

Message One: THE REALITY

Many of you coming to Restory this year have been broken in relationships:

- Friends (Sometimes your closest friends become your staunchest enemies)
- Fellowship (Sometimes the very people who should feed & nurture, turn on you)
- Family (Sometimes those tasked with protection ignore or abuse)

Relationships are God's way of sanctifying us.

Let's look at someone who experienced all those losses: JOSEPH

He was robed with blessing, robbed through testing, robust by entrusting.

Tell his story. Coat, brothers, slavery, Potipher's wife, jail, baker & cupbearer, Pharoah's dream, prominence.

8 Words that describe Joseph's story. Can you find yourself in these?

1. Mocked
2. Abandoned
3. Exploited
4. Betrayed
5. Misunderstood
6. Maligned
7. Imprisoned
8. Forgotten

In the classic allegory *Hinds' Feet on High Places* by Hannah Hurnard, we follow a young doe named Much Afraid as she ventures to the High Places in search of healing. Exhausted, she reaches a high peak where only rocks are her footing. She spies a lone flower pushing its way up through the crags. She asks the flower its name.

"My name is Bearing the Cost, but some call me Forgiveness."

She asks the flower how it arrived there.

"I was separated from all my companions, exiled from home, carried here and imprisoned in this rock. It was not my choice, but the work of others who, when they had dropped me here, went away

and left me to bear the results of what they had done.”

8 Things We Learn in the Aftermath of Joseph’s RESTORY:

1. FILLED. Genesis 41:38: So Pharaoh asked his officials, “Can we find anyone else like this man so obviously filled with the spirit of God?”
2. FORWARD THINKING. Genesis 41:51: Joseph named his older son Manasseh for he said, “God has made me forget all my troubles and everyone in my father’s family.”
3. FRUITFUL. Genesis 41:52: Joseph named his second son Ephraim, for he said, “God has made me fruitful in this land of my grief.”
4. FORGIVING. Genesis 45:3-4a: “I am Joseph!” he said to his brothers. “Is my father still alive?” But his brothers were speechless! They were stunned to realize that Joseph was standing there in front of them. “Please come closer,” he said to them.
5. FIDELITY TO GOD’S WAYS. Genesis 45:4b-5: “I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sold into slavery in Egypt. But don’t be upset, and don’t be angry with yourselves for selling me to this place. It was God who sent me here ahead of you to preserve your lives.”
6. FAITHFUL. (Jacob blesses him in Genesis 49:23-24): “Archers attacked him savagely; they shot at him and harassed him. But his bow remained taut, and his arms were strengthened by the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob, by the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel.”
7. FEARED GOD. Genesis 50:19: But Joseph replied, “Don’t be afraid of me. Am I God, that I can punish you?”
8. FRIENDLY. Genesis 50:21b: So he reassured them by speaking kindly to them.

THE REALITY: Life is hard. People are hard. People will hurt you. But God will be with you through it.

Message Two: THE REACTION

JOB: THE STORY ARC OF GRIEF

OVERWHELMING LOSS: Job 3:25: What I always feared has happened to me. What I dreaded has come true.

INITIAL FAITH: Job 1:21: “I came naked from my mother’s womb, and I will be naked when I leave. The LORD gave me what I had, and the LORD has taken it away. Praise the name of the LORD!”

SADNESS/DEPRESSION: “Let the day of my birth be erased, and the night I was conceived.” Job 3:3
“Lying in bed, I think, ‘When will it be morning? But the night drags on, and I toss till dawn.’” 7:3
“My life passes more swiftly than a runner. It flees away without a glimpse of happiness.” 9:25

BITTERNESS: “I cannot keep from speaking. I must express my anguish. My bitter soul must complain.” 7:11

BEWILDERING (PAT ANSWER) ADVICE: Job 16:20: My friends scorn me, but I pour out my tears to God. (A + B = C) “Your children must have sinned against him, so their punishment is deserved. But if you pray to God and seek the favor of the Almighty and if you are pure and live with integrity, he will surely rise up and restore your happy home.” 8:4-6.

LONELINESS: Job 19:14: My family is gone, and my close friends have forgotten me.

