opinions about anything. I had no message for anybody. But the realization that Jesus Christ was the key to everybody's eternity turned even a somewhat quiet, to himself kind of person into a person who carried around a satchel of tracts wherever I went and witnessed to everybody I could find. And those were the things that marked the evidence that God had given me new life.

If anybody is here and you're in that same position, life may be good; life may be rough. But there's no purpose, no sense of meaning. Why am I here? Is there a God? Who is He? Where am I going when I die? My prayer is that you would call upon Jesus Christ, the One Who changed my life 47 and a half years ago, and that you would know the same experience of having His peace that He gave to me. I cannot account for my life, except for the fact that Jesus is a risen and living Savior. None of this pulling yourself up by your religious bootstraps. I had no strength to pull myself up by any bootstraps. Jesus came and visited me in Middle Hall on the campus of Washington College in Chestertown, Maryland 47-and-a-half years ago and changed me forever.

And if you're not a Christian, He can change and save you. Call upon Him. Brothers, our subject this weekend is emotions. What did we see last night? We saw that our emotions originated with our creation. We were made in the image of God. We were made to think. We were made to choose. And we were made to feel. But we saw that sin has disrupted our emotions and I noted three ways that the fall of man into sin has disrupted our emotions. It has constricted our emotions so that they are restricted and restrained. In some cases, numbed and cauterized. And so they're not given expression, at least certain emotions, as they should. Sin has constricted our emotions. Sin has also corrupted our emotions. Turned them upside down so that we rejoice when we should mourn, we mourn when we should rejoice, we delight in evil and we despise good. Emotions turned upside down, perverted and corrupted by sin. And then sometimes, sin has affected our emotions in that our emotions come to control us. They grab the steering wheel away from our reason, and they lead our lives into destructive paths.

But we saw that our emotions can be redeemed. They can be restored to something of what God intended in the first place. How so? By the saving work of Jesus Christ. That saving work begins with restoring our right standing before God, where we believe in Jesus, and God takes our sin, puts it on Jesus, takes the perfect righteousness earned by Jesus, credits it to us, and we are justified, declared righteous based on the righteousness of another. That's where salvation begins with the right standing with God. But it doesn't end there. It continues by restoring a right state. And God works in us by His Holy Spirit, beginning with regeneration, and then continuing the life-long process of sanctification - becoming more holy. And we noted that becoming more sanctified, becoming more holy is tantamount to saying becoming more like

Jesus Christ. He is our perfect pattern of holiness. And specifically, He is our perfect pattern of holiness when it comes to the emotional life. He is the perfect representation of God the Father. He is the perfect embodiment of holiness which includes our emotional life. So as we are pressing on toward likeness to Christ, we should desire to think like Jesus, to act like Jesus, to react like Jesus, to interact with others like Jesus, and to feel like Jesus felt, to have the emotions that Jesus displayed.

And what I plan to do in this hour is to give you an overview of Jesus' emotional life. An overview of the emotional life of Jesus. And then, in the two remaining messages we want to key in on four of the emotions which are prominent in the Gospel accounts concerning Jesus. So the first thing we want to see is what I call the propriety of Jesus as our emotional example. Is it proper to look at Jesus as the example for our emotional life? I'm going to argue that it is.

Now in the history of the church, it's not surprising that the main attack of Satan and demonic doctrines has been against the person and work of Christ. The person and work of Christ is the jugular vein of Christianity, right? If you see programs about lions on the African plains, when they stalk and when they attack their prey - a gazelle or something else - they don't attack the rump. They go for the jugular vein. They go for the kill. And the person and work of Christ is the jugular vein of Christianity. And so Satan, who is a roaring lion, goes after the jugular vein. He's going to attack those doctrines which are the essence of Christianity. And so he seeks to pervert either the person or the work of Christ. Now the biblical doctrine of the Person of Christ is that He is fully man and fully God. Now we can say that, and we should, but we can't begin to wrap our minds around it, but if you deny either of those truths, it will be fatal to your soul.

Now you know in biblical times, there were those who denied the humanity of Jesus. Remember what John writes? Dealing with Gnostic's who didn't believe Jesus had a real body. He had a phantom body. So John says whoever confesses Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God. Whoever denies that Jesus has come in the flesh is not of God. In our modern day, there's more of a tendency to deny the deity of Christ as many of the cults do, as Jehovah's Witnesses, denying that Jesus is fully God. But one preacher, Allen Dunn, says when it comes to the emotions, we will be more tempted to overemphasize Christ's deity and to minimize His humanity. Now why is that? It might be because we want to say, be like Jesus in our emotions? That's not possible. Jesus was God! Well, Jesus was God, but Jesus also was fully man.

