

Trauma Is Not a Life Sentence

Introduction

A few weeks ago, we had a time of sharing, and the testimonies were brutally honest of pain and torment that persons suffered. And since that time, many people in the fellowship have had past traumatic memories resurface or amplify themselves. I praise God for that, as He designed those testimonies for that time, so that those things would be stirred, so He can address them with you. The title of today's message is, "Trauma Is Not A Life Sentence", as many people are still living in the past of those things, that are keeping them from moving into the abundant life God has for them today.

Psalm 23 A Psalm of David.

Psalm 23:1 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

Psalm 23:2 He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters.

Psalm 23:3 He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.

Psalm 23:4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

Psalm 23:5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over.

Psalm 23:6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever.

"Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death," King David would say, and we see the death was only a shadow of something looming. It was not actually death upon him. And there are many who suffer trauma and experience the post-traumatic stress of a trauma as if it was real, but in all actuality, it's only a shadow. It's not the actual trauma again, just a shadow of it.

Who this Message is For

This message is for:

- Those struggling with past traumatic events, and to start and/or progress healing
- Those who have loved ones who are struggling with past traumatic events, and you don't fully understand what is before them
- Those who want to help and minister to those who are facing past traumatic events

Today's Goal

My goal today, through the Word of God, that is living and powerful and sharper than a two-edge sword, is to share with you what God's Word, therefore God's heart, says about trauma. I pray the Word of God will break chains in your life, or at least begin the breaking, and start healing. I do not believe that wounds heal without scars,

I will not be making long points today, but precise points, and I pray that each point is like the tip of an arrow, hitting it's mark.

I start with where I will end; I know your trauma hurts, you are wounded, you may be struggling to piece it all together, you may feel your life is in pieces, broken, maybe even shattered.

I come to you with the heart of God. This is a message given to me of which I believe came straight from His heart. It's a message from Him, saying "I can restore you. I can put the pieces together. I will restore your soul (and notice He wants to do it as much for you, as for Himself, for His name's sake, His glory comes by restoring your soul).

Psalm 23:3 (NKJV) ³ He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.

Outline – Trauma is Not a Life Sentence:

About Trauma

- What is Trauma?
- Statistics on Traumatic Events for Individuals
- Some Signs of Post-Traumatic Stress
- They are shadows
- The Bible is honest about these things, and can relate to them
- God Himself experienced trauma

Reacting as Designed

- Responding to how you are created (Psalm 139)
- It is not a Disorder
- God equips us for the fallen world
- You are not alone

The Great Question – Where was God?

- Where was God?
- The Fallen World and Fallen Man
- God remembers all evil
- God was there weeping over every evil that came upon you in your trauma.
- Forgive and leave justice to God
- Don't let root of bitterness control your life
- The world, and the church, errors saying this is a mental health issue
- There is a Devil involved; always wants to twist and pervert God's design
- There is a spiritual war going on

Who You Are

- You are not broken
- You are valued
- This isn't your life or destiny of future
- John 10:10 is still true
- It does not define you / Your identity is not in that traumatic event. Your identity is in Christ.

You Can be Free

- Do you want to be made well?
- You still get to choose
- Same Power that rose Jesus from grave is available to you today
- Dealing with triggers and flashbacks
- Take every thought captive
- You are safe
- Claim and Memorize the Promises of God – especially “Do Not Fear”
- The compounding strings of trauma
- Though You slay me, yet will I praise You (Trust You)
- Don't go it alone
- Talk to God
- Talk to trusted others
- Pain divided – you have purpose when carry others pain
- Spouses, parents, family, friends are hurting too / Talk about it with your family

How you can help them

- The prayers of the saints are needed for your brothers and sisters
- Listen to their stories – but just listen
- Everybody has a book you should read – just listen
- Be there for them

Prayer – Boldly Ask Your God

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

What is Trauma?

Post-Traumatic Stress is something that some people develop after experiencing or witnessing a life-threatening event, like combat, a natural disaster, a car accident, a sexual assault, a violent attack, or a string of abuses that make a theme of abuse.