HONEST QUESTIONING OF GOD: “He has thrown me into the mud. I’m nothing more than dust and ashes. I cry to you, O God, but you don’t answer. I stand before you, but you don’t even look. You have become cruel to me. You use your power to persecute me. You throw me into the whirlwind and destroy me in the storm.” 30:19-22

THE WHIRLWIND OF SOVEREIGNTY: “Are you as strong as God? Can you thunder with a voice like his?” 40:9

HUMBLE ACCEPTANCE: “I know that you can do anything, and no one can stop you.” 42:1

SEEING GOD: “I had only heard about you before, but now I have seen you with my own eyes.” 42:5

VINDICATION: “I am angry at you and your two friends, for you have not spoken accurately about me, as my servant Job has.” 42:7

FORGIVENESS/LACK OF BITTERNESS: “When Job prayed for his friends, the Lord restored his fortunes.” 42:10

FEASTING: “Then all his brothers, sisters, and former friends came and feasted with him in his home.” 42:11 (Remember, God will also allow feasting in the midst of relational strife: Psalm 23:5: “You prepare a feast for me in the presence of my enemies.”)

RESTORATION: “So the Lord blessed Job in the second half of his life even more than in the beginning.” 42:12

SURRENDER AND PRAYER

Where am I in the story arc of grief?

What do I need to surrender today?

What am I holding onto?

PRAYER

Psalm 116: 1-2

I love the LORD because he hears my voice
and my prayer for mercy.
Because he bends down to listen,
I will pray as long as I have breath!

Psalm 84: 4-8

What joy for those who can live in your house,
always singing your praises. What joy for those whose strength comes from the LORD,
who have set their minds on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.
When they walk through the Valley of Weeping,
it will become a place of refreshing springs.
The autumn rains will clothe it with blessings.
They will continue to grow stronger,
and each of them will appear before God in Jerusalem.

O LORD God of Heaven's Armies, hear my prayer.
Listen, O God of Jacob. Interlude

Message Three: THE RELEASE

Let's look at the life of Jesus, a life of release, surrender.

- Mocked
- Abandoned
- Exploited
- Betrayed
- Misunderstood
- Maligned
- Imprisoned
- Forgotten

1. FILLED. Luke 4:1 1: Then Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan River. He was led by the Spirit in the wilderness . . .
2. FORWARD THINKING. Hebrews 12:2: We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne.
3. FRUITFUL. John 15:4-5 Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me. "Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.
4. FORGIVING. Luke 23:34 Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing."
5. FIDELITY TO GOD'S WAYS. John 5:19: So Jesus explained, "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself. He does only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does.
6. FAITHFUL. John 6:38 For I have come down from heaven to do the will of God who sent me, not to do my own will.
7. FEARED GOD. Luke 22:42 "Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine."
8. FRIENDLY. Titus 3:4-5 When God our Savior revealed his kindness and love, he saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit.

We can be all these things even after relational pain because He is all these things, and He will give us these abilities. We can move on. We can let go of the pain. But it's even more than that.

10 TAKEAWAYS:

1. Be welcoming of weakness. (You are not alone). Hebrews 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. This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. 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.
2. Be willing to grow and heal. We can experience PTG: Post Traumatic Growth TRUTH: BROKEN PEOPLE MAKE BROKEN CHOICES, but healed people make healthy choices. (Do you want to get well?)
3. Be defiant! The best revenge is a joyful life.
4. Be content with today's lot. "Let's be patient and trust that the treasure we look for is hidden in the ground on which we stand." Henri Nouwen
5. Be a storyceiver (story receiver). Let your trauma make you empathetic. Pic of nancy/glenda
6. Be WITH. Find safe community (what wounds is what heals). A bird alone tires easily. A flock empowers.
7. Be in love. Passionately love Jesus.
8. Be forgiving. Let go of bitterness and unforgiveness. "What could you do with the space left behind by letting go of your anger and bitterness?"
9. Be expectant. Let God be creative. Let Him complete the story in His way. God does what you least expect. He does NEW things. Instead of trying to orchestrate your own way, let God do what He wants. (Mary looking at Jesus on the cross).
10. Be reconciled with yourself. Make peace with yourself. Maybe the relationship you need to work on is your relationship with yourself.

STORY: VISITING ALKI

My weird dream: pushing the minivan to the airport. We can be so intent on staying in our old patterns that we can't see the obvious way through. Get a cab; stop pushing the car.

SHOW: Drive it like you stole it

Reframe: Drive it like He's graced it.