So let me just take a couple minutes just to establish what I trust you all believe, and that is the full humanity of Jesus so that He is the proper role model and pattern for our emotional lives. Why do we believe that Jesus is fully man? Well, because the Bible makes some very plain statements to that effect. John 1:1 - "In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, the Word was God." Verse 14 - the Word became what? Flesh and dwelt among us. Hebrews 2:14 - "Therefore, since the children..." That would be us - believers. "...share in flesh and blood, He himself likewise also partook of the same." For our sake, He partook of the flesh and blood humanity of which we are made. And then, the Bible shows that He possessed the essential elements of human nature. As a child, Luke says, He increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men. Jesus had to grow physically in the same way we grow. He had to drink milk from His mother's breast to be nourished and later take solid food. Jesus went through the years of adolescence emerging into teenage years. He may have had to wrestle

with acne or zits on His face as a teenager. He may have been gangly as some teenagers are, right? As their body's kind of growing too fast, knocking over things. Those are things not part of depravity. Those are things pertaining to humanity. Jesus had to grow in physical stature. He grew in wisdom. He had to learn the carpentry trade from His father Joseph. He had to be trained as an apprentice. He didn't just come in the first day, carve some beautiful yoke, you know? And Joseph says, wow, where'd you learn that? Well, you know, I'm God... No, Joseph had to train Him as an apprentice to be a carpenter, right? Jesus had to study the Bible. He had to study the Hebrew Bible and learn it. He didn't get it by osmosis. You know, put the Hebrew Bible under my pillow and in the morning, I have it memorized. He had to study it.

Now, as He read, as He learned, He always perfectly obeyed. But Jesus was fully man. We know that He became hungry after 40 days of fasting. On the cross, He said, "I thirst." He got tired and sat down by the well in Samaria. He got so bone tired, He was asleep in the back of a boat in the midst of a storm on the Sea of Galilee. And He died. So all the elements of human nature characterized Jesus.

But then finally, I just want to note one passage from John 3:34-35 that validates Jesus as our proper role model for our emotional life. We read in John 3:34-35, "For He Whom God has sent speaks the words of God. For He gives the Spirit without measure. The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand." Commentators understand that to mean that God the Father has given the Holy Spirit to Jesus in an unlimited way, so that the entire ministry of Jesus was conducted in the power of the Holy Spirit. That Spirit came upon Him in His baptism. It was in the power of that Spirit, He went out into the wilderness and faced temptation. It was in the power of that Spirit that He worked His miracles. In the power of that Spirit He preached. He says in Luke 4 the Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor. It was by the power of the Spirit, He offered Himself up on the cross to God the Father, and by the Spirit, He was raised. And my point is, it was by the power of the Spirit filling Him that He conducted His emotional life.

Now, the point is this, brothers. That same Holy Spirit lives in you and me. And so we can't say well, I can't be like Jesus in my emotions because He was God. Yes, He is God, but He was fully man, filled with the Holy Spirit. Our command is to be perpetually be being filled with the Holy Spirit. So while we'll never attain perfection in any realm in this life, Jesus is our valid pattern for our emotional lives.

Well now, let's consider the purity of Jesus' emotional life. Although fully man, He was wholly without sin. His emotions were not tainted with sin. And let's look at Jesus through the lens of what has disrupted our emotional lives. Remember we said our emotions are constricted; our emotions are corrupted; our emotions are controlling. Let's look at Jesus in those regards. First of all, Jesus was not constricted or restrained in His emotions. I'm going to quote James Stalker, a Scotsman living in the late 1800's/early 1900's. And he makes a beautiful statement about Jesus. He says, "Jesus was as refined and delicate in feeling as He was wise in speech and mighty in act. He taught mankind to feel finally. And ever since He was in the world, there have been increasing numbers who have learned from Him to regard childhood, and women, poverty, and service, and many other objects with sentiments totally different from those with which they were regarded before His advent. Nor would it be difficult to

trace the refining influence which intercourse with Him had on His disciples; how they learned to feel about things as He did." You know what He's saying.

