

Repurposing Our Pain

Philippians 3:7-11 NKJV

“But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; **that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.**”

I. This World is filled with Suffering and Pain

Recent Illustration:

- [Jack Murphy](#), age 22, former student of Park Street School here in Boston Died a little over a week ago from a lightning strike while with a training team for wilderness survival in Wyoming
- Sudden unexpected and painful events like the death of our beloved pastor, [Roberto Miranda](#), and Jack, leave us with many questions and undefined answers.

II. God is Not the Source of All Pain

1. Unwise choices in life can bring pain.
2. The choices of others have a direct bearing on our lives.
3. Pain is often the consequence of sin: we live in a fallen world with a real enemy who wars against the Kingdom of God and His people- this very morning, our brothers and sisters in many countries of the world are imprisoned and laying down their lives for the Gospel.

III. We live in an Age, especially here in America, where people are determined to avoid pain, but with the avoidance of pain, comes a lack of true learning. People remain locked into ignorance.

We live in an Opiate Crisis because in this scientific age people have decided that “Pain and Suffering” should not be allowed in this society.

When people live, “Out of their minds,” with drugs or other inebriating substances they do not learn. They trade their pain for something that masks, their pain is never healed, they are unable to learn and grow from their pain.

Never in the history of humanity has 2 Timothy 3:7 NIV been more true. "Always learning, but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth."

Significant people throughout history have discovered the value of painful experiences in their personal lives.

- **Malcolm Muggeridge**, Contrary to what might be expected, I look back on experiences that at the time seemed especially desolating and painful with particular satisfaction. Indeed, I can say with complete truthfulness that everything I have learned in my 75 years in this world, everything that has truly enhanced and enlightened my experience, has been through affliction and not through happiness.
- **Stephen Hawking** was an astrophysicist at Cambridge University and was perhaps one of the most intelligent men on earth. He advanced the general theory of relativity farther than any person since Albert Einstein. Unfortunately, Hawking was afflicted with ALS Syndrome (Lou Gehrig's disease). It eventually took his life. He was confined to a wheelchair for years, where he could do little more than sit and think. Hawking lost the ability even to speak, and communicated by means of a computer that operated from the tiniest movement of his fingertips.

Quoting from an Omni magazine article: "He is too weak to write, feed himself, comb his hair, fix his glasses--all this must be done for him. Yet this most dependent of all men has escaped invalid status. His personality shines through the messy details of his existence."

Hawking said that before he became ill, he had very little interest in life. He called it a "pointless existence" resulting in sheer boredom. He drank too much and did very little work. Then he learned that he had ALS Syndrome and was not expected to live more than two years. The ultimate effect of that diagnosis, beyond its initial shock, was extremely positive. He claimed to have been happier after he was afflicted than before. How can that be understood?

Hawking provided the answer.

"When one's expectations are reduced to zero," he said, "one really appreciates everything that one does have." Stated another way: contentment in life is determined in part by what a person anticipates from it. To a man like Hawking who thought he would soon die quickly, everything takes on meaning--a sunrise or a walk in a park or the laughter of children. Suddenly, each small pleasure becomes precious.

- [Victor and Mildred Goertzel](#) published a revealing study of 413 "famous and exceptionally gifted people" called Cradles of Eminence. They spent years attempting to understand what produced such greatness, what common thread might run through all of these outstanding people's lives. Surprisingly, the most outstanding fact was that virtually all of them, 392, had to overcome very difficult obstacles in order to become who they were.

IV. One of the primary purposes of pain is to instruct us and increase our understanding.

Understanding is intended to produce godly wisdom.

Pain is intended to train.

A loving parent says to their toddler reaching out to, say a toaster, "No, Don't touch, Hot." With wisdom and with regard to preventing serious injury, the parent warns again, "No, Don't touch, Hot." But if the child persists, the good parent safely permits the child to touch the "Hot" item and gain the understanding of what "Hot" means.

Proverbs 24:3 NIV Wisdom Builds her House

By wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established.

Job 28:28 NIV

"The fear of the Lord— that is wisdom, and to shun evil is understanding.

V. How Do We Deal with Pain and What Should be Our Responses to Pain?

- 1. Let pain drive us into the loving arms of Jesus. He identifies with our pain and come to know His heart in a way we never have before.**

Hebrews 4:14-15 New Living Translation

"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.

David learned to press into God in the midst of his distress.

