

Sorrow: Healing A Broken Heart!
2nd in a series of 7

Welcome to Timberline Church and thanks for being here and joining us this morning. This is week two of, 'How to get through what we're going through', a series originally written by Rick and Kay Warren after the suicide death of their son Matthew.

Interview: Some of you are like me in that you have never experienced such a tragedy. So this morning I have invited Mike & Julie Fisher and their Daughter Laurie to join us because they understand this kind of loss. On June 7, 2012, Julie's cousin found their son Justin dead at an aunt's house due to a drug overdose and my understanding is that this is the house you currently live in. As you can imagine this was a loss beyond comprehension.

Questions:

- We have a picture of Justin; taken about 7 years ago, so let's put that up and how about if you tell us a little about Justin.
- Justin had an accident in his teen years that shaped him... tell us what happened and how it impacted him.
- Justin made a commitment to Christ when he was young, how did that impact how you processed his death, and how did your faith come into play?
- Justin's drug involvement was part of the equation... what kind of emotions did this bring to the surface? Did you struggle with guilt?
- There were several people that said and did some things that were very helpful... tell us about that.
- Julie, your cancer surgery was just a few months prior to this... how did this impact the journey?
- What was the most difficult aspect of walking through this experience?
- How did Justin's friends react to his death?
- You still have some sad days don't you?

Prayer for them on their Journey:

Stand and shake hands: Let's take a minute to stand and shake hands and make it a point to take a couple of steps outside of your Sunday Morning Comfort Zone and then remain standing for a time of worship through singing.

Worship: Tony

- Holy Holy Holy
- My glorious

Offering & Bucket Offering: Tony

- Prayer at the beginning by Tony
- Worship Band – All who are thirsty

Worship: Tony

- Better is one day
- Glory

Announcements: Dawn

Slide #1 Thor Audio Clip – Sword down the aisle

Thor, the Mighty Avenger, understands warfare and he battles to save earth and all the Nine Realms from a shadowy enemy that predates the universe itself. Thor doesn't use a broadsword like William Wallace... Thor uses a hammer... a big magical hammer!

We have an enemy as well... and he is larger than the earth, he never sleeps, he never gives up and he never backs off. His main intent is to kill, maim and destroy and we need to be on guard.

Folks we are in the midst of a battle and we need to engage and stay alert. Satan's intent was to destroy Mike, Julie and Laurie through the tragic loss of Justin; because that is what he does best... he destroys! But instead, God is in the process of healing their hearts and I think this is the wonderful part of the story! But as you have heard for yourselves... it's been a battle!

Slide #2 Title: Satan makes us go through what we are going through because he hates us. Last week we took a look at Shock: when our world collapses. We must never underestimate Satan's ability to shake our foundation and try to cause as much damage as possible. This week we are moving on to the second stage...

Slide #3 Sorrow: Healing A Broken Heart!

All of us will experience a broken heart some time in life. It may not be as traumatic as what Mike, Julie and Laurie faced... but nevertheless we will need to deal with it in some way. It may come as a result of a girl dumping us in high school or failing to get the job we applied for or experiencing the trauma of a miscarriage or being forced to change schools when we were just a kid... but regardless of how intense it is... we will all have our heart broken some time...in some way. Rick Warren says...

Slide #4 There is no life without change. There is no change without loss. There is no loss without pain. But grief is a choice!

The message this morning is in two parts:

Part 1 Facing Sorrow

Part 2 Finding Healing

Let's go to our notes.

Slide #5 Facing Sorrow:

1. Loss is unavoidable, but grief is a choice.

Let me explain. All living things change. The only things that don't change are things that aren't alive. So if we are alive, we are going to face change and when things around us change... things inside of us change and there is no change without loss and there is no loss without pain. But grief is a choice and we must choose to let grief in and feel it's pain. And I think it was clear that Mike, Julie and Laurie let grief in!

You may wonder... why in the world would I ever want to let grief in? Because grief is the key to spiritual growth! Grief is not something that only happens at funerals... because loss is much bigger than people dying. We can have thousands of losses in our life.

We can lose our health, our job, our friend, our finances, our dog, our dignity, our reputation, our limbs, our fingers, our career... and the list goes on and on.

Because grief is so unpleasant... most of us try to avoid it and stuff it down and put it aside.

Slide #6 1 Peter 1:6-7 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith-- of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire-- may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Grief is par for the course on planet earth and it comes to us for a reason... to refine us! Here is a thought for us to ponder.

The cause of many of our problems is...unresolved, unmourned grief.