Nearly everybody agrees that the teaching of Jesus has had a profound effect on the human race, right? Even unbelievers will acknowledge that who don't regard His deity. But what Stalker is saying is that Jesus' emotional life has had a vast impact upon the world. The world has never been the same since Jesus Christ walked on its shores because of His emotional life. And the thing about Jesus' emotional life is He was not restrained and restricted. He was not bottled up and repressed in His emotional life. As we'll see in a few minutes, His emotional life was very expansive and very expressive. He displayed the full spectrum of human emotions. Whereas, our emotions are often constricted in certain areas and restrained - His were not.

Further, He gave appropriate expression to His emotions. Listen to B.B. Warfield who wrote an excellent article 100 years ago on the emotional life of Jesus. He said, "But the bodily expression of the emotions (in Jesus) is also frequently expressly attested. Not only do we read that He wept and wailed, sighed and groaned, but we read also of His angry glare, His annoyed speech, His chiding words, the outbreking ebullition of His rage, of the agitation of His bearing when under strong feeling, the open exultation of His joy, the unrest of His movements in the face of anticipated evils, the loud cry which was wrung from Him in His moment of desolation. Nothing is lacking to make the impression strong that we have before us in Jesus, a human being like ourselves." You see, to be more fully and healthily human, as Jesus is, is not to be less emotional. It is generally to be more emotional. Jesus was not constricted in His emotions. Jesus was not corrupted in His emotions. We are told that He was tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. It is appropriate to put before every emotion of Jesus the word "holy." Holy grief. Holy anger. Holy joy. Holy exasperation. Because in all of His emotions, He was without sin. That's why He's such a perfect guide.

We can look at one another, some of us are more or less mature emotionally, but none of us is a perfect example. We all have to say imitate me only insofar as I imitate Christ. But when we look at Christ, there's no qualification. Imitate Christ. Because He was not corrupted in His emotions. And He was not controlled by His emotions. As we view the life and ministry of Jesus, we never see Him out of control. His emotions were strong. But they were under control of His reason. They never took center stage.

And think about it, Jesus was under tremendous pressure during His ministry, wasn't He? Can you imagine having your enemy stalking you? Always waiting in the wings for you to say or do something amiss so they could go out and plot your death? Can you imagine living with the realization that one of your close band of twelve would be a treacherous traitor and would betray you? But John 6:64 says, "Jesus knew from the beginning who it was that would betray Him." And He had to love this man like He loved the other eleven. Jesus had the constant demand of the multitudes pressing in upon Him to heal and to cast out demons. He had to deal with the thick-headed disciples who just weren't getting it. All of these things to bring pressure upon Jesus, to provoke Him in His emotions. But His emotions were never out of control. You see His holy anger in the temple. Turning over tables, making a whip, driving out the animals, clanging the coins on the floor. But He never lost it in an irrational rage. He didn't turn and start punching the Pharisees out, right? Even that was under control. Perhaps the greatest physical display of His anger that we see in the Scripture, but it was controlled. His

compassion. Oh, when we study His compassion in the next message. How the heart of Jesus was drawn out in willing service to meet the needs and relieve the misery of people. There's an incident where He's in Capernaum, and He's up late, casting out demons, healing people. He goes off to be with His Father. And it's in Luke 4:42-43, and the people come after Him to try to pull Him back. And He's been in prayer. And He says, no, we must go to other cities and preach there also, because that's why I came out. He never let His emotions, even of compassion, rule Him and override the Father's agenda for Him. No, I know there are people I haven't healed, but My Father's agenda is that I go to other cities and preach to them. So even in His compassion, it didn't so overwhelm Him, that it overrode His apprehension of His Father's will for Him.

And we see Him in John 12, before Gethsemane. Certain Greeks are asking to see Jesus. Greeks. And the mention of these Greeks reminds Him that He's come to die for the sins of the whole world - not only Jews. And He says now is My soul troubled. What shall I say? A little precursor to the garden. What shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour? No. For this purpose, I have come to this hour. Father, glorify Your name. And the Father answers from Heaven: I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again. You know the emotion of fear, trepidation - I want to get out of this thing. But, no. No. I've come for this purpose. Father, glorify Your name. And the Father from Heaven says, even at the expense of the death of His Son, I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again. I will glorify My name in the death of You, My Son. But you see again, where the emotions of Jesus did not control Him as they sometimes control us.

