

## The Pathway Through Pain

Jesus once said, “In this world, you will have trouble.” Pain and suffering are inevitable in this life. Often, when we begin to practice the disciplines and become like Jesus, we become vulnerable, and the unhealed wounds of a lifetime rise to the surface of our hearts.

Everything in us wants to run in the opposite direction — to deny, detach, or drug our pain. But the invitation of Jesus is to meet him in our pain and let it become the crucible of our formation.

### **Jesus is qualified to ask this of us.**

*Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.” Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”*

—Matthew 26:36-39

The practices are not a religious formula to habit-stack our way into spiritual formation.

When we slow down and come to quiet before God, often the first thing that comes up is emotional pain, as our soul

begins to process and discharge all the pain and suffering of our life.

There are three primary ways people deal with pain:

Deny

Detach

Drug

Left unhealed, emotional pain can sabotage our transformation. But if we open it to God, it can become the secret to our transformation.

**The Jesus way is to meet God in our pain.**

### **Spiritual Bypassing**

A tendency to use spiritual ideas and practices to sidestep or avoid facing unresolved emotional issues, psychological wounds, unfinished developmental tasks, hurt, pain, or frustration.

### **Emotional Maturity**

You're aware of your feelings, but your feelings do not run you.

### **Spiritual Maturity**

The ability and willingness to know and do the will of God despite the pain.

**PAY CLOSE ATTENTION**

If you are hearing this message and feel a total and complete disconnect because you haven't experienced any significant loss, life is smooth sailing for you right now; you are tempted to check out because it isn't applicable...

I would beg you to pay extra close attention...

If you are hearing this message and feel entirely disconnected because your pain has you so overwhelmed that any talk of a solution or a way through it seems impossible. Prayer hasn't worked, Jesus has never come through, and you feel completely overwhelmed by what your head says and what your heart feels....

I would beg you to pay extra close attention...

By learning the practices of discipleship and becoming a disciple maker, you can make sense of the pain in the moment and stay true to your apprenticeship with Jesus.

You will also have the power to help others make sense of their pain and guide them towards following Jesus.

Jesus walked through pain and modeled how we are to do it.

**THERE IS INCREDIBLE POWER THAT COMES FROM FACING IMPOSSIBLE PAIN.**

I pray that today, your hearts will be flooded with light, that you can understand the hope He has given to us, and that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's

power to transform your groans of despair into a song of victory!

SUFFERING and GRIEVING are powerful things. Outside of drugs and alcohol, there is not much else that can so profoundly impact you and alter you physically, mentally, and emotionally.

It's not about if but when...

Change our perspective. Pain in peoples lives has produced many salvations.

## **1. HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT**

Describes something you are looking at but can't see.

*“So we don't look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever.”*

*—2 Corinthians 4:18:*

Things are not always as they seem.

What we can see with the naked eye is only part of the story—there are things right in front of us that we can't always see.

*Then the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”*

—Genesis 3:4–5

Satan promised we would have our eyes opened, but he gave us a blind spot instead. Our eyes were opened to see things we never should have seen - sin, guilt, nakedness, death.

*For we walk by faith, not by sight.*

—2 Corinthians 5:7

## **ETERNITY BECOMES VISIBLE BY FAITH**

We walk around looking only at the physical (liking pictures on Instagram, drinking lattes, and watching movies) oblivious to things happening all around us.

Faith changes everything...

It gives your soul night vision and lets you see in the darkest moments.

When you look at people with faith, you see potential.

When you look at pain, you see it's not without purpose.

When you look at problems, you remember that God has a plan.

## **NEARSIGHTEDNESS MUST BE CONSTANTLY CORRECTED**

Spiritual nearsightedness.

We see things here on earth right in front of us—heaven seems blurry and God far away.

Discipleship and learning the ways of becoming like Jesus. Having the kind of faith He had corrects that. Just as you would have to put glasses on each day (practices), so we must constantly choose to not rely on the naked eye.

The battle for our eyes is fought through our ears.

*So then faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.*

—Romans 10:17

All of life is a war of lenses. Believe what we see or what God says is there?

## **SEEING THE INVISIBLE, YOU CAN DO THE IMPOSSIBLE**

*(by faith)... subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.*

—Hebrews 11:33-34

We will lose heart if we only look at what we see with the naked eye.

When you let God give you supernatural vision, you will be able to receive strength that's superhuman.

Faith taps you into power from on high, peace that passes understanding, and joy unspeakable.

## **FAITH VISION CHANGES YOUR PERSPECTIVE**

*For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*

—Romans 8:18-23,26

## **2. STANDING ON TIPTOES AT THE EDGE OF ETERNITY**

**BECAUSE OF JESUS EXAMPLE, WE CAN LEAN INTO THE GROAN.**

That's what every one of us is longing for deep down. And by longing i mean groaning.

