



Emotionally Healthy Spirituality Church-wide Initiative

Enlarging Your Soul through Grief and Loss:

Part 5 — Matthew 26:36-46

Intro: 8 weeks series EHS... Emotional health and contemplative spirituality, when interwoven together, offer nothing short of a spiritual revolution, transforming the hidden places deep beneath the surface of our lives. (For this week – Read Chapter 7.) book and guide. Been profound for me deepen, revisit, profound

1. The Problem of Emotionally Unhealthy Spirituality
2. Know Yourself that You May Know God
3. Going Back in Order to Go Forward
4. Journey Through the Wall
- 5. Enlarge Your Soul Through Grief and Loss**
6. Discover the Rhythms of the Daily Office and Sabbath
7. Grow into an Emotionally Mature Adult
8. Go the Next Step to Develop a “Rule of Life.”

Key word – Enlarge. Reason this is so important is that the moment we are born (leaving the womb!), we are experiencing loss. One day we will lose everything (our achievements, our plans, our loved ones, our very selves – Job). Our lives filled with loss.

Critical Discipleship Issue to grow into spiritual maturity.

-Leads to a wholeness, a richness, a depth way we never dreamed.

-As we learn to let go of our grip on these things – we return to fully live our lives and find the most profound freedom!

-Our souls are enlarged.

Every family, culture, race has their way of dealing with loss and grief.

Challenge – to do so biblically.

For this reason 2/3 Psalms are Laments – feelings/expressions sorrow.

Lamentations, 2nd Beatitude, most of book Job a struggle with grief.

“Blessed are those who mourn for they will be comforted.”

Scripture not simply the Word of God – music of God. So much to this text – we will pick out couple of instruments of beauty meant to melt you!

TODAY – Jesus – **Rd. 26:36-46**

Underline a few words –

v.37 – *sorrowful* – “depressed” Gospel Mark uses a different Greek Word = “*horror came over him*”

troubled- “severely distressed” Luke uses word, “anguish”



v. 38 “My soul is overwhelmed to the point of death” = Jesus’ anguish enough to kill him!

During the days of Jesus life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death.” Hebrews 5:8

Jesus - man of sorrows and familiar with suffering (**Isaiah 53:3**)

v.39 – falls on his face to the ground – physical/bodily position tells us of spiritual our condition

Bodily position tells spirituality condition (kneeling, stand, bowing, this)

Jesus is poverty of spirit. Matthew 5:3

Luke. 22:44 – “and being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground”

pushed to the LIMIT!!!

Losses Cut off from Father (going to be made sin!) About to bear the wrath of God and his holy punishment for world’s sin? – He who knew no sin became sin. 2 Corinthians 5:21

loss of Judas (betrayal), desertion of other 11 been their teacher, healer, encourager, supporter, friend, Loss of Israel God’s chosen people, Very Creator of universe subject humiliation of sinful humanity all in the name of God.

“Being handed over.” – something done to him.

“This cup” = God’s fury vented against all sins of humankind – become burnt offering

Not a spiritual SUPERHERO- writers would have cleaned up Jesus – brave face of serenity!

e.g. Charge of the Light Brigade, the Alamo, Foxes Book of Martyrs,

Polycarp

“86 yrs have I served Him, “The fire you threaten burn but an hour and is quenched after a little while, but you do not know the fire of the coming judgment and everlasting punishment that is laid up for the impious. WHY DO YOU DELAY? Come do what you will”

Christ only began to be sorrowful. His God-head restrained him from consummating the emotion.

Jesus wanted out – postponement

The deep horror – Can I fulfill your plan by some other way?

“If it is possible” – so much for healthily, wealthy, prosperity, victory – that it is always possible to have bad things removed!

JESUS DOES NOT GET HIS MIRACLE (if it means getting what we want or looking the way we think) We don’t either!! We are not God.

Learning from Jesus — Christ models and shows us a whole new way of being human.

To Enlarge Our Souls thru Loss — Listen to Interruption and Learn to Fall



1. Listen (to the Interruption) and Learn (to Fall)

Losses are an interruption to our plans. Our tendency is to ignore them.