Men, let's look next at what I'm calling the perfect symmetry of Jesus' emotional life. He had perfectly balanced emotions. There's a picture of perfect balance in His humanity and in His emotions. You know, we are all so imbalanced that the psychologists can label us according to certain temperaments. You know how psychologists and even sometimes Christians try to do this? One of the classifications is according to the ancient bodily humors? Have you heard of this? The sanguine temperament, the phlegmatic, the choleric, and the melancholic? Well, let me give you a little rundown on what each one represents. The sanguine personality: extroverted, lively, fun-loving, activity-prone, impulsive, entertaining, persuasive, optimistic - sanguine. The phlegmatic personality: introverted, calm, unemotional, easy-going, laid back, never get upset person. Choleric: extroverted, hot-tempered, quick-thinking, active, practical, strong-willed, easily annoyed, self-confident, self-sufficient - choleric. Melancholic - introverted, logical, analytical, factual, private, reserved, suspicious, skeptical about most things, prone to negativity and depression. And then you have the Type A personalities. You hear that? He's a Type A personality. He's competitive. He's an achiever. He's a multi-tasker, success driven; he needs to win. The Type B personality, like the phlegmatic, more relaxed, they don't take stressful situations personally. They could be highly competitive, but they don't have the same urgency to see a successful outcome. Type A, Type B, Type C, Type D. As you hear those, most of us can say, yeah, that sounds like me, right? Yeah, I'm more like that. But you know why we can say that? Because we are so imbalanced. I'm strong in this, but it's because I'm weak in this. You know, I may be an aggressive achiever, but in the process, I run roughshod over people with insensitivity. Or, I may be sensitive, but too prone to negativity and depression. Or, I might be lighthearted and fun-loving, but run the risk of levity and not being reverent.

You see, we can be characterized by those psychological temperaments because we are sinfully imbalanced, right? Not so Jesus. Jesus would confound the temperament analysts

and the personality gurus. You can't pin Jesus down to a personality type. One author, Otto Borchard, in his book, "The Original Jesus," cited by Pastor Allen Dunn, and I'm just going to paraphrase here. He says this, you know you see Jesus cleansing the temple with great fervor and you say He's a choleric temperament. But then you see Him sleeping in the back of the boat during a storm, and you say well, He's a laid back phlegmatic. Or then you see Jesus in contrast to John. John comes with austerity. Jesus comes eating and drinking. He's making wine at a wedding, and He's mixing it up with people socially and you say surely Jesus has a sanguine personality. And then you see Him weeping at the tomb of Lazarus and you say, He's a melancholic. He's none of those. You see, you can't pin Jesus down to a personality type because He had a perfectly balanced emotional life.

Another author, Clifford Pond, also quoted by Pastor Dunn, shows the amazing clash of contrasts in Jesus. He says this, "He is frank and communicative, open about His need, His fear, His joy, and yet He can be reclusive, walking alone, spending nights alone in prayer to God. He can treat His disciples as friends because everything He hears from the Father He divulges to them. But He holds back certain things because they cannot bear them. He can be so serene at times, and yet at other times, be moved to the depths of His being with great upheavals in His inner man. He is mild yet intensely earnest. He is heroic yet full of tenderness. His words are wonderfully profound, and yet transparently clear." And then he says this - this is a beautiful statement. "His business is to conquer the world. Yet He can talk to an ordinary, common woman so searchingly that one might almost think the salvation of her soul was His only concern." Isn't that beautiful? His job is to save the world! But He's talking to that woman as though she is the only one that needs to be saved. Oh, our Lord is so beautiful in His emotional life. Perfect purity yields perfect symmetry. We need to ask ourselves, where are we imbalanced in our emotional life? Maybe you're very compassionate and tender, but you never get angry about anything. Jesus got angry about certain things. Maybe you have no problem with anger, but your problem is being compassionate and tender. Maybe you have sorrow like Jesus, but you don't have a lot of joy. Or maybe you have joy, but you don't know how to weep over the things that made Jesus weep. We are so sinfully imbalanced, but men, behold your Lord. Perfect symmetry in His emotional life.