The word that is repeated again and again and again in groan, GROANing, groanings....

We groan, long for, or yearn for reprevement, not just in moments of tragedy.

Graon - to sigh with anxious yearning. It's a heavyhearted moan.

It's an ache you can't shake.

## **THIS GROANING IS FROM GOD, AND IT IS FOR GOD.**

From God - He made us to know to whom we belong.

For God - Jesus is the answer to the ache within.

We were meant to live with God, to walk with him as Adam did in the garden. Sin separated us, and we have been groaning to return to Eden ever since.

*"If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world."*

—CS Lewis

When we arrive on that distant shore—there will be no groaning.

*He will swallow up death forever, And the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces; The rebuke of His people He will take away from all the earth; For the Lord has spoken.*

—Isaiah 25:8

Groaning is a mechanism that ensures that it happens. The groaning for relief from our pain gives us a direction, a homing beacon. a compass pointing towards where eternal relief will come from.

He put it in us, hoping that we might search for Him and find Him.

*For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.*

—Romans 8:18-19

*“The whole creation is on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming into their own,”*

—J. B. Phillips

**Stand on tiptoes at the edge of eternity.**

*...the Holy Spirit himself groans in our hearts...*

—Romans 8:26

Not only do we yearn for relief, but all of creation yearns for relief in ways that there are not even words for.

Even the holy Spirit yearns for us to see reprieve, hope, and peace.

It's the yearning to do it Jesus' way, his will not ours, that we feel deep down in our soul.

### 3. HOPE HAS A ROPE

*...this hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast.*

—Hebrews 6:19

It's a beautiful verse and an unbeatable promise.

A boat that is properly anchored will still face waves and wind; it just won't be moved

Because of Jesus, we have hope. And because of hope, we are anchored even during the worst storms of this life. We can hold onto that hope even in the days when the ground shifts under our feet.

When darkness veils His lovely face,  
I rest on His unchanging grace.  
In every high and stormy gale,  
My anchor holds within the veil.  
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand.

This Anchor (Hebrews 6:19–20.) ...enters the Presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus no matter what trial you face.....

That's what the resurrection does for us. We have a living hope because we have a living Lord.

At work, in your family, whatever crisis comes.....

The author of Hebrews doesn't just tell us that we have an anchor but what we are anchored to.

The word forerunner is the Greek word *prodromos*. It describes a pilot boat that would go ahead of a large vessel and bring its anchor into a harbor that was difficult to navigate. Large ships would pull up to the edge of the port and stop until a forerunner could come and grab the anchor. Once it was taken to shore, the ship could be slowly and safely winched in.

That is what Jesus did!

He ascended to heaven to bring our anchor behind the veil, where it is permanently fixed.

So the anchor is amazing.

#### **4. HOPE HAS A ROPE.**

As we make our way through this life, we are slowly being winched in, inch by inch.

So if hope is our anchor and Jesus brought it to heaven.... what is the chain or the rope?

Hope's rope was revealed to us before he left to take our anchor to the distant shores of Heaven.

*Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.*

—John 16:7

**The Holy Spirit is the rope connecting us to our hope.**

*“When the whirlwind passes by, the wicked is no more, but the righteous has an everlasting foundation.”*

—Proverbs 10:25

Having too much slack in the line can have devastating effects.

Practices are what draw us into the anchor. We hold the rope taut so trials will not sway us or jerk us around. Whether in difficult days or about to be — - you want a tight connection.

### **TRAIN FOR THE TRIAL YOU ARE NOT YET IN.**

The Holy Spirit helps us remember that heaven is NEARER THAN IT SEEMS.

Jesus himself said, Mark 1:15 “The kingdom of God is near.”

*“He, being filled with the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God”*

—Acts 7:55

The more we are filled with the Spirit, the more we will sense how close it is.

### **HOLD ON**

*Even the youths shall faint and be weary, And the young men shall utterly fall, But those who wait on the Lord Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.*

—Isaiah 40:30–31

BUT IT can hurt so badly.

You must hear the Holy Spirit say to you today: “You are going to get through this! It won’t always be so dark.”

Keep the slack out of your Rope...

Today is the day to put down roots. Sing your guts out to the Lord, even when you don’t feel your need for him.

Hide God’s word in your heart when you don’t get anything out of it and when the verses jump off the page.

Be filled with the spirit.....

You are going to make it.

Heaven is near!

Jesus is alive!

You are not alone!

Things Hidden in Plain Sight (how to see the invisible)

Standing on tiptoes at the edge of eternity (how to lean into the groaning)and that Hope has a Rope (how to keep your anchor on a short leash)

## **4. RUN TOWARD THE ROAR.**

If they are known for anything besides their mane, it is the unmistakable terrifying roar that can be heard for up to five miles away.

