

ADVERSITY GOSPEL #4 – THE PATH TO PEACE

Sermon by Todd Lester

February 26, 2017

When something bad happens, you have three choices:

1. Let it d_____ you 2. Let it d_____ you 3. Let it d_____ you

THE PATH TO PEACE IS TO SURRENDER

Romans 15:4 Such things were written in the Scriptures long ago to teach us. And the Scriptures give us hope and encouragement....

2 Samuel 12:16-19

STEPS TO SURRENDER

1. ACCEPT WHAT CANNOT BE _____

2 Samuel 12:22-23

Acceptance doesn't mean it's g_____, or stops h_____, or you stop c_____.

2. REMEMBER THAT IT'S NOT THE _____

2 Samuel 12:23b

Doubts are e_____.

"A Grace Disguised" book by Jerry Sittser

3. TAKE _____ OF YOURSELF

2 Samuel 12:20a

Grief can be p_____.

4. REFOCUS ON GOD THROUGH _____

2 Samuel 12:20b, Philippians 4:7

God puts up with the p_____ that evil causes in order to give us the c_____ to love and follow Him.

5. DO SOMETHING _____

2 Samuel 12:20c

Take the forward step of faith and say, in the midst of your pain ...

I'm m_____ but I'm going to start m_____.

I'm g_____ but I'm going to start g_____.

I'm h_____ but I'm going to start h_____.

I'm w_____ but I'm going to start w_____.

I'm s_____ but today I'm going to s_____.

6. KEEP ON _____ EVEN IN YOUR PAIN

2 Samuel 12:24, 1 John 3:16

If love is r_____, then r_____ it.

Look at what's l_____, not what's l_____.

The Serenity Prayer

God, give me g_____ to accept with serenity
the things that cannot be c_____,
C_____ to change the things
which should be changed,
and the W_____ to distinguish
the one from the other.

Living one d_____ at a time,
Enjoying one m_____ at a time,
Accepting h_____ as a pathway to peace,
Taking, as Jesus did,
This sinful w_____ as it is,
Not as I would have it,
Trusting that You will make all things right,
If I s_____ to Your will,
So that I may be r_____ happy in this life,
And s_____ happy with You forever in the next.
Amen.

By Reinhold Niebuhr

ADVERSITY GOSPEL #4 – THE PATH TO PEACE

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February 26, 2017

When something bad happens, you have three choices:

1. Let it destroy you 2. Let it define you 3. Let it develop you

THE PATH TO PEACE IS TO SURRENDER

Romans 15:4 Such things were written in the Scriptures long ago to teach us. And the Scriptures give us hope and encouragement....

2 Samuel 12:16-19 David begged God to spare the child. He went without food and lay all night on the bare ground. The elders of his household pleaded with him to get up and eat with them, but he refused. Then on the seventh day the child died. David's advisers were afraid to tell him. "He wouldn't listen to reason while the child was ill," they said. "What drastic thing will he do when we tell him the child is dead?" When David saw them whispering, he realized what had happened. "Is the child dead?" he asked. "Yes," they replied, "he is dead."

STEPS TO SURRENDER

1. ACCEPT WHAT CANNOT BE CHANGED

2 Samuel 12:22-23 David replied, "I fasted and wept while the child was alive, for I said, 'Perhaps the Lord will be gracious to me and let the child live.' But why should I fast when he is dead? Can I bring him back again?" Acceptance doesn't mean it's good, or stops hurting, or you stop caring.

2. REMEMBER THAT IT'S NOT THE END OF THE STORY

2 Samuel 12:23b ...I will go to him one day, but he cannot return to me. Doubts are expected.

"A Grace Disguised" book by Jerry Sittser

3. TAKE PROPER CARE OF YOURSELF

2 Samuel 12:20a Then David got up from the ground, washed himself, put on lotions, and changed his clothes.

Grief can be paralyzing.

4. REFOCUS ON GOD THROUGH WORSHIP

2 Samuel 12:20b He went to the Tabernacle and worshiped the Lord.

Philippians 4:7 Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

God puts up with the pain that evil causes in order to give us the choice to love and follow Him.

5. DO SOMETHING PRODUCTIVE

2 Samuel 12:20c After that, he returned to the palace and was served food and ate.

Take the forward step of faith and say, in the midst of your pain ...

I'm mourning but I'm going to start moving.

I'm grieving but I'm going to start growing.

I'm hurting but I'm going to start healing.

I'm wounded but I'm going to start walking.

I'm sad but today I'm going to step out.

6. KEEP ON LOVING EVEN IN YOUR PAIN

2 Samuel 12:24 Then David comforted Bathsheba, his wife, and slept with her. She became pregnant and gave birth to a son, and David named him Solomon.

1 John 3:16 We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us. So we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters.

If love is rejected, then redirect it.

Look at what's left, not what's lost.

The Serenity Prayer

*God, give me grace to accept with serenity
the things that cannot be changed,*

*Courage to change the things
which should be changed,*

*and the Wisdom to distinguish
the one from the other.*

Living one day at a time,

Enjoying one moment at a time,

Accepting hardship as a pathway to peace,

Taking, as Jesus did,

This sinful world as it is,

Not as I would have it,

Trusting that You will make all things right,

If I surrender to Your will,

So that I may be reasonably happy in this life,

And supremely happy with You forever in the next.

Amen.

By Reinhold Niebuhr

Alternate Icebreaker: I entered the following 50 words (from the message) into the Heads Up app on my ipad and we took turns trying to guess them, from other members' clues.

Adversity Surrender Accept Peace Define Develop Remember
Doubts Suffering Sorrow Setbacks Future Care Worship Grief
Productive Loving Paralyzing Refocus Understanding Rejected
Trust Redirect Walls Pain Faith Mourning Serenity Hardship
Fear Wounded Tabernacle Anger Choice Ordinary Washed Lotion
Clothes Solomon Palace Food Bathsheba Fasting Weeping Babies
Prostrate Begged Growth Glory Stuck

THE ADVERSITY GOSPEL #4 – THE PATH TO PEACE

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February 26, 2017

Icebreaker/Introduction

There are 2 possible icebreakers for this week:

1. Involves using an ipad/iphone app called Heads Up (it's free but to create your own deck it may cost a couple of bucks). I've included 50 words from this week's message (after the Scriptures page) which can be used to build a deck to play with.
2. Fill in the blanks on The Serenity Prayer.

What are your thoughts about (the expanded version of) the Serenity Prayer?

When something bad happens, you have three choices: 1. Let it destroy you 2. Let it define you 3. Let it develop you

Do you agree with these choices? Do you know people who have let tragedy define them? Is it more helpful to say that it becomes part of their identity? Do you see a possible progression in these 3 statements (ie. can a person move from having something devastate them, define them, then develop them)?

Read Romans 15:4. What is a Scripture that comes to mind that has brought hope and/or encouragement in your life?

Read 2 Samuel 12:16-19. Can you imagine spending 7 days fasting and praying? What is the biggest thing you have ever asked God to do?

Todd said that God uses adversity (suffering, sorrow, setbacks) for our growth and His glory. How has God used adversity in your life?

STEPS TO SURRENDER

1. ACCEPT WHAT CANNOT BE CHANGED

Focuses on 2 Samuel 12:22-23

Acceptance doesn't mean it's good, or stops hurting, or you stop caring.

Todd pointed out that usually the first reaction to tragedy is denial – saying “No!” When have you had this kind of experience in your life?

Are there some situations where it is difficult to know if something can't be changed? (eg. separation)

2. REMEMBER THAT IT'S NOT THE END OF THE STORY

Focuses on 2 Samuel 12:23b

Doubts are expected.

Do you find it helpful to hear that 'doubts are expected'? What role has doubt played in your faith? What things cause you to doubt?

Todd said that it wasn't the end of the story for David because he would see this child in heaven. What are some other ways that it wasn't the end of the story for David? (eg. continue as king, win battles, write psalms)

3. TAKE PROPER CARE OF YOURSELF

Focuses on 2 Samuel 12:20a

Grief can be paralyzing.

Can you recall some of the 'ordinary activities' Todd mentioned that people in deep grief often don't care about? (eating, bathing, clothing, entertainment, ...)

Have you ever tried to help someone who was feeling down or paralyzed? What did you do?

Can you identify with this idea? Have you had times when you didn't care about some of the basic things?

4. REFOCUS ON GOD THROUGH WORSHIP

Focuses on 2 Samuel 12:20b, Philippians 4:7

God puts up with the pain that evil causes in order to give us the choice to love and follow Him.

What is a favourite worship song/hymn?

Todd said that David wasn't angry, but that he was surrendering to God in worship. Do you think you can be angry with God and still worship Him?

Discuss Todd's statement that not everything that happens in the world is God's will.

5. DO SOMETHING PRODUCTIVE

Focuses on 2 Samuel 12:20c

I'm mourning but I'm going to start moving. I'm grieving but I'm going to start growing.

I'm hurting but I'm going to start healing. I'm wounded but I'm going to start walking. I'm sad but today I'm going to step out.

Would you agree that it is fear that can tend to keep people from doing something productive in these situations?

How can making even one small step of faith help in the grieving process?

6. KEEP ON LOVING EVEN IN YOUR PAIN

Focuses on 2 Samuel 12:24, 1 John 3:16

If love is rejected, then redirect it.

Look at what's left, not what's lost.

Can you think of people in your life who have been loving in spite of pain or great loss?

Can it sometimes seem too flippant to say something like 'look at what's left, not what's lost'? is it dependent on the severity of the loss, or the stage a grieving person may be at?

Consider the role that temperament plays in grief – how does personality affect how a person goes through this process?