Statistics on Traumatic Events for Individuals

- 70% of adults in the U.S. have experienced some type of traumatic event at least once in their lives. This equates to approximately 223.4 million people
- Up to 20% of these people go on to develop PTSD. As of today, that equates to approximately 44.7 million people who were or are struggling with PTSD.
- An estimated 8% of Americans – 24.4 million people – have PTSD at any given time. That is equal to the total population of Texas.
- An estimated one out of every nine women develops PTSD, making them about twice as likely as men.
- On average, 22 of our County's service man/woman commit suicide every day. More die on American soil, than by the bullets and bombs of the enemy they fought on foreign soil

Some Signs of Post-Traumatic Stress

Some may or may not recognize they are dealing with Trauma, but here are some signs a person is:

- Re-experiencing: Trouble sleeping because thinking about it, or nightmares, or flashbacks (triggered seemingly out of nowhere, or triggered by sight, or smell, or sound).
- Avoidance: Trying to avoid the thought by focusing on work, or numbing with alcohol, or avoiding any situation that could resemble the original traumatic event
- Feeling worse about yourself or the world: The feeling of guilt, or unhappiness, depression, feeling of no purpose, distant and unattached
- Hyper arousal: The feeling of anxiousness, irritable, jittery, always on alert, being on edge, defense mode, anger, hypervigilance,

It is a shadow

"Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death," King David would say, and we see the death was only a shadow of something looming. It was not actually death upon him. And there are many who suffer trauma and experience the post-traumatic stress of a trauma as if it was real, but in all actuality, it's only a shadow. It's not the actual trauma again, just a shadow of it.

Psalm 23:4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

The Bible is honest about such events; therefore, the Bible can relate to such events

The narratives in the Old Testament are awkwardly full of details. Like peering at surveillance footage, God inspired the authors to exposit the events with brutal accuracy. Judah and Tamar (Genesis 38). A Levite and his concubine

(Judges 19). Amnon and Tamar (2 Samuel 13). These are ugly, awful stories about traumatic experiences among God's faithful ones. God didn't intervene to prevent the abuse. God didn't micromanage the suffering, or give the victims a clean and quick "recovery story." And yet he still put them on stage in his redemptive story.

Judah and Tamar interrupt the Joseph narrative. The Levite and his concubine interrupt the final cycle of Judges. Judah and Tamar interrupt David's saga with Bathsheba and Absalom. God interrupts the stories of redemption with short stories of lives interrupted by trauma, some that are never resolved for us.

Anyone who can sustain reading the Bible beyond the first chapter of Genesis will notice that there are difficult passages. The Bible's stories are forged out of murder (Gn 4), rape (Gn 34), dismemberment (Jgs 19; 1 Sam 18), kidnapping and forced marriages (Jgs 21), forced migration and infanticide (Ps 137), slavery (Ex 21; Lv 25; Dt 15), genocide (Jos 1-12), cannibalism (2 Kgs 6-7), political corruption (1-2 Kgs) and social desolation (the Prophets). The metanarrative of salvation history is laced with loss.

The life of David is such an example of such things. David took men into harm's way continually for the sake and freedom of Israel. War, death, killing, blood, and loss were continual events in the life of David and his men and people. Stories of his life relate to today. Also, David caused much pain because of his failures, his poor choices, his selfish decisions. Stories of his life relate to today, especially the part that a person can feel guilty for failing others, making decisions that cost others their lives, or just the place that we couldn't save them.

God Himself experienced trauma

Jesus suffered trauma, extreme, excruciating trauma, with scars and wounds that, even into eternity, we are told He will still bear. But we see Jesus overcome the trauma because He knows that He is safe in the Father's arms. And therefore, our example for us, the safety and security in the Father's arms.

Some will say to others you cannot minister to me because you have not been through what I have been through, you don't know my pain, you don't have the same wounds and scars that I have..... To which I would say that may be true but don't miss the ministering angels God sends to you, but regardless God will show you His hands, and you will see His scars that say I can relate, fully. And He will say come walk with Me, and as you do, you will see nail scarred feet that say I have walked where you have walked, I understand. Those nail scarred hands will extend to you with His Word, the Holy Scriptures, and say let me minister to you healing.

