

WSS Part 13

Wednesday

Hope In The Storm

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Today's Treasure

I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall. I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me. Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.

Lamentations 3: 19-22

I was out in the barn during the massive storms that hit our area. 50-70 mph wind gusts and rain at 2-3 inches an hour, for almost 24 hours led to a very stressed-out rescued horse! The barn sounded like freight trains were coming across the roof, the doors were shaking, the other horses outside were whinnying, and Apollo was amped up from the anxiety. Horses are prey animals, and when their environment changes, such as high winds, pouring rain, or loud noises, their anxiety is off the chart because of the unknown.

I started thinking about the correlation between a broken horse and a broken human. Sometimes anxiety creeps in and makes its way into your soul and you don't know why it's there. As I observed Apollo, I knew he had no idea why he was scared. He didn't know that the storm coming was the "trigger" for his fear and anxiety, he just knew he was scared. As much as I tried to console him and reassure him, his anxiety was way louder than my voice, and he doesn't trust me yet, so all I was doing was adding to his fear.

As someone who suffers from anxiety, I can relate to this in so many ways. We really can never be fully prepared for when anxiety or fear hits us. I have learned, through extensive self-care work, studying the Word, and reading about the journeys of others that when anxiety hits, our body is trying to tell us something. Whether it's a physical or emotional response, it is still a very palpable feeling that requires a reaction. For Apollo, he could hear all the scary sounds around him, and he had no idea how to cope. He felt alone and wanted to trust me, but I hadn't earned that yet. He felt he was on his own. And isn't that exactly how anxiety feels? Lonely, without control, yet desperate for someone to help?

My earliest memory of that sick feeling in my stomach that I now know is anxiety, was when my younger brother got lost in a campground. I was five. As I grew up, that feeling intensified when I was afraid, anxious, nervous, or unsure. I felt everything in my stomach. Sometimes it was severe enough to have me bent over in pain, sometimes it was just a nagging discomfort, but it is absolutely related to an anxious situation.

Anxiety is our body warning us of a situation that could cause us some type of stress or discomfort. However, living with constant anxiety is not okay, nor does anyone choose that life. 1 Peter 5:7, “Cast all your anxiety on him...” and Philippians 4:6-7, “Do not be anxious about anything.....” are familiar to all of us; and of course, these are truths that comfort us just by knowing Jesus is there to take it on. But with the same emptiness that my presence offered Apollo, sometimes these verses just hit like empty words that would be better served on a bumper sticker. It feels, in those moments, that these verses are more like platitudes, and it is as if we are oversimplifying the issues at heart. And then THAT feeling of not feeling comforted by the Scriptures becomes a source of anxiety as we desperately look for an escape.

LIFE-GIVING ENCOURAGEMENT

Today’s verse in Lamentations speaks of the storm, as well as the hope. “I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall. I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me. Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.” Isn’t this exactly how we are presented with anxiety? We remember all the bad things, the pain, the grief, the hurt, the bitterness; and our peace is gone! BUT, there is hope, my dear friend. Because of our Lord’s great love, that anxiety will not consume us, the pain will not be more than we can bear! The arms of our Savior wrap us up and remind us that no matter where we wandered, or what has made us bitter, HE loves us anyway, and his compassion is real!

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, wrap me in Your arms today. Calm my racing heart, and command the storms in my soul to be still! Allow me to feel the love that only You can offer. Amen