

# Divorce - Jesus' Compassion

**Katherine:** I'll never forget how I felt the day my daughter called to tell me that her marriage was over. I knew there had been some problems from time to time, but all marriages have problems don't they? And I thought they were working things out. How could this happen?

**Carol:** **Hello and Welcome to *Women of Hope***, I'm Carol. And as usual, I am not alone. How are you today, Tammy!

**Tammy:** I'm fine thanks Carol. And you...as you listen...I hope you're well too.

**Carol:** I wonder . . . could you be feeling sad or upset like this mother we just heard. If you've had someone in your family divorce – or you've gone through divorce yourself, I hope we can encourage you today.

**Tammy:** You may have heard Katherine talk with us before – you may remember her house blew down in a hurricane sometime after her husband died. She was all alone and her children helped her through a very difficult time.

Well – now, some years later, it was her turn to help one of her children through a very difficult time. Thanks for coming to share this story with us today Katherine. I'm sure it has not been easy...

**Katherine:** No – that's very true. In fact in some ways it has been more difficult than when I lost my home. My heart broke as I heard the tears in her voice, when she said, "Mom, Robert is having an affair. He's leaving. What am I going to do?"

**Carol:** Oh Katherine . . . what did you answer her?

**Katherine:** Well...I wanted to rush right in and "fix" things for this beloved child. When Susan was little, it was easy to take her in my lap and soothe away the hurt of a fall from the bicycle, or a friend who had said something unkind. Now, the pain was far worse, and I didn't know how to help, or even what to say that would ease the pain.

As she talked and cried, I thought about those three precious grandchildren. What was going to happen to them? Were they going to have to make choices between their parents? Were they going to have to move from the only home they had ever known?

**Tammy:** So did you have some advice for her?

**Katherine:** I couldn't offer any advice. I'd never been in that position and never imagined one of my children would be, either. And you know, I really felt that it wasn't the time for advice. I just needed to listen as she told me all about it.

Later that day, I thought about Susan's beautiful wedding fifteen years ago—the gorgeous gown, the flowers, the music, pictures of a glowing bride, a nervous bridegroom and a happy family gathered around.

Now, those pictures were destroyed, the music stilled. Susan had been abandoned, thrown aside for someone her husband found at a bar. All her plans, her beautiful home, the future of her children, her own feeling of self-worth—lay shattered with her dreams.

**Carol:** And as a mother You must have felt really terrible...

**Katherine:** Oh yes. Many times I prayed and wept for this adult child. As she grew up, Susan was protected by her older siblings. She had exciting dreams for her future, with the "prince charming" she would marry.

The big question now was: "What are we going to do?" But I had no answers.

**Carol:** ...and what did you do?

**Katherine:** All I knew was that sitting and crying was not going to help. It was a lousy situation, but life had to go on—for Susan and for her children.

Fortunately, I knew of a good counselor in the area. He and his wife were Christians and were well-trained as counselors. They had helped my husband and me when we were having serious problems with an adopted child, Susan's younger brother. The best part was that they worked as a special ministry to people in need, they had no charges. People paid if they could, but it was not required.

Knowing Susan had no money, I called her. "Honey," I said, "I don't know what to tell you, but I do know someone who can give you good advice. Here's the number."

A week later, Susan sat at my kitchen table with tears in her eyes. "The counselor listened to me, Mom," she sniffled, "but he spoke strongly to me!"

"Why?" I asked. This child certainly didn't need any more pain. Maybe I had given her the wrong advice after all.

"He...he asked me why I was putting up with all the abuse I've been going through," she said.

Abuse? This was even more upsetting. Susan had never talked about beatings.

But she continued. "It was the ugly talk, and the way he went out almost every night and left me and the kids alone, and the way he never wanted to give me the money I needed...that kind of abuse. The counselor told me I was worth more than that."

"And you are!" I assured her as I put my arms around her.

**Tammy:** You're listening to *Women of Hope* and it's good to be with you. Katherine, what happened as you tried to comfort and help your daughter through her divorce?

**Katherine:** Over the next few weeks, I listened as Susan talked about plans and goals the counselor helped her make. One of those goals was to study God's Word, the Bible, with a few other women. Another was a budget – a plan for how to spend the money she had ...and looking for employment. Each week, I could see more and more brave smiles on her face...more determination.