Revelation 5:6 (NKJV) ⁶ And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

Isaiah 52:14 (NKJV) ¹⁴ Just as many were astonished at you, So His visage was marred more than any man, And His form more than the sons of men;

Matthew 27:46 (NKJV) ⁴⁶ And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

Luke 22:44 (NKJV) ⁴⁴ And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

Reacting as Designed

Responding to how you are created (Psalm 139)

You are wonderfully made by God. Every detail of you. God has created our brains as such that when we suffer a traumatic event, the brain stores the memory so it can be recalled immediately for use in a future event. This is one of God's fail-safes in our design. The traumatic event is stored regardless of our conscious recollection of it, and our body is prepared to respond to protect itself based on anything that triggers that response. Those triggers could be based on any of the senses: sight, smell, feel, touch, taste. If triggered, our body immediately goes back to the settings of that day: heart rate, adrenaline, vision, audio exclusion, hyper-vigilance, etc. These stored responses, are now trained responses.

Psalm 139:14 (NKJV) ¹⁴ I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well.

It is not a Disorder

It is not a disorder; it is exactly how you were designed. The world loves to put labels on people. The world does not know, or believe, that man is body, soul, and spirit, and therefore tries to explain things without the full information. It is not a disorder, you are not broken, you are responding exactly how designed.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 (NKJV) ²³ Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Even the VA (Veterans Affairs) National Center for PTSD starts their discussion on this topic with the statement, (Normal Reactions to Abnormal Situations) and go on in the discussion of how normal man's reactions are in such abnormal situations.

You are not broken; you are responding the way you were designed

God equips us for the fallen world

In fact, your response is how God equips us to live in this fallen world. You are not broken, you are responding as designed to guard against and prepare for trauma that comes in this fallen world.

You are not alone

And again, you are not alone. The Devil wants to isolate you, for when you are isolated with your thoughts, and his demonic thoughts, then he has you all to himself. You are not alone as the statistics have shown us, and the Lord has declared to you.

Psalm 23:4 (NKJV) ⁴ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

The Great Question – Where was God?

Where was God?

God wants you to ask. For by involving Him, he will be involved, and His ministry to you can be blessed and prosperous.

Fallen World and Fallen Man

We live in a fallen world, that is populated by fallen man. The world is fallen because of sin, and the ills (whether acts of man or acts of nature) of the world are because of sin. The only way to eliminate the fall, is to eliminate sin, and that would mean God would have to remove all sinners from the earth, and thus the Day of Judgment. But the Lord is not willing that any should perish but all seek repentance, He continues the fallen world, which I am thankful that He patiently waited for me to come to repentance, the chief of sinners, saved by His grace.

James 4:1–3 (NKJV) ¹ Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? ² You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. ³ You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.

2 Peter 3:9 (NKJV) ⁹ The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

Remember, this isn't the world God intended it to be, the Adam-Bomb (sin of Adam) destroyed that, and every man (for Adam means man) has carried on its destruction. This world is a war zone, and it is not our home, we are passing through it with much tribulation until we make our eternal home in heaven with the Lord.

Romans 5:12 (NKJV) ¹² Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—

1 Peter 2:11–12 (NKJV) ¹¹ Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, ¹² having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.

Hebrews 11:8–10 (NKJV) ⁸ By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹ By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; ¹⁰ for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

God remembers all evil

God remembers evil, and there will come a day that all evil will be judged. God's justice will be served.

Exodus 34:6-7 (NKJV) ⁶ And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, ⁷ keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation."

Proverbs 11:21 (NKJV) ²¹ Though they join forces, the wicked will not go unpunished; But the posterity of the righteous will be delivered.

Nahum 1:3 (NKJV) ³ The LORD is slow to anger and great in power, And will not at all acquit the wicked. The LORD has His way In the whirlwind and in the storm, And the clouds are the dust of His feet.

Jeremiah 50:25 (NKJV) ²⁵ The LORD has opened His armory, And has brought out the weapons of His indignation; For this is the work of the Lord GOD of hosts In the land of the Chaldeans.

God was there weeping over every evil that came upon you in your trauma.

