

Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.

Sunday March 15, 2020 "Breaking Chains: Depression."

I Intro.

Welcome to the weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work through from the message this past Sunday. Whether you were able to attend the worship service or not, this devotional is free-standing and you can still use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. Take as long as you need to dive into this material and feel free to share it.

II Recap.

Last Sunday we started our three week series, "***Breaking Chains***", and are focusing on those things we battle all the time, but often get trapped in them and can't find our way out. So we stay bound and limited by these things. Last week we talked about busyness, which morphed into a great conversation at After Party about establishing and protecting boundaries. Those are those lines we create between us and the people around us, to protect our inner self from people who don't have our best interest at heart. It was a productive and meaningful conversation about doing some 'pre-hab' work protecting us from being chained up.

Jesus came to set us free and release us from the things we let bind us. But first we have to recognize what those things are, how we got in bondage, and learn how to lean fully into God to find what we need to be freed. The life God is calling us to.

III Sunday.

Sunday we talked about the chains of depression. We gave a lot of disclaimers about the different understandings and experiences of depression that are on a spectrum of experiences that range from mild disappointment to debilitating severe chronic depression. We affirmed that biological depression is real, and needs more than just throwing scripture at it. Scripture is great to give us hope, a future beyond that depression, to assure us of the presence of God in our darkest times. But that level of struggle needs professional help and there is no shame, and only positive benefits, from seeking help when you're experiencing that level of depression. And if the depression you are experiencing is causing you to have suicidal thoughts, then PLEASE talk to someone. What you're feeling in the moment is your feelings, and not all of reality. And we promise you there is a better there out there. There were two scriptures used from the same book...Lamentations. A highly structured poem of grief and despair. The book ends at a tough place, and we used that passage first. So read that and we'll talk about the real benefits of voicing what we are feeling in the midst of our depression.

Lamentations 5:19-22.

How did this passage affect you?

What did it say to you about despair and depression?

Kal said there are 5 benefits of voicing our feelings and pain woven all through Lamentations.

1. Lament is a form of protest against your struggle and pain.

Suffering calls, demands, us to push back against it. We name the grief and shame. You don't have to take it sitting down...fight/push/protest against it. **Scripture is a story of the struggles, pain of life, and a God who continually reaches into history towards us to be with us in our time of pain.**

2. Lament is a way to process intense emotions.

Depression and suffering boils up deep and incredibly painful emotions. Any strong emotions not expressed will come out eventually...sideways. We have to deal with the emotions before you can begin to process the actual situation. **And in these expressions we find a God who joins with us.**

3. Lament is a place to voice confusion.

A lot of what you may be experiencing in the midst of your depression, can neither be explained or understood. Identify, surface, and own any part you may have in your struggle. There may not be answers, but recognizing this is hugely therapeutic and clarifying. 1 Corinthians 4:33 says; *"Our God is not a God of confusion, but of peace."* In honestly voicing our confusion, God will bring us peace.

4. Lament is better done out loud and in community.

I have seen through countless stories of abuse, experienced trauma, that carrying those burdens silently and privately because of shame and embarrassment only multiplies the pain. When we can call out injustice, pain, the sources of our despair and depression, we find solidarity, oneness, and others who are experiencing the same thing. That is why we have the scriptures. A real place to voice our struggles, and find a God who genuinely cares. We can't always make the causes go away, or even what we may be feeling, but we can keep from battling these things alone. And in community we find people to carry us, and hold our faith, until we can find God again ourselves.

5. Lament restores sacred dignity to us within our depression.

What you're going through strips away your God-given humanness. Doing this work of expressing your feelings within the community, pushing back against your depression returns your dignity. Feeling of powerlessness strips away our dignity. Your situation may not change. You may be stuck in that place for awhile. And honestly lament will bring meaning and purpose to your pain. God is a God who brings wholeness, healing, completeness in the midst of life.

IV. Challenge.

This second Sunday of **"Breaking Chains"** was tough. This is a sensitive topic. However, it's an important one the church has to take the lead on, be bold, and give people who struggle with severe mood disorders a safe place to express their pain and grief...to lament. There weren't a lot of specific questions with this lesson, but hopefully important information to help you. We'll still ask a final one.

What can you and the church do better to help people who struggle with depression?