

“Finding Hope in Pain”

Gina Nicola, lmft, September 17-18, 2016

INTRODUCTION

Real hope is not wishful thinking, real hope is found in the truth of God’s Word. Last week we began a series called “Anchored: We Have This Hope” and we looked at the hope we have for our future. This week we ask how a Christian finds hope in the midst of grief, pain and loss.

Ice Breaker (Optional):

How do you typically handle pain? (hide it, express it, deny it, mask it)

Study Questions (45 MIN)

Confidence that Jesus understands our despair

Q1. Read John 11:1-43; Hebrews 4:15

When we lose a loved one and begin to mourn, we may experience a wide array of emotions. In chapter 11 of John, we see Jesus experiencing the death of his friend. Even though he was able to raise Lazarus from the dead, what were Jesus’ reactions described in verses 33, 35 and 38? The stages of grief commonly include denial/shock, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. Which of these do you find in this passage? If you have personally experienced grief, which of these would you say characterizes the most difficult or most prolonged period of your grieving? Hebrews 4:15 tells us that Jesus (our high priest) is able to sympathize with us in our weakness. How did you experience His sympathy and comfort in your time of grieving?

God promises that healing will come

Q2. Read Mark 5:1-18; Psalm 147:3; 2 Corinthians 12:9; 2 Corinthians 1:3; Revelation 21:4

In His encounter with the man in the tombs (Mark 5) Jesus delivered the man from the pain of oppression and restored him to “his right mind.” What do you think of as common sources of pain in our lives? For those of us suffering the emotional pain of a broken heart, what does God promise in Psalm 147:3? God is able to, and may, heal us of physical illness and disease, but if He does not heal our body, what are we promised will sustain us in 2 Corinthians 12:9? Pray for the members of your group, that “the God of all comfort” will bring healing to their pain, whatever the source.

Believing God has the victory in our suffering

Q3. Read Jeremiah 32:27; Psalm 34:18-19; Matthew 5:3-12; Psalm 144:2

Even in our times of suffering God holds the key to victory. How does Jeremiah 32:27 assure us of this? If you find your spirit crushed or if you are suffering afflictions of any kind, what are you promised in Psalm 34:18-19?

In Matthew Chapter 5, Jesus addresses the crowds in what is known as the Beatitudes. Here we see a series of promises that give hope to those who need hope. Are there any of these promises that you feel applies specifically to you? No matter what our needs, God is the answer. How does David describe the Lord in Psalm 144:2? Which of these roles gives you the greatest comfort or confidence as you face the pains in life?

Wrap-Up

In times of grief or pain or loss we can become hopeless. But God, not our circumstances, is the source of our hope. We are confident that Jesus understands our despair, because he experienced the same sorrows and pain when He walked the earth. We know that He promises healing in all of our pain, and power to sustain us through it. And we believe that there is victory in our suffering because all things are possible with God. He holds the key to our victory and is our hope even in our times of pain.

Memory Verse

He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

Psalm 147:3 ESV

Prayer (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: _____

Pray for your group members’ needs: _____

Challenge: Pray that God will touch any area of pain in your life and bring you victory and hope.