The next thing we look at: the absence of sentimentality in Jesus' emotional life. Now what's the difference between sentiment and sentimentality or sentimentalism? I had to do a little study on this to understand, but there's a difference. Sentiment is simply feeling. Sentimentality is kind of excessive feeling, or feeling that is disproportionate to the situation. For example, if you weep over the death of a child, that is very, very appropriate. But if you weep over a mouse caught in a mouse trap, there's something out of balance with that. I don't care if his big brown eyes are looking up at you... You don't weep over a mouse. He's a rodent! That's a sentimentality, that's an excessive emotion that doesn't fit the situation. And sometimes we associate sentimentality, which is out of balance with reason, with words like gushy, mushy, maudlin, schmaltzy, drippy, over-emotional and tear-jerking. You know, people can get sentimental about a number of things. People get sentimental about the past. You know what would make me sentimental - listening to oldies. Now, I know what oldies means for you. Does "oldies" mean different things for different people? Or is "oldies" - my oldies. My oldies are music from the 60's and the 70's. If you're a young guy, are your oldies the 90's? I don't know if

that's a moving target or not, but all I know is when there's an oldies station, they're playing my music from the 60's and 70's. Now sometimes I need to listen to oldies. When I was traveling back from Jeremy's soccer games at 1 or 2 in the morning, driving home and the coffee wasn't doing it. To keep myself alive, I'd find myself an oldies station. Man, it would perk me up and I'd be able to drive for hours listening to those oldies. Because it had such a nostalgic effect - a powerful effect upon me. But otherwise, unless it's to keep me alive driving, I shouldn't listen to those oldies. Because it's a sentimental nostalgia. You know what I think? I think man, oh to be back in my teen years. Oh, to be back in my twenties. But here I am in my 60's and life is passing me by... that's not good. I need to press on toward the mark forward - not look back. That's not productive. That's not edifying for me. So the oldies have a sentimental effect upon me which is not a good emotion. So the past - music - can be sentimental. Sentiment is good. Sentimentality is not good.

People get sentimental over paraphernalia. Parents sentimental over their children's first baby shoes. And they keep their childhood toy. And this was the little stuffed animal that he had when he was three. You get sentimental over paraphernalia and things. People get sentimental about pets. Some people get so attached to pets that you would think the pet is a child. They get overly sentimental about a bird. Dogs now? Dogs are man's best friend. It's hard to lose a dog, isn't it? God made dogs in a special way. But still, you have to say at the end of the day, it's an animal right? It's an animal.

I'll tell you a story about sentimentality and animals. Years ago, my children were 7, 5, and 3. Jeremy was 3. I was running around the high school track - Downingtown High School track, and it was a cinder track at the time. And I'm running and all of a sudden I look down and there's a baby snapping turtle in my path. And I'm glad I didn't step on it. Now I know that snapping turtles lay their eggs on land, but they live in the water, and there was not a body of water anywhere to be seen. But anyway, I thought, I'm going to take this little snapping turtle home and give it to the kids as a pet. And so we take it home and I say, now kids you can keep this for a couple of weeks and then we're going to have to let it go. We got a little terrarium and they played with the snapping turtle. And they named him Roger. And then the time came to let the snapping turtle go back into the wild, so we went down to the local duck pond, and I was thinking, boy, how's this going to be for my kids? Is this going to be hard for them to let their pet Roger go? We no sooner got to the bank when my son Chuck reached into bucket and throws him as far as his 5 year old arm can throw. "Bye, Roger!" And that was it. Alright, that was easy. "Bye, Roger!" Roger's gone. And I thought, so much for sentimentality.

Another story though, about my son Jeremy. And you'll appreciate this if you're under his pastoral care. When my daughter was about that same age, we had gotten her a parakeet, and sometimes the kids would let the parakeet fly around and get some exercise. And it was Christmas-time, and the kids had the parakeet out, and we had some visitors, and when they came in the door, the parakeet flew out the door. It was about 32 degrees. So we go out, we bring the cage, we try to coax the parakeet back. No do. The parakeet's gone. So we come back in and my daughter's sad. And Jeremy comforts her. "Valerie, I'm going to get you a bird with no wings that can't fly." So you see, from the very beginning, he was a sensitive guy. But brothers, Jesus was not sentimental.

Again, let me give you a few instances. Rather than take the time to turn to the passage, I'll reference it. You can look it up. In Mark 3, Jesus is teaching a multitude of people. His family - not believing in Him - come looking for Him. They think He's working too hard. You know, we need to relieve Him. And they come. And it's reported to Jesus, Your mother and brothers are here. What does Jesus do? Oh, pardon Me, My mother and brothers are here. No. You know what He says? You remember. Who is My mother and My brother and My sisters? He who does the will of God. Now, it's not that He didn't love His family, but there was not a sentimental attachment to His family that overrode His duty to teach the people of God. When Peter, after giving the great confession: You are the Christ, the Son of the living God, and being affirmed by Jesus: Blessed are you, Simon. A few minutes later, Jesus is saying I need to go to Jerusalem, suffer under the chief priests and elders and die. And Peter said, "God forbid, Lord!" And what did Jesus say? Now Jesus loved Peter. Jesus knew that Peter was well-intentioned. But without any sentimentality, He said, "Get behind me, Satan!" I love you Peter, but that thought is a devilish thought. I've got to go to the cross. And so, Jesus was not sentimental.