Grief comes to all of us... some time... the critical question is this... have we chosen to let it in and deal with it... or are we stuffing it down?

Slide #7 Facing Sorrow:

2. Grief is healthy.

Even though grief is without a doubt the most painful emotion we go through, it is healthy and helpful because it is God's tool to get us through the transitions of life. If we don't grieve in our losses... we get stuck.

If we stuff it down when we are a child... we get stuck in childhood. If we stuff it down as a teenager... we get stuck in the teen years. If we stuff it down when we are young adults we will get stuck in the post high era.

Some of us here this morning are still stuck at age ten or age seventeen or age twenty three because we didn't grieve a major loss in our life... and then we wonder why we have anxieties and phobias and fears and low self- esteem... and many times it comes back to... unresolved and unmourned grief! This may have been what happened to Justin.

Jesus grieved, Jesus mourned and Jesus understood sorrows! Listen to what the prophet Isaiah said about Jesus hundreds of years before he was born.

Slide #8 Isaiah 53:3 He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Jesus was a man of sorrows... he understood grief. John, the Gospel writer, said it this way when he wrote about Jesus comforting Mary as she was mourning the death of her brother Lazarus.

Slide #9 John 11:33-35 When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. "Where have you laid him?" he asked. "Come and see, Lord," they replied. Jesus wept.

Jesus wept, he cried, he sobbed... say it however you want... but he grieved and he was acquainted with sorrow.

Slide #10 John 11:36-38 Then the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?" Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb.

Lazarus was one of his favorite people and he was gone and Jesus grieved... his emotions were transparent for all to see.

Showing emotion is not a sign of weakness. Actually weak men and women are often afraid of showing their emotions and are afraid to cry and the stronger we are, the more confident we are, the more we are not afraid to show emotion.

There are two unhealthy reactions to loss and they are kind of big words that doctors and psychiatrists and psychologists like to throw around... but they are important words for us to understand.

Slide #11 One is called repression and the other is called suppression. Repression is when I unconsciously block painful thoughts out of my mind... I'm not even aware I'm doing it. Suppression is when I intentionally and consciously stuff painful thoughts down and refuse to deal with them.

To refuse to grieve loss is a mistake... because grief is God's gift of getting us through what we are going through and if we repress it or suppress it... it will come out in some other way.

Like the man who goes to work and he's angry at his coworkers because of the way they treat him but he is too nice... to ever let them know and when five o'clock comes... he gets in his car and road rage consumes him and this nice guy from the office... rolls down his window and yells at people and shouts at them with hand motions!

So when adults kick doors down, or turn to drugs or alcohol, or spend endless hours in front of the tube or the internet, or face chronic back or neck pain or other unexplainable medical issues... it may have started many years ago... back at the playground with a bully, or in the kitchen with a screaming mom or in the car with a raving father. Rick Warren says...

Slide #12 When we swallow our grief... our body rejects it!

Slide #13 Facing Sorrow:
3. God grieves with us.

Our whole ability to grieve comes from God. The only reason we have emotions is because God has emotions, because we were created in the image of God.

Back in the book of Genesis when God finally makes a decision to flood the earth, we get this incredible insight into the heart of God.

Slide #14 Genesis 6:5-6 The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain.

Did you know that God grieves, he feels pain, he understands sorrow.

Slide #15 Genesis 6:7 So the LORD said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth-- men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air-- for I am grieved that I have made them."

Our ability to grieve is one of the many reasons we are different from animals. Cows don't grieve. Worms don't grieve. Birds don't grieve. They may experience pain... but they don't grieve... because animals are not made in the image of God... but we are!

Not only does God grieve... but he grieves with us. God suffers with us because he is a suffering God. He is a sympathetic God. When we are in pain, God isn't aloof. He's not standing over on the sidelines watching us and saying... why don't you just get over it?

Slide #16 Psalm 34:17-18 The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles. The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

Maybe your heart was broken this past week or this past month or this past year... or maybe many years ago... regardless of when... the Lord is close to the brokenhearted. Mike, Julie and Laurie... the Lord grieves with you!

Slide #17 Facing Sorrow:

4. Grief is healed in community.

We are most likely not going to get well on our own. We are better... together. Two are better than one... we talked about this last week. We need each other. When God created Adam and put him in the Garden of Eden, he was living in a perfect environment. He didn't need to work, there was no one to fight with, there were all kinds of sights and sounds to check out... and yet into this perfect world God declared that something was missing.

