



Pastor Flint and I have been doing this series on the Beatitudes of Jesus with a parallel to the Celebrate Recovery series on Healing Choices. We have discovered through God's Word the pathway to spiritual, emotional and relational healing. Our hope as pastors is that we may all find this community of believers called First Baptist a place to find solace, refuge, and healing for the journey of faith. May we realize that we are sojourners together seeking healing from life's pain. The hope is two fold: we have a choice and we have a Savior who heals!

Today we will conclude this series by looking at the value of sharing our story of pain with others and how God uses us to bring healing to others.

[We are indebted to Pastors Rick Warren and John Baker for the many insights in this sermon.]

*“Happy are those  
who are persecuted  
because they do  
what God requires.”*  
Matthew 5:10 TEV

This last beatitude of Jesus is exhorting us to know we are blessed or favored when we are persecuted for the sake of righteousness as we live in God's Kingdom. It is a strange paradox to think of suffering or persecution as a blessing when we are right in the middle of going through it! As with all the beatitudes....the message is clear..... through a single minded desire for God and his will that obedience always has the outcome of blessing (happiness) and favor from God.

# Recycling Pain – The Sharing Choice

*I Yield Myself to God to be Used by God to Bring this Good News to Others, both by my Example and by my Words.*

God wants to use your experiences to help other people. God never wastes a hurt. God never waste any suffering or persecution. Everyone here today has a story to share about some kind of hurt, pain, or suffering in their life. Some of you may have told your story in order to help encourage other people and witness about God in your life. Have you heard of the story of Ashley Smith, the former drug addict who became famous by using Rick Warren's words to keep a killer at bay? She now devotes her life to saving others. (Read from the magazine)

# Why God Allows Pain in Your Life

Whether we are Christian believers or not, we tend to ask the question....why God allows pain in our life? It is human nature, isn't it?

# 1. God has given you free will.

You are free to choose right or wrong, but you are not free from the consequences of your choices. God gave you free will because he wants you to love him, and love has to be voluntary. The downside of having free will is that we can make bad choices which result in pain and suffering.

## 2. God uses pain to get your attention.

*Sometimes it takes a painful experience to make us change our ways.*

Proverbs 20:30 TEV

It's not until you get to the end of yourself that you get to the beginning of God.

Pain **reveals** something. Depression, anxiety or fear isn't the real problem. Those are symptoms of something deeper...a void, a vacuum in our hearts. We need Jesus Christ to fill every void. "God whispers to us in our pleasures, but shouts to us in our pain." C.S. Lewis

### 3. God uses pain to teach you to depend on him.

*We were really crushed and overwhelmed ... and saw how powerless we were to help ourselves; but that was good, for then we put everything into the hands of God, who alone could save us. 2 Corinthians 1:8,9 LB*

You don't know God is all you need until God is all you've got.

*My suffering was  
good for me, for it  
taught me to pay  
attention to your  
decrees.*

Psalm 119:71 NLT

## 4. God uses pain to give you a ministry to others.

*[God] comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us. 2 Corinthians 1:4 NLT*

This is one of my favorite verses! I realized the truth and power of this verse early in life when I went through pain and suffering of my parents divorce, the death of a spouse, and the tragic death of my father. Isn't it great that God can use our personal story to minister to others?! The apostle Paul shares with the Corinthian church in 2 Corinthians 1:4. Share your story of how God comforted you in a time of suffering!

***Always be prepared to give  
an answer to everyone who  
asks you to give the reason  
for the hope that you have.  
But do this with gentleness  
and respect.***

**1 Peter 3:15 NIV**

*If [someone] is overcome by some sin ... humbly help him back onto the right path, remembering that next time it might be ... you who is in the wrong. Share each other's troubles and problems, and so obey our Lord's command.*  
Galatians 6:1,2 LB

Think about it this way. Think of all the experiences that you've had in your life, whether positive or negative. Then ask yourself, "What did I learn from that experience? How did God help me make it through that tough time? Then ask yourself, "Who could best benefit from hearing my story?"

*“Happy are those who are persecuted because they do what God requires.”*

**Matthew 5:10 TEV**

Be prepared that sometimes sharing your story to help someone will be challenging and obeying God might end in persecution. Rick Warren shares a story like that when he felt God leading him to intervene in a situation that was necessary. He was persecuted by one of the parties involved for doing what was right in God's eyes.

# Three Suggestions for Sharing Your Story

# 1. Be humble.

Not bragging.

Help each other through our weaknesses and struggles.

## 2. Be real.

Involves honesty and modeling. Share your story.  
This gives hope to others and brings healing to you.  
This helps you get stronger.

## 3. Don't lecture.

*Life is worth nothing to me unless I use it for finishing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus Christ – the work of telling others the Good News about the wonderful grace of God. Acts 20:24 NLT*

Just witness and tell your story.

There is no greater accomplishment in life than helping somebody else find the assurance of eternal life. So share your story with someone who doesn't know Jesus.

Move beyond pain to growth. Serve others through your pain.

*I Yield Myself to God  
to be Used by God to  
Bring this Good  
News to Others, both  
by my Example and  
by my Words.*

Is God using you to minister to others? God never waste our pain! Our pain can have new meaning as we find healing and share the Good News of God's power and hope with others.

In the days following Easter, we will begin small groups of Celebrate Recovery. Think about committing to the journey of healing through a small group with others.

May we have a few moments of meditation and I will close in prayer.