Of course I prayed daily—all day—for this precious, hurting child and her family. During that time, I found a verse in God's Word, the Bible, which said, "And my God will meet all your needs, according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:19 NIV) It was a promise I held on to, and shared with my daughter.

Often, after she went to work, I was called on to take the children to their activities or to care for them when they're sick. I tried not to miss any of their school performances.

One day, I got a pretty card in the mail. Inside, it said, "Thanks, Mom, for praying for me and helping with the kids. And thanks for not trying to tell me what to do—for just listening."

I had to laugh to myself. How many times had I wanted to say, "I think you should do—or not do—this or that."

It was very difficult to keep from giving my opinion of the man who had promised to love and care for my daughter and had not kept his promise.

**Tammy:** I can imagine you felt like telling him just what you thought of him...

**Katherine:** Oh yes...I had some choice words for him, but God kept me from saying them. The strangest thing was that I discovered, as I read God's Word, that I needed to pray for the man who had destroyed his home and brought such pain to my loved ones. That was not easy, but I learned

to do it.

**Tammy:** Wow...

**Katherine:** Watching my daughter struggle with being a single parent, taking the whole responsibility for finances, house repairs, sick children, accidents, decisions, and disappointments was hard on a mother's heart.

But one day Susan's older sister remarked, "You know, Susan has really changed. She's not selfish any more, and she can take charge of situations when she needs to."

"I think you're right," I said. "She's also growing in her faith. I see her depending on God to take care of her and the children, instead of crying over what happened."

It's been two years since that awful telephone call, and the divorce is final. I don't know what's going to happen, but I do know that God has cared for this little family every step of the way. The children are healthy and happy. They love to go to church and learn about God. They have good, loving friends who care for them in many ways. And Susan has a job she enjoys.

God heard my prayers. And I'm grateful that he helped me to keep my mouth shut and my ears and heart open to help my daughter through her difficult time.

**Carol:** Katherine, Thank you for sharing your story today. We all hope we would never be in the same situation as you. But many women are aren't they? And I'm sure they'd find it really hard, like you did...and still do sometimes.

**Katherine:** I do – but mostly I'm grateful that my daughter has learned so much and grown so much in her faith.

**Carol:** The thing I noticed most from what you said is that when you felt like giving advice to your daughter you didn't. Do you remember what Katherine did? ...Yes, she just listened, helped out where she could, and prayed for her daughter and grandchildren.

**Tammy:** I'm sure I would have felt just like Katherine did – that I wanted to tell that husband just what I thought of him – and the way he had treated my daughter! But Katherine listened to what God told her in his word the Bible didn't she? She not only didn't say those harsh words to him, but she actually prayed for him!!

**Carol:** Katherine showed love and compassion to her daughter and her family, and she didn't show hate to her son in law! She supported and helped her but she allowed her daughter to make her own decisions...to work out for herself how to keep going in this difficult situation. And it has made her daughter a stronger person.

After this song, we have some thoughts to share with you about God's love and compassion.

**Tammy:** We're back together on *Women of Hope*. Katherine was so sad for her daughter Susan wasn't she? She loves Susan and cares about her so much. She wanted the best for Susan. Susan was hurting because her husband had left her to be with another woman, and Katherine was hurting out of compassion for Susan.

You know, God is compassionate. In fact, he has more compassion and love for us than we could ever imagine. His compassion for us is like a father's compassion for his child, or like Katherine's compassion for Susan.

Jesus, God's son, also has compassion for us. The Bible tells us many stories of when Jesus lived on this earth. He healed, comforted and encouraged people. He eased many people's pain. Carol is going to tell us one of these stories about Jesus.

**Carol:** Jesus felt other people's pain. God's word, the Bible, tells us that one day Jesus heard that his dear friend Lazarus was very ill. But Jesus didn't leave to go to his friend for two days, so Lazarus died before he got there. Lazarus' sisters Martha and Mary loved Jesus. When they heard that Jesus had come, Martha went out first to meet Jesus and said to him ...“Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” Soon Mary came out to meet him, and she too said to him...“Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

Let me read to you what happened next, from God's Word, the Bible.

‘Jesus saw [Mary] weeping, and he saw how the people with her were weeping also; his heart was touched, and he was deeply moved. "Where have you buried him?" he asked them. "Come and see, Lord," they answered. Jesus wept. "See how much he loved him!" the people said. But some of them said, "He gave sight to the blind man, didn't he? Couldn't he have kept Lazarus from dying?" Deeply moved once more, Jesus went to the tomb, which was a cave with a stone placed at the entrance.’ (John 11:33-38 Good News Translation).