Slide #18 Genesis 2:18 The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

Here is what I find fascinating! It was worth it to God... to risk the possibility of messing everything up... in order to eradicate loneliness. God chose to reduce loneliness because we are made in HIS image. God lives in community with the Spirit and the Son and so he made us to live in community as well. Whether we ever get married or not... is irrelevant... we need people in our lives... because we need relationships... we need community.

We talked about this last week...fellowship is what we need when we are in shock and fellowship is what we need when we are in sorrow. We need other people around us.

Julie said last evening that for three days... people just showed up! That's what Laurie's best friend did... she just showed up!

It is not good for 'the man to be alone'... healing comes in community.

Slide #19 Facing Sorrow:

5. Grief takes time.

Grief takes time. It isn't processed quickly. We tend to think... take off work a couple of days and get over it. It just doesn't happen that way. Grief has its own timetable and we can't rush it. Asking people if they are 'over it yet' is not helpful because we don't 'get over' grief... we get through it.

Those of you here this morning that lost a baby or lost a career or lost a spouse... know that we don't just get 'over it'. We will remember it... the rest of our lives... because grief is part of our story and grief takes time.

Slide #20 Ecclesiastes 3:1-4 There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance.

What the Bible is saying is that life is composed of opposites. We have good days and we have bad days. We have up days and we have down days. There's a time to weep and there's a time to rejoice. There's a time to be sad, to mourn and a time for laughter and dancing. Julie said to me last

evening... I still have sad days! Both ends of the spectrum are legitimate parts of life, and maturity comes when we can enter into both.

Grief is a 'season'... which means that it's more than a day or a week... it's a season... there is a time to weep and mourn.

So when we get fired, or our girlfriend says 'hit the road jack', or we birth a stillborn baby or we fall into deep depression... the temptation is for us to immediately want to fix it... and we can't!

Grief is a choice. It isn't going to happen unless we choose to embrace it. If we stuff it, or deny it, or repress it, or suppress it, we are going to live an unhealthy life. Grief is healthy. God grieves with us. We find healing in community and it takes time.

So how do we get through it so we can move forward and find healing? Let's to our notes:

Slide #21 Finding Healing:

1. List the losses we haven't grieved.

Jesus said grief... is the key to blessing. Here is how he said it.

Slide #22 Matthew 5:4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Who will be comforted? Those who have the courage to mourn!

Here is what he is saying. Cover-uppers don't get comforted. Deniers don't get comforted. Posers don't get comforted. And if I don't get comforted I don't get blessed.

Slide #23 Finding Healing:

2. Identify what we have really lost.

What did I lose by having an alcoholic dad? What did I lose by being laid off? What did I lose when my parents divorced? What did I lose when my family moved so often as a child? What did I lose when that person walked out of my life? What did I lose when the Church split? Did I lose stability? Did I lose security? Did I lose identity? Did I lose encouragement? Did I lose my credibility? Did I lose trust?

We need to look past the obvious and say... what did I really lose? We can't mourn and grieve and be comforted if we don't list the losses and identify them for what they really took from us.

Slide #24 Finding Healing:

3. Have the courage to lament.

We need to have the courage to lament. Lament is not a word that we use much today but it's a kind of action that we must do in order to be healthy emotionally and spiritually.

What is a lament? A lament is a passionate expression of grief to God. It is an act of worship. It may mean crying out to God, shouting to God, weeping or even complaining to God.

Read Psalm 88 It appears that this lament is written by a guy named Herman and he is just venting to God. What is he saying? Life sucks and God you are responsible for it!

You have put me down
You have isolated me
You have rejected me

You have hidden from me
You have taken my loved ones from me
Darkness is my closest friend

I want you to know... God isn't afraid of negative emotion. We are, I am, but God isn't. The Bible is full of laments. In fact, there's an entire book in the Bible. It's called Lamentations. It's an entire book... filled with Jeremiah complaining that God got it all wrong. And it's in the Bible. And God just says... have at it Jeremiah... go for it... spout off... I can handle it. We need to learn to lament to God... not to other people.

So try this. Read through Psalms in a modern paraphrase... like The Living Bible or The Message... and check it out. Don't take my word for it. Read it and then get your notebook out and join in... God can handle it, it's part of the grieving process.

Slide #25 Finding Healing:

4. Ask Jesus to heal your broken heart.

He is the real healer!

Slide #26 Prayer and Reflection: (I-pod)

Invite the Prayer Team Up:

Benedictions:

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy place where the Most High dwells.

God is within her, she will not fall;

God will help her at break of day.

The Lord Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.