In Luke 9, a would-be follower, in v. 59-60, I think it's on your handout, a follower comes to Jesus, Jesus, I want to follow You, but let me first bury my father. Let the dead bury the dead. Come, follow Me. Jesus does not allow sentimental attachment to family interfere with the urgency of following Him and making the spiritual life the priority. And remember how He says in Matthew 10, He who loves father or mother, son or daughter, more than Me is not worthy of Me. So Jesus was not sentimental.

Let me make some applications of this, brothers. In His emotional life, He was not given to sentimentality. I say first of all, if you are especially a deeply emotional person, beware of sentimentality. It is false emotion. It is unprincipled emotion. Make sure that what you feel fits with the reality of the situation. Secondly, be alert to sentimentality as it is used in churches to manipulate decisions for Jesus. You're aware that there are countless people in countless churches who think they're Christians because they were manipulated emotionally by tear-jerking music and appeals that run around the mind and appeal to their emotions and tug on their emotions, and they make an emotional decision for Jesus, and they're not converted. They've not come to terms with their sin and alienation from God. They've not repented. But they're told they're in the kingdom because they made a decision for Jesus and they were just moved by a manipulative, emotional, sentimental appeal. Beware of that. Certainly, don't practice that in your churches. You do a great disservice to sinners. And then, in light of Jesus's unsentimental rebuke to Peter... I was talking to a brother just today and I added this application. If you think, well, I know this person needs the Gospel, but it's going to be offensive to them, and it's going to hurt them. Don't for sentimental reasons withhold the hard truth that they need to hear even if they turn on you upon hearing it. Sometimes, we have a brother, a sister that needs to be corrected. And we think, well, I don't want to hurt their feelings. Well, wait a minute, if they're sinning, they're hurting themselves. They're hurting others. They're hurting the cause of Christ. Now, you go graciously. You go humbly. You go gently. But go! And speak that word to them. And don't not go for the sake of maudlin sentimentality. And then beware of being a manipulator if you are a fast-talking, smooth kind of person, beware of using sentimentality to manipulate the emotions of others and prey upon them to get what you want.

Brothers, next, let's consider the variety of Jesus' emotional life. I don't have time in these messages to cover all of the emotions of Jesus. We're only going to key in on four. But I want to give you a spectrum of the emotions of Jesus. One of the things that I enjoy doing in preparation for this is just going through the Gospels, looking for the emotions of Jesus, and taking pages and pages of notes where I saw the emotions of Jesus. And I invite you, if I don't cover an emotion that you're aware of, would you tell me? I would love to expand this list. No doubt I have missed some. So I'm open to add to this list. But let me just run through a spectrum of the emotions of Jesus as I found them in the Gospels. The compassion of Jesus - we're going to focus on that tonight. When He went ashore, He saw large crowds and felt compassion for them and healed their sick. The amazement of Jesus.

Are you aware that there were two occasions when Jesus was amazed? Now that's amazing to me, because He's the One that amazes us. But on two occasions, Jesus was amazed. He was amazed at the great faith of the Centurion. It says He was amazed. Never have I seen such faith in Israel. And He was amazed - wondered - at the great unbelief in Nazareth. That's intriguing to me. The One at Whom we marvel, actually marveled at great faith and great unbelief. The amazement of Jesus.

The wariness, the suspicion, the skepticism of Jesus. Jesus was not gullible. In John 2, it says He wasn't entrusting Himself to them because He knew what was in men. He had emotions of skepticism about them. He didn't just entrust Himself to everybody, and neither should we. The serenity of Jesus. The storm whips up on the Sea of Galilee, and He's sleeping peacefully like a baby in the back of the boat.