I'll stop reading here, and I'll tell you what happened next.

Jesus then ordered that the stone should be taken away. When she heard this, Martha told him that the body would smell because Lazarus had been dead for four days! But Jesus told her that she would see God's glory if she believed. Then Jesus looked up and prayed to his Father, God.

And now, I'll read to you some more of the story from the Bible.

‘After he had said this, he called out in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" Lazarus came out, his hands and feet wrapped in grave cloths, and with a cloth around his face. "Untie him," Jesus told them, "and let him go." (John 11:43, 44 Good News Translation).

That's the end of the story from God's Word.

**Tammy:** Wow...There were many surprises in that story weren't there?

**Carol:** Oh there certainly were. First, Jesus didn't go straight to his dear friend Lazarus when he heard that Lazarus was very ill, did he? I would have thought he'd hurry there right away!

**Tammy:** No, Jesus stayed for two more days before going to him.

Lazarus' sisters Martha and Mary must have desperately wished that Jesus had come to them sooner. They both said to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

**Carol:** The next surprise is that Jesus cried. When he saw Mary's pain, and the pain of those around him, his heart was touched, and he was deeply moved. Jesus cried. Even though he knew he was going to raise Lazarus back to life, Jesus cried.

And then, Jesus ordered the stone to be removed from the entrance of the cave where Lazarus's body had been laid. He then called “Lazarus, come out!”

**Tammy:** ...And the next surprise - Lazarus walked out of the tomb as he was... wrapped in grave clothes. Amazing! Can you imagine it? Lazarus shuffling out from the grave, with his body all wrapped so that he couldn't even walk properly? The people looking on must have been terrified.

**Carol:** I have a question for you...Jesus knew that his dear friend was seriously ill, so why do you think he stayed where he was, instead of going straight to Lazarus? The Bible says he stayed for two more days!

**Tammy:** What do you think? ...I think it was because Jesus wanted to raise Lazarus back to life. That way, he could show the people God's glory...that God has power ... even over death. And

that Jesus himself is the giver of life. You know, you and I don't need to be afraid of death, because Jesus, who loves us so much, has power over death. We know this because Jesus and Martha had an interesting conversation. After she had said, "If you had been here Lazarus would not have died", she said to him, "But I know that even now, God will give you whatever you ask." Jesus answered, "Your brother will rise again."

Martha was not quite sure what Jesus meant, so Jesus said some really important words to her. He said, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die. And whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

Martha replied, "Yes Lord, I believe that you are the Son of God who has come into the world."

**Carol:** Let's hear those words again that Jesus said to Martha – He said, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die. And whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

I wonder, my friend, if you believe this too?

**Tammy:** Jesus really does love us doesn't he? He loves us so much that he died on the cross to take away the punishment for the wrong things we do. That's why we can believe in him and never die. He didn't mean that our body will never die, but that our spirit will go to be with him when we die...if we believe in him.

**Carol:** Jesus loved Martha and Mary, and the people that were with them so much, that he cried when he saw the pain they were in. He cried, even though he knew that he was soon going to end their pain ... by raising Lazarus from the dead. What great compassion Jesus had!

And do you know, Jesus has just as much compassion for you too? When you're hurting, Jesus feels sad for you. He feels sad about all the things that cause you pain ... and all the things that cause pain in the world.

Yes he does. And so does his Father, God. God doesn't always stop the things that cause pain from happening. Sometimes he uses those things to bring about good. But he does feel our pain ... more than we could ever imagine.

**Tammy:** It comforts me to know that God can bring so much good out of things that hurt me. God feels sad when I'm hurting, because he loves me so much. Knowing this means that I'm able to experience his love and comfort, and to have a very deep and close relationship with him. Let's listen to this lovely song before we finish today...

**Carol:** We've enjoyed our time with you today, and we hope you've enjoyed it too. We always say we'd love to hear from you – and we mean it! If you want to share something that has caused you pain in your life, please do and we can pray for you. Or you may have a story to encourage someone else in their pain.

**Tammy:** You can write to us in care of this station or at Women of Hope. We do hope you will be with us again. Have a great week filled with God's blessings.