Losses/grief comes into all our lives – deaths, divorces, breakups, illnesses, crushing disappointments, abuse, dreams dashed, relationships broken never to be restored, failures, our children, our parents, doors/opportunities close, painful memories of decisions we've made and people we have hurt,

Our culture (esp. church culture) – don't feel. Don't talk about it, stuff it. Numb pain. Busy.

We lose control- not sure of our faith (doesn't work as before) – SHAME-GUILT DEEP.

Shame = I'm not enough. I'm worthless or I'm unlovable. Not what I've done that needs to change.

So if you're sad, feeling shame, inadequate – last place to be is church

“You can't come here if you're sad!” so PEOPLE FAKE IT, PRETEND

Good Christians don't get hurt, confused, discouraged, fall on faces – esp. leaders!!

TRUTH – Yes they do!!! Look at Jesus!

Jesus – entirely human like us – body, emotions, mind. Really one of us. Fully Human

v.38 Jesus doesn't stuff it. – get it out

weight of depression is so heavy says “I feel so bad I could die!!”

This is the Messiah – God in flesh. Incarnation.

Some people reject the “fleshly, human, struggling, Gethsemane Jesus”

-early heretics who could not accept God fully human and fully God rejected this passage.

-spacesuit to put on; agnostics.

We give permission to FEEL here – to grieve biblically (like David)

e.g. Gethsemane– We're headed for tough time. I am going to die. God on the throne. Are headed for resurrection and the salvation of the world. Watch me. Be strong!”

e.g. Lazarus instead of weeping – “Let's go. Get on with it.”

e.g. Jerusalem – instead weep “I longed to gather you.”

e.g. Cross – “My God why...” – Praise him.

God has revealed himself in history, Bible – person of Jesus – victory of cross

Yet – God remains hidden. There are times his presence is hidden – appears absent!

Nicholas Wolterstorff, Yale Professor and theologian, wrote *Lament for a Son*, after his 25-year-old son Eric was killed in a mountain-climbing accident.

Eric was bursting with plans. Now it's all gone. All the rich future he held – gone in those tumbling seconds... Nothing fills the void of his absence. He's not replaceable. We can't go out and get another just like him... There's a hole in the world now. In the place where he was there's now just nothing. only a gap remains. Please don't say it's not really so bad. Because it is. Death is awful, demonic. “I cannot fit it all together by saying... I can only endure with Job. I do not know why God did not



prevent Eric's death. I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. I also believe my son's life was cut off in its prime. I cannot fit these pieces together. I am at a loss... To the most agonizing question I have every asked I do not know the answer. I do not know why God would watch him fall. I do not know why God would watch me."

My early Christian life unspoken message – to listen to the interruption of griefs and losses and end up on the ground like Christ – was to be a bad Christian.

That advice was both unbiblical and inhuman!

2. Learn to Fall

Philip Simmons, age 35, was teaching creative writing college when found out he had Lou Gehrig's disease (ALS) and would probably be dead within a few years. Literally Fall!!

Opposite of the spirituality of ascent (Western culture – bigger, better, smarter, more successful)

There are gems, hidden treasures in the trash, the unlovely, that which smells bad! SO MANY. (about yourself, God, others.)

3. Breaks our Self-Will

"Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what He suffered" Hebrews 5:8

Jesus – fully God and fully human. God in the flesh. His flesh was not imaginary

Jesus submitted to the will of God by conforming His human will to God's will.

Truth of this text – Son of God, in human condition, lay on the ground overwhelmed before the unfathomable will and power of God.

What makes this text so meaningful, Jesus had human will. Not "Oh He was God!" Maximus – born in Constantinople 580 BC. Brilliant man. Worked for emperor, then become monk, writer/theologian. Wrote: Christ had to have a human will as well as divine will. This passage – the decisive moment in history of salvation. Christ willed the salvation of the world – to drink the cup. Christ acceptance to drink cup was a free act, with Father and Spirit. Result – Maximus, for refusing to recant to emperor, exiled – right hand cut off so he could never write again. Tongue ripped out so never teach again. Because of his courage and faith and vision – became known as Maximus the Confessor.

