

August 3 - August 7, 2026



When Grief Comes to Shore

A Five-Day Devotional

Grief can make solitude feel like the only safe place. When our hearts are hurting, withdrawing can seem easier than explaining how we feel or trying to carry on as though everything is normal. Yet Scripture reminds us that God often meets us at the very shoreline of our withdrawal.

This week, we will reflect on Jesus' compassion in Matthew 14 and consider how God meets us in grief, draws us toward community, and provides what we need when our own resources feel small. Along the way, we will remember that none of us is meant to carry life's burdens alone. Whether we are grieving a loss, facing a new season, caring for others, beginning a new school year, or simply growing older, Christ meets us where we are and faithfully walks with us.

Monday, August 3

When Jesus Meets Us at the Shore

Matthew 14:13–14

"13 Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. 14 When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick."

Jesus withdraws because His heart is heavy, not because He is indifferent. When grief hits, it can feel impossible to be "on" for anyone. Our minds become foggy, our bodies tired, and our emotions raw. Matthew's account reminds us that Jesus Himself sought solitude. Scripture does not shame Him for needing space to grieve.

Yet the crowd meets Him at the shore, and something remarkable happens: grief does not erase compassion. Jesus sees people not as a threat or interruption but as sheep in need of care, and He responds with healing. His example reminds us that sorrow and compassion can exist together. We may not have the strength we once had, but God can still work through us in our weakness.

There are times when we need to step away, be quiet, and allow ourselves to grieve. But isolation does not have to become our permanent home. Jesus shows us a healthy movement: sometimes we need the boat, but eventually we may need to come back to shore. We can take that step slowly, honestly, and with grace.

Reflection Question

Where have you been seeking a "boat" of isolation recently, and what might one small step back toward connection look like?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, meet me in my grief and weariness. Give me space to rest when I need it, but keep my heart open to those You place around me. Help me receive Your compassion and share it with others. Amen.

Tuesday, August 4

Near to the Brokenhearted

Psalm 34:18

"The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit."

Grief can convince us that we must handle pain alone. Being seen can feel vulnerable, and being needed can feel exhausting. But Psalm 34 gives us a beautiful promise: the Lord is near to the brokenhearted. He does not stand at a distance waiting for us to get ourselves together. He draws close in the very places where we feel most fragile.

Jesus' nearness does not always remove the difficulty or immediately change our circumstances. Sometimes His presence comes through a person who calls, a friend who sits quietly beside us, a meal prepared when we don't have the energy to cook, or a Scripture verse that speaks directly into our pain. God often uses His people to remind us that we are not forgotten.

We do not need to pretend that everything is fine in order to experience God's presence. We can bring Him the honest version of our hearts—the questions, exhaustion, disappointment, and sadness. The Lord is not frightened by our brokenness. He meets us there with mercy.

Reflection Question

What is one honest sentence that describes where you are right now, and how might you bring that truth directly to God?

Prayer

Father, thank You for drawing near when my heart is hurting. Help me be honest with You and open to receiving care from others. Give me the grace to take one small step toward connection today. Amen.

Wednesday, August 5th

We Carry One Another

Galatians 6:2

"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

Isolation often grows when grief makes ordinary responsibilities feel impossible. We may assume we are a burden or fear that asking for help means we have failed. Galatians gives us a different picture of Christian community: burdens are meant to be carried together, and this shared carrying reflects the heart of Christ.

This truth was beautifully visible during our Blessing of the Backpacks. As a new school year begins, we recognize that children do not walk into a new year alone. They are surrounded by parents, grandparents, teachers, church members, and friends who pray for them and help carry the responsibilities and challenges that come with growing up. The same is true for teachers and parents. Each carries burdens that others may never see.

The church is a family in which we both give and receive care. Sometimes we are strong enough to carry someone else's burden; sometimes we need someone to carry ours. Neither role is more spiritual than the other. There is humility in asking for help and love in offering it. Christ's people become stronger when we stop pretending that we can do everything by ourselves.

Reflection Question

What burden are you carrying privately that you could share with someone you trust, and who might God be inviting you to help carry this week?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for giving us one another. Help me be willing to receive help when I need it and to carry the burdens of others with compassion. Watch over our children, parents, teachers, and families in this new school year, and make our church a place where no one carries their burdens alone. Amen.

Thursday, August 6th

Comfort That Becomes a Gift

2 Corinthians 1:3–4

"3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."

God's comfort is more than soothing words. It strengthens, steadies, and gives us enough grace to keep moving forward. Paul calls God the "Father of mercies and God of all comfort," reminding us that His comfort often arrives in the middle of affliction rather than only after it has passed. God does not minimize our loss; He meets us within it.

Our celebration of Golden Age Sunday gives us a beautiful reminder of this truth. Those who have walked with Christ for 75 years or more carry stories of God's faithfulness through generations, seasons of joy, seasons of sorrow, and circumstances they never expected. Their lives can remind the rest of us that God's faithfulness is not limited to one season of life. The God who sustained them yesterday is still the God who sustains us today.

Over time, the comfort we receive can become a gift we share with others. This does not mean rushing through grief or turning suffering into a project. It simply means that God can use what we have experienced to make us more compassionate toward someone walking a similar road. Sometimes the greatest ministry is simply being able to say, "I understand," or "I've been there," and then quietly walk beside someone who is hurting.

Reflection Question

Who has been a source of God's comfort and faithfulness in your life, and how might you pass that same comfort to someone else?

Prayer

God of all comfort, thank You for carrying me through every season. Help me recognize Your faithfulness and use what I have received from You to encourage others. Bless those who have walked many years with You and help their wisdom and witness strengthen generations to come. Amen.

Friday, August 7

Enough for Today

Matthew 14:19–20

"19 Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, and taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. 20 And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over."

When evening comes, the disciples see scarcity: not enough food, not enough energy, not enough capacity. Grief can train our vision in much the same way. We begin to focus on what we lack—strength, patience, hope, motivation, or even the desire to connect with others. Yet Jesus takes what is available, blesses it, and multiplies it until everyone is satisfied.

The miracle is not only about bread. It reveals something about the kingdom of Jesus: our limitations are not the final word. Jesus does not shame the disciples because they have only a small amount to offer. He receives what they have and does something with it that they could never have accomplished themselves.

Perhaps you feel as though you have only "five loaves and two fish" emotionally, spiritually, or relationally. You don't have to pretend otherwise. Bring Jesus what you actually have. Bring Him the small prayer, the difficult conversation, the willingness to accept help, the strength to get through one more day, or the simple decision to show up. He can work with small offerings.

This is especially important when we are entering a new season. Whatever season we are entering, Christ does not ask us to possess tomorrow's strength today. He gives grace for today. His provision is often enough for the next step.

Reflection Question

What feels scarce in your life right now, and what small offering can you place in Jesus' hands today rather than waiting until you feel stronger?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, You know how little I sometimes feel I have to offer. Take what I have, bless it, and use it according to Your purposes. Give me grace for today and trust for tomorrow. Thank You for always providing what I need, one day at a time. Amen.