The sensitivity of Jesus. Let me park here for a minute, because this impacted me. How sensitive Jesus Christ was. He was sensitive to the emotions of other people. Over and over, I read how sensitive He was to human fears. To Jairus He says, "Do not be afraid any longer." When the men are trembling on the Mount of Transfiguration, He says, "Do not be afraid." When He's walking to them on the water and they're in the boat and they think it's a ghost, "Don't be afraid." I see the perpetual sensitivity of Jesus to allay human fears. Don't be afraid. I'm not here to frighten you. I'm not here to alarm you. Beautiful display of the sensitivity of Jesus. He was sensitive to practical needs. James Stalker talks about how when Jesus raised the daughter of Jairus, He took her by the hand, so that when she awoke, she would have some human contact, and then of all things, He says, "give her something to eat." She's been dead, you know. She hasn't eaten in awhile. But who would have thought of that? Jesus is sensitive to this very practical need. She's going to need something to eat now, now that she's alive from the dead. Give her some food. Sensitivity of Jesus. Sensitive to His disciples' need for rest. You've been working hard. Come apart and rest for a while. His sensitivity to social propriety. He comes into the home of the Pharisee Simon, who's grumbling about the woman who wets His feet with her tears, and He says, "Simon, you gave Me no water for My feet. You didn't give Me a kiss. You didn't anoint My head." He was sensitive to the social amenities of His day. Jesus was sensitive to His peoples' suffering. How much time does He take in the Sermon on the Mount to prep them for what's coming down. I'm going away. You're going to suffer, but in this world, you're going to have tribulation, but cheer up - I've overcome the world. He takes chapters in our Bibles to comfort them about the upcoming suffering because He is sensitive. The sensitivity of Jesus

Christ. The exasperation of Jesus. Have you been so long with Me? We'll study that in more detail. He got exasperated.

The fearlessness of Jesus. In Mark 3, there's a man with a withered hand. He knows that if He heals him, His enemies are going to plot to destroy Him. And He says stretch forth your hand. And He makes it whole. Fearlessness. Knowing His enemies would go out, as they did, to plot to destroy Him. He healed the man. The anger of Jesus: with sin, with death, with His enemies. The joy of Jesus. We're going to end, God-willing, with that tomorrow. I want you to see, as I've seen more fully the joy of Jesus. The zeal of Jesus. He cleanses the temple. Zeal for His Father's house consumed Him. The grief and sorrow of Jesus. The fear of Jesus in the garden. Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me. The loneliness of Jesus. Could you watch with Me for even an hour? I'm human. I need friends. This is My hour of trial. You guys are sleeping! Couldn't you watch with Me for an hour? He felt loneliness. The alarm of Jesus. Beware! Watch out!

One more, the love of Jesus. And by the love of Jesus, I don't mean the electing love of Jesus. I mean the human love of Jesus. Let me open this up. There were three individuals or groups that it says Jesus loved, and it's not talking about His eternal, electing love, but His human affection. Who were they? Give me one. The rich, young ruler. The man went away sorrowful. And it says Jesus felt love for him. He let him go. He didn't give him plan B. He didn't compromise the terms. But He felt a love for him. Who else? Lazarus. He whom You love is sick. Jesus loved Lazarus, Martha, and Mary. Not talking about His electing love as God. It's talking about His human affection. And who else? John - five times. John says "the disciple whom Jesus loved." Isn't that intriguing? He loved them all, but there was a special bond of affection for John. Brothers, now, final thing. The key to Jesus' emotional life. I hope you see something of the beauty of the emotional life of our Lord. It is so expansive. It is expressive.

But how do we attain to that kind of emotional life? The key to Jesus' emotional life is communion with His Father in His Word and prayer. There's no easy formula, brothers. Jesus had the emotional life He had because of His communion with His Father in Word and prayer. Jesus was committed to the Father's Word. Emotions are never intended to lead. They're always intended to follow our rational thinking, and our thinking is always to be subject to the Word of God. We're to take every thought captive to the Word of God. And Jesus did that with His Father's Word. John 5:30, "I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him Who sent Me." John 7:16, "My teaching is not Mine, but His Who sent Me." Matthew 4:4, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." Jesus did that perfectly. He lived by every word out of the mouth of His Father.

And how would Jesus' commitment to His Father to live by His Father's Word affect and govern His emotional life? I would say this, His emotions were under the influence and control of His Father's revealed purposes and promises and provisions. For example, we're going to see that His holy joy was based on His Father's purpose. He says I praise You Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, that You've hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them unto babes. His joy was based on His commitment to His Father's purpose to reveal Himself to those who were dependent babes. His holy anger was born of the fact that He was jealous for His Father's purpose. The Father had made that temple a place of prayer, and they were perverting it. And because they were perverting the Father's purpose, it evoked anger from

Jesus. His holy submission in the garden was based on His trust in the Father's promise and provision. He will see the travail of His soul and be satisfied. Though it was agonizing to Him, what made Him say, Father, not My will but Yours be done - because He trusted the Father's promise that He would have a seed as a result of His work. In short, Jesus' emotional life was grounded in His knowledge of and obedience to His Father's Word.

And so it must be with us, brothers. If we're going to be further sanctified in our emotional life, there's no shortcut. We need to drink deeply of the Word of God. We need to imbibe the plans, the purposes, the precepts, the promises of God. And we need to obey them and our emotions will fall into line with them. Listen to a lengthy quote from Pastor Allen Dunn. He says, "We are to relate to God as our Father and by faith, regulate our emotional reactions to life, not according to our situation or the dictates of other people, but according to our Father's Word. His words which abide forever must regulate our emotions. Not the things which are passing away. When we are emotionally disobedient it is because our hearts are not fastened to the Word. We allow fleeting feelings or passing pressures - something other than God to define who we are. We doubt His promises. We get our eyes off of Christ and stare fearfully at the water and begin to sink, and wave after wave of emotional turmoil - up, down, bobbing around - not steadfast of mind, but blown about, impulsive, seeking to gratify the emotional demand to worry, pout, blow up in anger, be silly and self-indulgent, rather than seeking to please God and satisfy the Scriptural demand to trust God. If you are emotionally disfigured, temperamentally extreme and imbalanced, then I invite you to study the emotionally symmetric Jesus.

And I submit to you that the fundamental reason why He was able to keep such emotional equilibrium, was because He was in perfect obedience to the Word as the man of faith." What gave ballast to Jesus' emotional life was an unwavering commitment to the Word of His Father. And that's going to be the case with us, brothers. We need to be faithful to obey the Word of God. And in the path of that obedience, our emotions will follow along and be righteous emotions. But not only that, but also prayer. Jesus was committed to the habit of prayer. We read in Luke 5:16, "But Jesus Himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray." And at times that would have been emotionally tempting for Jesus, we find Him praying. He prayed at His baptism when the Spirit came upon Him. When He needed to choose 12 disciples, He prayed all night. After that exhausting evening of ministry with the crowd, and knowing they would pressure Him to continue on, He was alone with His Father to have restored the Father's agenda. So He's not bullied by the agendas of man. When He hears about the death of John the Baptist, what's He going to think? I'm next. They're out for Me. He was the forerunner. I'm the real target. And so, we read that He goes off to Himself to pray. When He's healing a man in the synagogue, and provoking the Pharisees to plot how to destroy Him, He prays. When they want to make Him an earthly king because He feeds multiplied thousands, He withdraws to Himself. There's an emotional temptation. And Jesus withdraws to be alone with His Father and pray. And it will be the same with us. If we are to have emotional maturity, emotional equilibrium, not only do we need to be obedient to the Word, we need to draw near to God our Father in prayer. Casting our care upon Him. Repenting of our sinful emotions. Calling on Him to draw near. To calm or settle our emotions, at one point - at another time, to awaken and inflame our emotions. Lord, this ought to make me angry and I'm not angry. Lord, help me to feel as You feel. Or Lord, I'm worried, I'm fearful, please calm my heart.

You see, there's no silver bullet. There's no easy formula to instant sanctification. And that applies to our emotional lives. The usual means of grace: soaking our minds in God's Word, spending much time in His presence in prayer, will help us to grow in our emotional likeness to Jesus. And then let me add another means of grace. Fellowship with other brothers. He who walks with wise men will be wise. The companion of fools will suffer harm. Right? And there are some brothers who better represent the emotions of Jesus than we do. And we will be rewarded for fellowshipping with them, observing them, and learning from them. And imitating them as they imitate our Lord Christ.

Let's pray. Lord Jesus, we thank You for the beauty of Your Person. And as we have surveyed very briefly Your emotional life, we thank You for the beautiful symmetry and equilibrium of Your emotional life. Lord, You know us. You know our imbalances. Thank You that Your blood cleanses us from all of our emotional sins and sinning. But do work in us to conform us more fully to Your emotions, that we would not only do as You do, and think as You think, but we would feel as You feel, Lord Jesus. We ask in Your name, Amen.