The fallen world, with free-will, brings great consequences upon this world. But where was God when all this pain and suffering happened? Weeping. Sovereign God knew, yes. Yet in some depth we do not know, He was there weeping tears, while at the same time catching yours. When Lazarus died as part of a fallen world, although He could have intervened, He did not, He wept. When He came upon Jerusalem knowing the destruction to come because their free-will choice, although He could have intervened, He did not, He wept.

John 11:33-36 (NKJV) ³³ Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. ³⁴ And He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to Him, "Lord, come and see." ³⁵ Jesus wept. ³⁶ Then the Jews said, "See how He loved him!"

Luke 19:41-44 (NKJV) ⁴¹ Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, ⁴² saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. ⁴³ For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, ⁴⁴ and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation."

Psalms 56:8 (NKJV) ⁸ You number my wanderings; Put my tears into Your bottle; Are they not in Your book?

Forgive and leave justice to God

Beloved, I know they hurt you, but leave the judgment and justice to the Lord. Forgiveness means to "send away". Send it away my brother, my sister. You mean let them get away with it? No, let it get away from you. They will not get away with it, God will judge all evil. What if they are a believer who hurt you? God in His righteousness will deal with them. Trust God, and leave the judging up to Him, and be free of vengeance.

Hebrews 10:30-31 (NKJV) ³⁰ For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The LORD will judge His people." ³¹ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Romans 12:17-21 (NKJV) ¹⁷ Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. ¹⁸ If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. ¹⁹ Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. ²⁰ Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head." ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Don't let root of bitterness control your life

Don't let them have any more control over you by continually giving them the time of your life thinking about them. Don't let the root of bitterness for what they have done rob or control your life. Bitterness will choke out your life.

Hebrews 12:14-15 (NKJV) ¹⁴ Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: ¹⁵ looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;

The world, and the church, errors saying this is only a mental health issue

Again, it is not a disorder; it is exactly how you were designed. The world loves to put labels on people. The world does not know, or believe, that man is body, soul, and spirit, and therefore tries to explain things without the full information. It is not a disorder, you are not broken, you are responding exactly how designed. But the Church can error and think that PTSD is something beyond the reach and ministry of the church and therefore don't address

it, or send the hurting to the world for help, rather than believing God is exceedingly able to heal and progress the beloved from their pain and torment.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 (NKJV) ²³ Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There is a Devil involved; always wants to twist and pervert God's design

There is a Devil who is looking to stir and destroy. He is always taking God's perfect design, and twisting it (that is what pervert means), and taking God's design and twisting into something contrary to God's design. He takes intimacy intended for marriage for example, and turns it into something self-gratifying which then becomes cheapened and no longer sacred. He takes alcohol and turns it into drunkenness. He takes beauty and turns it into lust. And he takes your natural protection system, and twists it and perverts it.

John 10:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

There is a spiritual war going on

Because there is a devil, there is a spiritual war going on. We have to face that warfare with the appropriate weapon, spiritual weapons. God says, "You asked me where I was, so I can tell you, and be involved in this battle you are facing."

Ephesians 6:10-13 (NKJV) ¹⁰ Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

2 Corinthians 10:2-5 (NKJV) ² But I beg you that when I am present I may not be bold with that confidence by which I intend to be bold against some, who think of us as if we walked according to the flesh. ³ For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. ⁴ For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, ⁵ casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

Who You Are

But before that, we must be reminded who we are, and our value. For many never can get up, because they feel they are valueless after what they have suffered.

You are not broken

Again, you are not broken, you are responding to how you were designed. If you buy into the lie of the Devil, that you are broken, you will be defeated. Which one of us can fix anything in this lost and fallen world?

You are valued

The value of something is not based on what someone says something is worth, it is always based on what someone is willing to pay. God paid with His only Begotten Son for you, that is your worth. You are priceless!

John 3:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

This isn't your life or destiny of future

God has a future and hope for you, no matter the past.

Jeremiah 29:11-14 (NKJV) ¹¹ For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. ¹² Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. ¹³ And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. ¹⁴ I will be found by you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive.

John 10:10 is still true

God's promise of abundant life is still God's promise for you

John 10:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

It does not define you / Your identity is not in that traumatic event. Your identity is in Christ.

No single event in life defines a person, and this traumatic event does not define you. There is only one event that defines a person for life, and that is when a person receives Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. That is the defining event that defines them as His, a follower of His and a Christian. But these traumatic events of life and this evil in this fallen world, they do not define us. And therefore, do not let them define you and who you are.

Galatians 3:27 (NKJV) ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

1 John 3:2 (NKJV) ² Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

Genesis 1:27 (NKJV) ²⁷ So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Colossians 1:27 (NKJV) ²⁷ To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

You Can be Free

Based on who you are in Christ, and what He desires for you of the abundant Christian life, you can be free. Yes scarred, but free. Wounded but stronger.

Do you want to be made well?

The first question in all healing is this: Do you want to be made well? Two thousand years ago Jesus was walking this earth, came into Jerusalem and while coming into the city He passed a man who had been a paralytic for 38 years, and Jesus stops and asks him, "Do you want to be made well?"

John 5:1-9 (NKJV) ¹ After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ² Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches. ³ In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. ⁴ For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had. ⁵ Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. ⁶ When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him, "Do you want to be made well?" ⁷ The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me." ⁸ Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your bed and walk." ⁹ And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath.

Strange question we may ask, but not really. The first step to healing, wellness, and wholeness is the desire to be made well, and the belief that Jesus can make you well.

- But for some, the memory has become part of their daily life, they are resolved that life will never change, this post-traumatic stress is a life sentence.
- For some, it is an excuse for bad behavior, they use it as an excuse to abuse alcohol, to abuse their family and friends, to abuse drugs, to chase after illicit relationships, and the likes. They blame PTS for their bad behavior and bad decisions. But we all know the facts, bad behavior with or without trauma, will always lead to destruction.
- As odd as it may sound, there are many who have found their identity in their PTS. They don't want to heal because they don't want to lose their identity, in that they did something heroic and got hurt, or they were a victim. I don't want to minimize either of them, you still did something heroic, you still were a victim, but you have a much greater purpose than living in PTS.
- Some say they can't be healed because only a counselor who has been through such trauma can relate to them. I say Jesus Christ can relate, so talk somebody who knows the heart and mind of Jesus. Trauma comes in all forms, and while another person's trauma may not be identical to yours, another person can still relate to trauma because they lived through their own trauma.
- And for some, they don't want to be made well because their trauma causes everyone else in their lives (family, friends, children, etc) to be their caregivers, and relieves them of responsibilities.

Jesus asks today, do you want to be made well? And those who say I do, then He responds.

You still get to choose

Beloved, here is one thing that can never be taken away from you, and that is you still always get to choose. As Joshua would say, choose this day whom you will serve, but as for me and my house we choose to serve the Lord.

Free-will always give you the free-will to choose, even when someone else's or something else's free-will is trying to change that.

Joshua 24:14–15 (NKJV) ¹⁴ "Now therefore, fear the LORD, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the LORD! ¹⁵ And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

Holocaust survivor Viktor Frankl reflected on his time in concentration camps, he described the moment he realized the key to survival in the camps and happiness in life, saying even though his captors could take almost everything away from him, the one thing they could not take was his ability to decide.

- "Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way."

He understood that his life was not defined by what happened to him or where the circumstances outside of his control may have led. His life was defined by the decision he made every day, even in captivity, to be the very best person that he could be. When talking about how people often say that their responses to trauma are out of their control, he said simply:

- "Between stimulus and responses there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom."

**Vikto Frankl, Man's Searching for Meaning (1959)*

Same Power that rose Jesus from grave is available to you today

When you choose, know that the same power that rose Jesus from the grave is not just available to you, but lives in you.

Ephesians 1:17–23 (NKJV) ¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, ¹⁸ the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power ²⁰ which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. ²² And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, ²³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Mark 12:24 (NKJV) ²⁴ Jesus answered and said to them, "Are you not therefore mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures nor the power of God?"

Dealing with triggers and flashbacks

A "trigger" is when the past interrupts the present without apology, and often without warning. We may not even know we are being triggered until much later on (we may not ever know in this life). Have you ever felt an unexplained surge of anxiety or anger? Is that feeling consistently experienced with one person or in a particular place?

You know not when something will trigger you into a flashback, or response. But when it does happen, remember you are in a spiritual war, and you are weaponized with the greatest of weapons, which God gives for you victory. Use them, and use them skillfully.

Take every thought captive

When they come, take them captive, do not allow yourself to let them have free course. Remember the spiritual war.

2 Corinthians 10:2–5 (NKJV) ² But I beg you that when I am present I may not be bold with that confidence by which I intend to be bold against some, who think of us as if we walked according to the flesh. ³ For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. ⁴ For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, ⁵ casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

You are safe

Remember and immediately tell yourself, I am safe, I am not in harms way, I am not vulnerable, this is a shadow.

Psalm 23:1–3 (NKJV) ¹ The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. ² He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. ³ He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.

Psalm 23:4 (NKJV) ⁴ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

Psalm 23:5–6 (NKJV) ⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. ⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever.

Claim and Memorize the Promises of God – especially “Do Not Fear”

The Bible is loaded with specific passages that say, “Do Not Fear”. Some have said there are 366 “Do Not Fear” in the Bible, I am not sure of that, but I did find 366 passages that deal with fear. Obviously, fear is a continual theme in this fallen world, and the Bible speaks in depth in dealing with fear. Here are a few of my favorite power passages I that I have locked in my phone, and memorized in my mind:

Isaiah 41:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.’

Genesis 26:24 (NKJV) ²⁴ And the LORD appeared to him the same night and said, “I am the God of your father Abraham; do not fear, for I am with you. I will bless you and multiply your descendants for My servant Abraham’s sake.”

Isaiah 35:4 (NKJV) ⁴ Say to those *who are* fearful-hearted, “Be strong, do not fear! Behold, your God will come *with* vengeance, *With* the recompense of God; He will come and save you.”

Matthew 10:31 (NKJV) ³¹ Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

Revelation 2:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw *some* of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

Psalm 61:3–4 (NKJV) ³ For You have been a shelter for me, A strong tower from the enemy. ⁴ I will abide in Your tabernacle forever; I will trust in the shelter of Your wings. Selah

Proverbs 18:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ The name of the LORD is a strong tower; The righteous run to it and are safe.

Jeremiah 33:1–3 (NKJV) ¹ Moreover the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah a second time, while he was still shut up in the court of the prison, saying, ² “Thus says the LORD who made it, the LORD who formed it to establish it (the LORD is His name): ³ ‘Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.’

Psalm 139:17–18 (NKJV) ¹⁷ How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! ¹⁸ If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; When I awake, I am still with You.

The compounding strings of trauma

And may I add here, that many traumas are strings of traumas that make up a common theme. Recognize them, and recognize how they fed to the “one” event, and how they can still feed afterwards. Maybe you were abused as a child, maybe you were continually failed by various people in your life who should have protected you, and when you come back into the environment of those people, or people or places connected to them, you find yourself suffering those emotions all over again. To which, you claim your promise of God, and you remind yourself, I am safe, I am not vulnerable to them anymore. But if by any chance you are unsafe because of them, then respond to how you were made, God’s warning to fight or flee, and get out of there.

Though You slay me, yet will I praise You (Trust You)

People will still fail me, this world will still be fallen, but I find true power and freedom when I come and say, though all may fail me, maybe “fall” upon me, yet I trust You. Regardless of how bad my life may be, I still “choose” to trust You Lord. I will surrender to none, but the ONE! That ONE, is Jesus Christ!

Job 13:15 (NKJV) ¹⁵ Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him. Even so, I will defend my own ways before Him.

Hebrews 13:5 (NKJV) ⁵ Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

Don't go it alone

Beloved don't go it alone. The Devil wants to isolate you, so he has you all by himself.

Talk to God

Talk to God, David did. Notice in Psalm 23 how David first talked about God (verses 1-3), then He talked to God (verses 4-6).

Psalm 23:1-6 (NKJV) ¹ The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. ² He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. ³ He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake. ⁴ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. ⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. ⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever.

Talk to trusted others

Talk to others. It has been rightly said, "pain shared, is pain divided".