Cup – Jesus did not automatically do obedience. Now struggling. **WOULD LIKE OUT** Jesus told the Father about his present want – did not pretend! But able to say "But the main thing I want is NOT what I want, but what you want!

STRUGGLING – 3x prays same thing see **v.44**

He did not just automatically DO obedience. He learned it, True obedience no snap!

A struggled, learned, prayed for obedience is the true obedience.

**The process can be severe – but it is merciful! Learning to Fall.

4. Brings us finally to a place of deep love and letting go.

Relinquishing/let go of her need to have all the answers. To understand.



Philip Simmons, age 35, had Lou Gehrig's disease (ALS) Wrote *Learning to Fall*. As culture we have accomplished lot by seeing life as a set of problems to be solved. We've invented new medicines, gone to moon, developed computers/new technologies. We perceive problems and set about solving them. So 6 ways to find a maid. 8 ways to have a successful marriage. "But here is where we go wrong. For at its deepest levels life is not a problem but a mystery. Problems are to be solved. True mysteries are not. Personally, I wish I could have learned this lesson more easil... each of us is brought to the cliff's edge. At such moments we can either back away in bitterness or confusion, or leap forward into mystery. We hand ourselves over. We can participate in mystery only by letting go of solutions. This letting go is the first lesson of falling and the hardest"

THERE IS A LINE – WE DO NOT CROSS. MYSTERY

Bow before the mystery of suffering, death and loss. UNLEARNING

GOD IS GOOD AND HIS LOVE ENDURES FOREVER. WE DON'T UNDERSTAND

You can't grieve for anyone else. BE QUIET. (Going thru walls/losses will help you)

Learn thru loss to be alone Jesus' friends are a stones throw away.

God # 1 – Friends #2 v.40-, 43, and 45 wants human companionship!!!

i.e. 30-50 yards. You can only get so close.

5. Deep grieving empties our hearts of junk – making more space for God to fill.

In emptying, we create a holy vacancy for God, allowing God to fill our lives.

Loss creates space for the love of God to come in.

***We absorb our pain. It enlarges our soul. We are not meant to be the same.

HOPE BIRTHED that all makes sense in God. He is on the throne.

6. Praying is at the center of discipleship.

Jesus shows us – a prayer life indispensable to grieving well.

Really about dependence! And limits

***JESUS PRAYS – if He needed to...how much more do you!

Strength is the result of willpower, or action, or zeal but result of praying!

Jesus prays "MY FATHER" v. 42 "Abba, Father" – Abba = Daddy

**Peter Doesn't think prayer is really that important! – CUTS OFF EAR!!

What does that mean? Attention to the presence of God in all I do. Silence Solitude

God inviting you to detach from control so you can begin to hear the voice of Love speaking to you. (Our finite minds cannot comprehend the infinite god). Let Go.

Let go. Listen to Interruption. Learn to Fall.

This is the path to the new – to resurrection – to many seeds.

There is always resurrection through death.



It is true –

I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. John 12:24

Invitation – persevere – like Job, David, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Jeremiah, Jesus

... Let your stony heart be broken so love of Jesus can enter.

God will use your pain to teach you. You will become a gift to others.

Transformation comes – but in the way of the cross. Jesus faces his loss – head on!!

Miracle **v.46a** – “let us go” – Experiences resurrection.

Patient Trust

Above all, trust in the slow work of God.
We are quite naturally impatient in everything
to reach the end without delay.
We should like to skip the intermediate stages.
We are impatient of being on the way to something
unknown, something new.
And yet it is a law of progress
that it is made by passing through
some stages of instability-
And that it may take a very long time.

And so I think it is with you.
your ideas mature gradually let them grow.
let them shape themselves, without undue haste.
Don't try to force them on,
As though you could be today what time
(that is to say, grace and circumstance
acting on your own good will)
will make of you tomorrow.

Only God could say what this new spirit
gradually forming within you will be
Give our Lord the benefit of believing
that his hand is leading you.
And accept the anxiety of feeling yourself
in suspense and incomplete.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin