

HEALING JOURNEY SEPTEMBER 5, 2022

SERIES: "KNOWING GOD IN MY PAIN"

THE MOST DANGEROUS MYTHS ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

If you were not aware of mental health in 2019, you certainly became aware of it in the early part of 2020. One of the most noticeable negative effects of the pandemic in the last two years has been the increase in mental health issues. Even people who never showed any tendency of mental health, are now exhibiting such. And those who suffered from it prior to Covid, are experiencing an increase. Perhaps you personally know someone who is, or you personally are affected. There is no shame in acknowledging this. Pastor Craig Groeschel, whom we are going to hear from tonight and in subsequent weeks, is the leader of one of the largest churches in USA. He not only studied and preached on mental health in the past, but to his own surprise, he was suddenly faced personally with that challenge in the last 18 months. This first teaching session by Pastor Craig addresses the myths / misunderstandings about mental health challenges, and how we can help those in our communities who suffer from it, including ourselves. The first few minutes of this video is a powerful testimony on how it all came to a head for Pastor Craig.

VIDEO NOTES

A lot of people can relate right now to Pastor Craig's story. They're still "showing up" like everything is fine, but inwardly, they are battling real _____, or an ongoing chronic kind of _____, or are feeling _____ - it's just too much.

If you find yourself struggling mentally, you are NOT _____.

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 "May God Himself, the God of peace, sanctify (cleanse) you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The One who called you is faithful, and He will do it."

May the God of peace bring you _____. God is my peace! For years, the church didn't talk about mental health because they preached that when you're saved, all is healed instantly. It's true that God fully saves you, He forgives you, He redeems you, He fills you with His power, and He will never leave you, and yes, everything does work together for good. ALL of that is true, BUT it's _____.

Just because Jesus saves you doesn't mean He fixes every area of your life instantly when saved. Just because your sins are forgiven, it doesn't mean that you become instantly mentally healthy.

MENTAL WELLNESS INCLUDES 3 THINGS:

- 1) Emotional well-being
- 2) Psychological well-being
- 3) Social well-being

Mental health is not static. You can be very healthy for a while, and then something happens and you're suddenly in a very bad place afterwards.

Your mental health affects:

- How you think
- How you _____
- How you _____
- How you handle stress around you
- How you relate to people

- How you make _____
- How you bounce back from a difficult situation, or how you don't bounce back
- How you cope if you go to the wrong sources for comfort
- How you choose your _____
- The quality (or not-so-quality) of your marriage or relationship

TWO MENTAL HEALTH MYTHS

MYTH #1: CHRISTIANS SHOULDN'T STRUGGLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH.

Many churches believe if you are saved (having accepted Jesus as your Saviour), you shouldn't suffer from anxiety, being depressed or burned out. And if you do, it's probably your fault – you don't have enough _____, or not praying enough, or not praying right, or there's some kind of sin in your life that you need to confess.

TRUTH: You CAN love Jesus, and STILL fight depression. You CAN be in the Word, and still battle with anxiety. You CAN attend _____ faithfully and still struggle to overcome trauma.

When we look in the Scriptures, some of the people we see as _____ of the faith, they still had bouts with mental challenges. For example: Elijah, David, Jeremiah.

If you struggle today, the church may be telling you that you just need more of God, and that may be so, but you may also need: more sleep; better friends, be part of a life support group (like Healing Journey), change your diet, go to a different doctor or do some deep therapy.

If you're struggling, it doesn't mean you're not a good Christian. It means you're _____.

MYTH #2: GOD DOESN'T CARE ABOUT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

When you look at the Psalms, you see how much God cares about every area of your life.

Here are a few:

"The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?" (Psalm 27:1)

"The LORD is close to the broken-hearted, and saves those who are crushed in spirit." (Psalm 34:18)

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." (Psalm 46:1)

All of Psalm 23

THE LORD CARES ABOUT YOU!

Go to Psalms to see how much He cares about you and go to Psalms to see some people breaking down mentally. Psalm 88 is written by Heman, a man of God.

- Heman had great _____ (1 Kings 4:31)
- Had musical ability (1 Chronicles 6:33, 16:41-42)
- Was a committed parent (1 Chronicles 25:5-6)
- Was very faithful in his service to the _____ (1 Chronicles 25:6)

Heman was a man of _____, but in Psalm 88:1-5, we see him as a man in despair, and in Psalm 88:13-14, he cries out to God for help and asks why (as many of us may do when in despair).

God is not afraid of our honesty. He cares that you love Him, and that you may _____ Him. You may worship Him, but still you may hurt. When you hurt, He cares.

Getting help isn't a sign of _____. It's a sign of _____.

Matthew 22:37 Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your _____."

HOW DO YOU LOVE GOD WITH ALL YOUR MIND?

Your life is always moving in the direction of your _____.

Your brain thinks in patterns. It continues to think in the same pathways that it's been down before. That's good news...if your thoughts are _____. It's bad news when your thoughts aren't.

When your body is not healthy, you go to a _____ - you might change your diet, start to exercise, get treatment. So if your mind is unhealthy, what do you do? You might go to a doctor (counsellor), or go to the Great Physician (God) who helps renew your mind. In order to _____ our mind, we must **disconnect** our mind from the wrong things, in order to **connect** it to _____. If you want _____ of mind, here's the foundation:

Isaiah 26:3 "You will keep in _____ peace all who trust in You, all whose thoughts are _____ on You!" The phrase "perfect peace" comes from Shalom, Shalom. The words "thoughts fixed on you" means (samak) to prop, to rest your full weight on an object.

IF YOU'RE NOT OK RIGHT NOW, YOU NEED TO:

1. **Disconnect** your mind from things that are not _____.
2. **Reconnect** to God. Fixing your thoughts on God.

Creating new neural pathways in your brain. The Bible teaches to not be conformed to what everyone else is doing – the craziness, the toxicity, the hateful, the bitterness, the negativity. "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be _____ by the _____ of your mind." (Romans 12:2)

3. **Find a Bible verse** to reconnect you with God.

Pastor Craig's verse during this challenging time was 2 Peter 1:3 "His divine power has given us _____ we need for a godly life through our knowledge of Him."

Instead of saying, "I can't", "This is too much", "This is going to kill me", "No one understands", "No one cares", say this:

"GOD is my _____ and my _____. I have everything I need to do everything He _____ me to do."

GROUP DISCUSSION

1. What hit home for you in this video session?
2. Have you experienced any mental anguish, confusion, depression, anxiety or other disorders in the last two years? If so, how have you been coping with that?
3. Our brain thinks in patterns, meaning it continues to think on the same pathway (pattern) that it's been down before. Is there a pathway in your brain that needs redirecting – disconnecting and reconnecting?
4. Do you have a favourite Bible verse that encourages you during tough times? OR, referring to the handout, what other verse(s) may be of encouragement to you when feeling disconnected from God, and perhaps experiencing some mental anguish?

15 Powerful Bible Verses about How God Cares for You

by Mark Altrogge

1. **“For I, the LORD your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, ‘Fear not, I am the one who helps you.’” Isaiah 41:13**

God doesn't simply send an angel to hold your right hand. The God of heaven and earth personally holds your right hand. This is a figurative expression of his closeness to us and his personal care for us. He says that we are not to fear because he personally helps us – “I am the one who helps you.”

2. **“Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.” Isaiah 41:10**

Here God says that he personally will be with us, strengthen, help and uphold us. For this reason, we need not fear or be dismayed when facing or going through tough times.

3. **“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.” Isaiah 43:2**

We will all “pass through waters” and rivers of hardship, and times of uncertainty, and walk through the fires of life. But God promises, “I will be with you.” Personally. Presently. In the midst of the fire, like he was with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

4. **“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you.” Psalm 32:8**

This is one of my life verses. God himself, the fountain of infinite wisdom and knowledge, promises to personally instruct and teach his children. And he promises to counsel us with his eye upon us. He is watching over us every second. He never slumbers nor sleeps. And he counsels us step by step, day by day, with his eye constantly watching over our every step.

5. **“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. *He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.*” Psalm 23:1-3**

In this, one of the most well known passages in the Bible, God tells us he cares for us intimately and personally. He leads us. Feeds us, gives us rest in him. Our good shepherd feeds us and refreshes us in his word – in green pastures. He personally restores our souls when we are weary and drained. He personally leads us in paths of righteousness for his name's sake – so that we will bring glory to his name.

6. **“He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.” Isaiah 40:11**

Our **good Shepherd** gathers us in his arms and carries us “in his bosom,” a picture of intimacy and closeness and deep care, and he gently leads us.

7. **“Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.” 1 Peter 5:6-7**

God isn't so busy running the universe that he doesn't have time for our petty worries. He tells us to cast all our anxieties on him. Why? Because HE CARES FOR YOU. He cares about you. He cares about your children and grandchildren. He cares about you in your job. He cares about your church. He cares for you, that you would have joy and strength.

8. **“As for me, I am poor and needy, but the Lord takes thought for me. You are my help and my deliverer; do not delay, O my God!” Psalm 40.17**
The Lord takes thought for us individually – “the Lord takes thought for ME.” You personally are always on his mind. He knows us intimately when we’re “poor and needy” spiritually, emotionally, or physically. And because he takes thought for us he is our help and deliverer. So cry out to him!
9. **“When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears and delivers them out of all their troubles. The LORD is near to the broken-hearted and saves the crushed in spirit.” Psalm 34.17-18**
Are you broken-hearted? Crushed in spirit? The Lord is near to you. He is with you and identifies deeply with you. If God tells us to weep with those who weep, how much more does he feel for us in our sadness and pain. And he tells us to cry for help, because he hears the cries of those he has made righteous by the blood of Christ. And our personal Savior will deliver us out of ALL our troubles.
10. **“But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.” Ephesians 2.13**
We were once far off from God, but once we believed in **Jesus**, God brought us near to him by Son’s blood. How near? We are one with Christ, in union with him. Adopted as God’s children. No longer far off, but family. Heirs with Jesus.
11. **“Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’” Hebrews 13.5**
God will never leave us, nor forsake us. This is how we can be content in every circumstance. We have God himself, the fountain of life and every good thing, and he will never abandon us.
12. **“No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.” John 15:15**
Talk about intimacy! Jesus calls us his friends! Intimate friends. Friends are intimate and share with each other. And Jesus makes known his Father and his Father’s words and ways to us.
13. **“A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.” Proverbs 18.24**
Jesus is closer to us than any brother, closer than any family member could ever be. And he sticks close to us – He’s not going anywhere.
14. **“Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you.” Isaiah 49.15**
I love this verse. Human mothers have a deep care and affection and concern for their nursing children. Human mothers have deep compassion for their infants. Yet sometimes, they may forget. Yet God has more compassion and care for us than the most loving mothers on earth. He will never forget to care for us or fail to have compassion on us.
15. **“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.” 2 Corinthians 1:3-4**
When we are afflicted, we can run to “the Father of mercies and God of all comfort.” And there is no affliction he will not comfort us in – he comforts us in “ALL OUR AFFLICTION.” So much so that we can pour out God’s comfort on others in their pain.