

Trusting God With Our Pain

Intro:

Opening illustration: Surfing at PC... here goes nothing...

Recently taken up surfing... not very good, try not to make wounded seal noises...

Nice set of waves coming in – tried to paddle in to the first one, missed, look over my shoulder, tried for the second one, missed... tried for the third wave in the set and I paddled in and started to stand up and go for it – my big moment, I was gonna be a Polynesian warrior chief in neoprene. Men would cheer – women would swoon... What I didn't realize is that after missing 2 waves, I had come in very close to the shore and I was in shallow water, about 2 feet of it!

Went to stand up as the wave pushed me forward and looked down saw nothing but sand in the bottom of the wave... slammed in to the beach hit my shoulder, head, had sand all in my wetsuit, board shot out from under me... totally embarrassed, in pain. One of my friends said – “did you actually try and surf that wave?”

- Pain is always going to be a reality of this life. How do I trust God with it?
- How do I trust God with that phone call in the middle of the night that changed everything or that relationship that ended that wounded me so deeply, or that one tragic event that changed everything...

A couple weeks ago I heard a man speak – I was really stoked about it, sat down with PD and was telling him about it and he challenged me to bring what I had learned and experienced – helped me put together an outline. So this is what the HS laid on my heart to bring to you guys today.

I love God's Word – puts into words so clearly how we feel sometimes... David a man after God's own heart says this

⁶ *I am worn out from sobbing.*

*All night I flood my bed with weeping,
drenching it with my tears. Psalm 6:6 NLT*

What do we do when we are in this kind of pain? Where do we go from this?

- Let me give you 3 decisions, choices to make that will help you trust God with your pain. Important to note – that I am not here today to answer the Why? Question. Many men far wiser than me have argued and discussed this for years. I am here to talk about the what now -

I. Accept That Pain Is Universal

A. No one gets a pain free ride at life – we watch the evening news, read the paper, No matter who we are, pain finds us.

No one can avoid it – not the wealthy, famous, powerful – Pain is Universal, part of the human condition – many kinds of pain –emotional, physical, spiritual. I would rather take 20 waves to the head than experience some of the intense pain represented in this room.

Even God’s people are going to experience pain – Jesus says this about that.

John 16:33 “I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.” (NLT)

The apostle Paul talks about pain and troubles...

II Cor. 4:8-9 “We are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed. We are perplexed, but not driven to despair. We are hunted down, but never abandoned by God. We get knocked down, but we are not destroyed.” (NLT)

Trans... It’s interesting to note... that even though we acknowledge that we all hurt at some point or another it can still lead to division and separation in our lives. The most common response I get when I talk to students dealing with pain? “I feel so alone”

B. Pain can separate or unite, divide or join our hearts, relationships, and lives.

1. If we let it pain can cause seemingly irreparable damage. It can isolate us, cause us to withdraw from people (especially if people around us are the one’s causing the pain.) It can cause us to lose faith, doubt God – doubt there is a God!

2. Psalms says this...

Ps. 69:1-3 “Save me, O God, for the floodwaters are up to my neck. Deeper and deeper I sink into the mire; I can’t find a foothold. I am in deep water, and the floods overwhelm me. I am exhausted from crying for help...” (NLT)

3. BUT Pain can also unite us...

Clear laps – participate in something. I want to show you something.

Stand if... Betrayed in a friendship, business partnership, romantic relationship? You’re not alone, Someone that you love has been affected by cancer? You are not alone.

4. pain can also unite us with Jesus –

a. As Christians, we get invited into this incredible relationship with God, creator, inventor, sustainer of life. This God, sent a piece of Himself to live as human being and die on the cross and then defeat death so that he could give us an opportunity to be reunited with Himself.

b. It's almost as if God sent us Jesus to say "I know how you feel" I created you, and then became one of you, to let you in on who I AM – I know how you feel. It's like the difference between "I know how you feel" and I Know how you feel – one's sympathetic and another empathetic. The cross might be a way of God saying to us – I know how you feel.

Which leads to the second choice in trusting God with our pain...

II. Trust That God Knows How You Feel

Jesus was 100% human and 100% God – Jesus experienced everything we do, yet didn't sin! This means that Jesus dealt with lust and didn't sin – betrayal, loss of loved ones, sorrow This means Jesus had stinky feet! – dealt with stinky armpits!

A. This belief causes me to turn to Him in our pain!

a. Because This Jesus I can understand, relate – God says, you want to know who I am? Look at my Son!

Heb. 4:14-16 "So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe. ¹⁵ This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. ¹⁶ So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most." (NLT)

b. Sometimes in the midst of our pain we do stupid things – we mess up, hurt ourselves or others, lost in addictions, medicate through drugs and alcohol – according to what we just read in vs. 16 there is grace for us when we need it most.

c. There is grace enough for us because Jesus died for all sin, for all time – his grace is enough for me, what I've done. His grace is enough for me, to set me free.

We just suffer from the consequences our own sins – sometimes the sins of those around us, but Jesus suffered on the cross for all our sins – for all time! This was part of God's plan for him and for us. If we realize this, we can gain a greater appreciation for his pain.

B. This belief gives me a greater appreciation for His pain

Is. 53:10-11 But it was the LORD's good plan to crush him and cause him grief...When he sees all that is accomplished by his anguish, he will be satisfied. And because of his experience, my righteous servant will make it possible for many to be counted righteous, for he will bear all their sins." (NLT)

- Jesus' pain in essence defined him as the Messiah, the redeemer.
- Jesus willingly chose God's path of pain for his life
- What do we celebrate when we celebrate communion? Jesus' body broken for us, his blood spilled for us! His pain...

We've got to do the same, and let the pain in our lives define us – and not defeat

III. Allow Pain To Define You Not Defeat You

A. Pain is God's spiritual shaping process

- a. God can use good things too – but I have found that I learn the most about God through painful situations

Rom. 5:3-5 “We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.” (NLT)

- Pain is God's spiritual shaping process – we have to choose to respond to it accordingly.

Because...

B. Our response in pain defines or defeats

I Peter 4:19 “So if you are suffering in a manner that pleases God, keep on doing what is right, and trust your lives to the God who created you, for he will never fail you.” (NLT)

May you be blessed with the understanding that your story has not ended here, in the midst of your pain... that this pain isn't the end... May you be free from the why question and begin to learn that you can trust God with your pain, that He knows how you feel, that he lovingly wants to shape you into a Masterpiece.