Pain divided – you have purpose when carry others pain

Many who have suffered trauma lose a purpose in life. God gives you a purpose when you start to carry your brothers/sisters' burdens. You are fulfilling the "law of Christ" when you love your neighbor.

Galatians 6:2 (NKJV) ² Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Mark 12:29-31 (NKJV) ²⁹ Jesus answered him, "The first of all the commandments is: 'Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one.' ³⁰ And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment. ³¹ And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

Spouses, parents, family, friends are hurting too / Talk about it with your family

And it is so important to know, realize, remember..... you don't hurt alone, as your family hurts and are part of this with you. Don't go it alone, and don't make it something all your own. Your family is part of this too because they are part of you. Talk to them, be open and put it out there so you can discuss and progress together.

How you can help them

The prayers of the saints are needed for your brothers and sisters

If you have a loved one who is suffering PTS, love them, be patient with them, and pray. Hell and fire is coming after them, pray like hell and fire is coming at them.

James 5:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

Colossians 1:9 (NKJV) ⁹ For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

Ephesians 1:15-23 (NKJV) ¹⁵ Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, ¹⁶ do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: ¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, ¹⁸ the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power ²⁰ which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. ²² And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, ²³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Listen to their stories – but just listen

Listen to them, don't judge them, speak only when you are sure God is giving you a word to speak.

Everybody has a book you should read – just listen

Everybody always has a book they should read. Give that book only if you confirm with the Lord that it is His will. But listen to them, walk this out with them, for it will not heal and pass in a day, or a session, or a book, but it is a road, it is a journey, and they need someone to simply walk it out with them.

Be there for them

Simply be there for them, and be there when they are not around, go to them, call them, and check in on them. Sometimes the greatest ministry is the ministry of presence, simply being there with them and for them, even when not a word is being said, but they know they are not alone.

Ecclesiastes 4:9–12 (NKJV) ⁹ *Two are better than one, Because they have a good reward for their labor. ¹⁰ For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, For he has no one to help him up. ¹¹ Again, if two lie down together, they will keep warm; But how can one be warm alone? ¹² Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken.*

Conclusion

The Good Shepherd..... lets hear His heart again before we close

Psalm 23 A Psalm of David.

Psalm 23:1 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

Psalm 23:2 He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters.

Psalm 23:3 He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.

Psalm 23:4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

Psalm 23:5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over.

Psalm 23:6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever.

Do You Know the Good Shepherd?

Do you know the Good Shepherd personally? It's as easy as A-B-C we like to say, for He makes coming to Him real simple, because He simply loves us.

And here's the A, B, C of the gospel.

- A is for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. We've all missed the mark, we've all missed God's standards, his holy law (Thou shall not steal, thou shall not lie, thou will honor thy Lord thy God). And our sin separates us from the holy God. Because he is perfect and pure. But he did not leave us in this state of separation, hopeless and helpless. He came to help. We couldn't help ourselves so he came to help. And he sent his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. We need to **admit** our need for a Savior.
- The B. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever should **believe** in him shall not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:16. And we need his help. Because Romans 6:23 is clear without a shadow of a doubt, "The wages of sin is death," and that death is eternal separation from God. And eternal separation from God is a place called Hell and it's real. But he goes on to say, because there was a cross, that "the gift of God is eternal life."
- The C - What's our role? If we **confess** with our mouth the Lord Jesus Christ, believe in our heart that God raised him from the dead, we shall be saved. And believe means to believe that we needed a Savior, to recognize the need. And secondly, it's a calling to turn and follow. Believe comes with a turn from our sin and follow, it's called repentance. And then there's the receiving; we pray and ask him into our hearts. Romans 10:9-10. If we believe in our heart that God raised him from the dead you too shall be saved." And there's the power of the gospel, it's the resurrection life.

Admit

Romans 3:23 (NKJV) ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Romans 6:23 (NKJV) ²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Believe

John 3:16–17 (NKJV) ¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

Confess

Romans 10:9–10 (NKJV) ⁹ that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Disciple

Matthew 16:24–26 (NKJV) ²⁴ Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. ²⁵ For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. ²⁶ For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?

Prayer – Boldly Ask Your God

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

End of Study