

Sermon - Despair

Feb 15, 2020

Intro

Story about riding motorcycle into manure pile!

Point = before I knew what happened it was all over me....got into every place/stunk/hard to get rid off/messy/overwhelming to senses!

I want to share tonight about DESPAIR and the anchors that God gives us to avoid being sucked into it's vortex

PICTURE of TORNADO - explain

***NOT clinical depression or anxiety...despair can range from deep disappointment to feelings of utter hopelessness)

How I navigate life should look different, sound different....when people get close enough....it should even smell different (manure!)....it is not that as a child of God, life doesn't happen to us....but when life does happen to us....and it will...we get to respond differently, behave differently and come through it differently!!! So it has been this season of heaviness, that God has been ministering to me about the anchors in His Word that allow me to walk victoriously through despair!

13. I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

14. Wait for the Lord: Be strong and let your heart take courage; Yes, wait for the Lord.
Ps. 27:13-14

Unpack these questions together:

What are you believing?

What you are you seeing?

How are you waiting?

1. What are you believing?

- worship time....singing "I am expecting the glory of the Lord. I am expecting a move of God"

God asked me "Do you believe I can move in this situation? Do you really believe that I will show up? Do you really believe that I will win? Me - NO!

God: "Are you going to believe me or not? How would things be different if you truly believed me?

How would your thoughts change?

How would your words change?

How would your peace change?
How would your joy change?
How would your feelings change?

God: This is not a complicated concept Vanessa - you have to believe me!

EX: what it looks like when I believe someone

NEVER ONCE do I think about it again,
never once do I worry about it...why?
Why...Because he has never forgotten!
Why...because he keeps his word!
Why...because he understands what is at stake!
Why...because he wants her safe and taken care of!
Why...because he loves her as much as I do!
Why...because he is fully invested in the responsibility of parenting her!
Why...because I BELIEVE HE IS GOING TO DO WHAT HE SAID. PERIOD.

PREACH: God began ministering to my heart....Do I believe God is truly able, that He sees the beginning and the end, that He stands outside of time, that He has had a dream in His heart for the people involved in this situation, that He loves each of us intimately, that He truly understands the impact of what is happening. Do I believe that He will keep His promises....not just to me....but to all of the people affected in a situation! Do I believe that God is as invested in the outcome as I am?

If I believe this.....and I DO....than it instructs how I behave, how I act, how I think, it instructs my joy, my peace; I don't need to obsess over situations, constantly revisit what I want the outcome to be. When I believe I can give my focus to other things!

When I truly BELIEVE God, I only have to do my part and I can BELIEVE that God is doing His! (He doesn't forget the pick up time!)

Belief is mission critical!! The word "believe" is used 148 times in NT

Mark 16:16-17

16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

17 And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues;

18 they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well."

Believing accesses the power of God!! Unleashes the supernatural.

True believing is accompanied by signs and wonders...by living differently than the rest of the world that doesn't believe! And this is how the world will truly SEE Jesus!

What are you believing?

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...the next anchor....

2. What are you seeing?

How many know that seeing is different than looking?

Looking = directing your eyes in a particular direction

Seeing = involves becoming aware of someone/something by using your eyes to look but engaging your brain to turn those images into something you recognize!

Did you know that the brain processes 400 Billion bits of information every second but we are only aware of 2000; we LOOK at endless amounts of images and data in a day but our brains know how to only SEE a certain few comparatively

Story:

Seeing is more difficult than we realize - I am taking a drawing class at the Peninsula Fine Arts Center with Claire that is teaching me how challenging this can be!

In this introduction to drawing class, we were taught about the value of negative space in a picture, how it can be just as important as the positive space when you are drawing an image; we were given the task of drawing an image by only sketching the negative space around it rather than sketching the positive space....it was very hard for me to SEE the negative space as my brain has been conditioned to only ever focusing on the positive space

So it is when it comes to seeing what God is doing in a situation....

What are you seeing?

Viewing things through God's truth changes WHAT I see. God does things differently, His values are different, His purposes are different than ours

Is 55: 8-9

8 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD.

9 “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

2 Cor. 4:18

So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

we live in a world where seeing is believing
we are not allowed to prescribe to God the plan we want to see!

READ: When navigating despair, I believe that once we BELIEVE (anchor #1), we are able to position our hearts to begin SEEING (anchor #2) what God is doing....even when we don't see what we want to see; then I plant myself in His goodness (goodness of God detective)

Ex. 34: 6 compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in loving kindness and truth

Ps. 145:9 the Lord is good, His mercies are over all His works

1 Chron. 16:34 His lovingkindness is everlasting (never runs out!)

Ps. 25:8 good and upright

Mark 10:18 no one is actually good except God

James 1:17 every good thing is from God; He never shifts or changes

Mt. 7:11 God is the master giver of good gifts

Ps. 107:8-9 He performs wonders, satisfies the thirsty soul, fills us with good

A “goodness of God detective” begins to learn how to spot God's goodness in all forms, wherever it shows up, no matter how big or small

Lysa Terkeurst, “It's Not Supposed To Be This Way”

“Some will live their whole lives missing the chance to see all the good God has placed around them just for them. Partly because the hard stuff has demanded so much of their attention. And the seeming permanence of some of the heartbreak has stolen their affection for life.” (p.xiv intro)

My dear friend Laurie Ruggerio were talking about this, in reference to her journey with breast cancer...I asked her how she anchored herself in seeing the goodness of God when the days were long and hard, diagnosis unknown....she shared with me (I have her permission to share tonight) that having a gratitude journal was a very tangible and practical way for her to SEE God's goodness in the typical or mundane, to focus her heart on looking at the what was good

- she loves snow....and it would snow on the day she had to go to chemo....a sign for her

- she would see deer in her yard that spoke to her of God's provision and peace

- the bird on the bird feeder

- Family interactions

What are you seeing?

...I had never really paid attention to v. 14 before...

3. How are you waiting?

Psalms 27:13-14 (NAS)

13 I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

14 Wait for the Lord; Be strong and let your heart take courage; Yes, wait for the Lord!

How I wait matters!

This verse tells us how to wait...in strength (not as a victim, disappointment turn into disillusionment, harden your heart, get mean, get angry) and letting our hearts take courage

Letting....implies I have a choice, a part to play in the waiting, not a passive waiting but an active waiting!

There is strength to be gained in the waiting!

Courage =

- the ability to do something that frightens one.
- strength in the face of pain or grief.

Is. 40:31

Yet those who wait for the Lord will gain strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.

How do you gain strength in the natural? practicing, repetition, by pushing myself beyond what I have done before or beyond what is comfortable, discipline, determination, showing up again!

This is when transformation happens in us! This is when God really does the work of changing us! (Lysa Terkeurst)

My affections - my heart, what I love

My adoration - my mouth, what I worship

My attention - my mind, what I focus on

My Attraction - my eyes, what I desire

My Ambition - my calling, what I spend my time seeking

My Action - my choices, how I stand firm

James 1:2-4

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

Closing:

What are you believing?

What are you seeing?

How are you waiting?