*Now that same day, two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking with each other about everything that had*

*happened. As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them;*

*—Luke 24:13-15*

They tell Jesus all of the hardships and persecutions of Jesus.

Jesus helps them with their orientation...

*And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going farther. But they urged him strongly, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight.*

*They asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?” They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together and saying, “It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.” Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.*

*—Luke 24:27 - 35*

One or more lions will attack from the front and come in loud their prey runs away but they don't know about the

lions that have flanked and hidden waiting to ambush as they retreat.

Running away from the seeming roar of your circumstances is a trap...

We stop coming to church when we do wrong?????

The safest thing would be to run toward the roar head-on, not away from it.

These two disciples, one named Cleopas and the other who is unnamed, go from frightened, despondent, and scared to enlivened, enthusiastic, and evangelistic—all because...

### **...Then their eyes were opened**

Once this happened they ended up running toward what they were previously heading away from - Jerusalem.

We can relate...

Our past sometimes roars at us. We over compensate and run from dealing with it. Life does not turn out like we thought it would.

People did things to us that we had no control over.

And we miss people we have not even met yet (Country Music)

Mourning over something that you think is over is always premature when Jesus is in the picture.

He always get's the last word He can make a way where there is no way The resurrection is proof!

# **IN HIS HANDS DEAD THINGS CAN LIVE**

He brings beauty out of ashes.

He turns trash into triumph.

He restores to you things you assumed were lost forever.

Graves don't intimidate him, and death can't stop him.

## **This Weeks Practice: Noticing and naming your emotions**

(From Practicing the Way by John Mark Comer)

The journey into emotional health involves learning to notice and name our emotions in the presence of God.

When we notice and name our feelings, they have less power over us. If you were to name a painful emotion like fear, anger, disappointment, or jealousy, a brain scan would show that your very act of naming it helps to process and quiet that emotion.

This is why psychiatrist Dan Siegel encourages us to “name it to tame it.”

This session's spiritual exercise is a simple template for prayer designed to notice and name your feelings and offer them to God in prayer.

Find a quiet, distraction-free place and time.

Put away your phone or any devices, and settle into a comfortable but alert position.

**Take a few minutes to breathe and center your awareness in God's presence. And then do the following:**

1. Notice: Now that you are centered in your body and in God, begin to let yourself feel. Let whatever is in you come up. Just notice it. Don't fight it or run away from it or feel guilty about it or judge it — just notice it. Let the feeling be.
2. Name: Then name the emotion and be as specific as possible. You should use the below list of emotions. Pick out one to three words from the Feelings list below that put language to what you're experiencing in your body.
3. Feel: Sit in those feelings. Sink into them. Usually, we turn away from them and run in the opposite direction. Instead, turn and face them, like you would an ocean wave, and let it wash over you and then pass you by.
4. Offer it to God: Remember and follow Jesus' Gethsemane Prayer.
5. Give God your feelings — Tell him what you feel, with no filter.
6. Give God your desires — Tell him what you want, good or bad.
7. Give God your trust—surrender your heart again to him. Stop grasping for control and yield to God and his will for your life. You may want to pray Jesus' prayer, "Not my will, but yours be done."

## Feelings list\*

### Happy

Admired  
Alive  
Appreciated  
Assured  
Cheerful  
Confident  
Content  
Delighted  
Determined  
Estatic  
Elated  
Encouraged  
Energized  
Enthusiastic  
Excited  
Exuberant  
Flattered  
Fortunate  
Fulfilled

### Sad

Alienated  
Ashamed  
Burdened  
Condemned  
Crushed  
Defeated  
Dejected  
Demoralized  
Depressed  
Deserted  
Despised  
Devastated  
Disappointed  
Discarded  
Discouraged  
Disgraced  
Disheartened  
Disillusioned  
Dismal

### Angry

Abused  
Aggravated  
Agitated  
Anguished  
Annoyed  
Betrayed  
Cheated  
Coerced  
Controlled  
Deceived  
Disgusted  
Dismayed  
Displeased  
Dominated  
Enraged  
Exasperated  
Exploited  
Frustrated  
Fuming

### Scared

Afraid  
Alarmed  
Anxious  
Appalled  
Apprehensive  
Awed  
Concerned  
Defensive  
Desperate  
Doubtful  
Fearful  
Framic  
Full of Dread  
Guarded  
Horried  
Impatient  
Insecure  
Intimidated  
Nervous

### Confused

Ambivalent  
Awkward  
Baffled  
Bewildered  
Bothered  
Constricted  
Directionless  
Disorganized  
Distorted  
Doubtful  
Flustered  
Foggy  
Hesitant  
Immobilized  
Misunderstood  
Perplexed  
Puzzled  
Stagnant  
Surprised

## RECOMMENDED READING

Through the Eyes of A Lion - Levi Lusko  
Practicing the Way - John Mark Comer