Psalms 61:1-2: NIV

Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer.

From the ends of the earth I call to You,
 I call as my heart grows faint and overwhelmed
 Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

2. If We Have Sinned, Let Godly Sorrow and Repentance Do Their Purifying Work of Restoration to the Heart of God.

Psalm 51: 1- 13 and verses 16 & 17 NIV, David's Prayer

1 Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness; According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin. 3 For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin *is* always before me. 4 Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done *this* evil in Your sight—That You may be found just when You speak, *And* blameless when You judge. 5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me. 6 Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, And in the hidden *part* You will make me to know wisdom. 7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. 8 Make me hear joy and gladness, *That* the bones You have broken may rejoice. 9 Hide Your face from my sins, And blot out all my iniquities. 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. 11 Do not cast me away from Your presence, And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. 12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me *by* Your generous Spirit. 13 *Then* I will teach transgressors Your ways, And sinners shall be converted to You.

Verses 16 & 17

16, You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. 17 My sacrifice, O God, is[Ⓜ] a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise.

After Repentance and Forgiveness come Blessings.

In Job Chapter 42, Job made a burnt offering for his friends and prayed for them as God commanded Him to do. Job's fortunes were restored when he prayed for his friends. Job's prayer of forgiveness released blessings!

Job 42:12 "The Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning."

Even greater than the blessings, was that Job came to really know God!

Job 42: 3-5 NLT Then Job replied to the LORD...

3, You asked, 'Who is this that questions my wisdom with such ignorance?' It is I—and I was talking about things I knew nothing about, things far too wonderful for me. 4, You said, 'Listen and I will speak! I have some questions for you, and you must answer them.' 5, I had only heard about you before, but now I have seen you with my own eyes.

Job 19:25 NIV

I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end He will stand on the earth.

3. Allow God's Redemptive Love to Fulfill His Divine Purpose in the Midst of Our Pain.

God turns what was meant for evil into good for His redemptive purposes.

Romans 8:28: NIV

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose."

Life of Joseph: sold as a slave by his own brothers into Egypt, yet God fulfilled His divine plan, not only for the people of Egypt, the Israelite immigrants living there, but Joseph's own family was reconciled.

Genesis 50:20 NIV (Joseph's words to his brothers)

"You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives."

Jesus, our Redeemer, Set His Face like a Flint to Fulfil His Divine Destiny

Isaiah 1:7, “For the Lord GOD will help Me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.”

The Apostle Luke referred back to this scripture in **Luke 9:51 KJV**

“When the time was come that He should be received up, Jesus steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem.”

Jesus, our Redeemer, even from eternity past, resolved to save His people. Nothing could keep Him from the accomplishment of His purpose.

Hebrews 12:2 NIV

“Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer (author) and perfecter of faith. **For the joy set before Him**, He endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Galatians 2:20 NIV (Paul the Apostle)

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, **who loved me and gave Himself for me.**”

Our Relationship with Jesus can only be cultivated through passionate love for Him, rooted in gaining His wisdom, which is true understanding.

Lessons of pain in our lives are intended to instruct us and help us gain the godly understanding which produces wisdom and the resurrection power of Jesus in our lives.

- A man found a cocoon of the emperor moth and took it home to watch it emerge. One day a small opening appeared, and for several hours the moth struggled but couldn't seem to force its body past a certain point. Deciding something was wrong, the man took scissors and snipped the remaining bit of cocoon. The moth emerged easily, its body large and swollen, the wings small and shriveled. The man expected that in a few hours the wings would spread out in their natural beauty, but they did not. Instead of developing into a creature free to fly, the moth spent its life dragging around a swollen body and shriveled wings. The constricting cocoon and the struggle necessary to pass through the tiny opening are God's way of forcing fluid from the body into the wings. The "merciful" snip was, in reality, cruel. **Sometimes the struggle is exactly what we need.**

- On a wall in his bedroom [Charles Spurgeon](#) had a plaque with Isaiah 48:10 on it: "I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction." "It is no mean thing to be chosen of God," he wrote. "God's choice makes chosen men choice men...We are chosen, not in the palace, but in the furnace. In the furnace, beauty is marred, fashion is destroyed, strength is melted, glory is consumed; yet here eternal love reveals its secrets, and declares its choice."

Press into God in the middle of the pain.

Trust God that, 1 Corinthians 10:13(NIV) is true for you.

"No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it."