**Why, God? – Part Two**

***Pastor Michael Ngui***

How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever?

How long will you hide your face from me?

How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and day after day have sorrow in my heart?

How long will my enemy triumph over me?

Look on me and answer, Lord my God.

Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death,

and my enemy will say, “I have overcome him,”

and my foes will rejoice when I fall.

But I trust in your unfailing love;

my heart rejoices in your salvation.

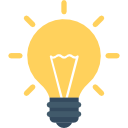
I will sing the Lord’s praise,

for he has been good to me.

(Psalm 13)

# Introduction

Pain is real and exist in humanity. There are some disturbing realties we have to deal with while living in this world, such as people having relational problems, marriages falling apart, and children suffering from broken marriages where their father and mother can no longer live with each other or love each other. People suffer pain when tragedies come unannounced, such as the loss of a loved one. Financial pressures come, tearing families apart, and men break under the stress of needing to provide.



BIG IDEA:

God is not absent in our pain and suffering

What can we do when pain and suffering is present, and God seems not?

When pain is present...

# Image result for sadAcknowledge the pain

How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever?

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How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and day after day have sorrow in my heart?

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(Psalm 13:1-2)

David could not pretend that he was not suffering. He acknowledged the pain and brought forth his questions. David was honest about how he felt before the Lord. He was too distressed to pray cliché prayers, too broken to pretend that everything was fine when it was not.

The apparent silence and absence of God is painful. Most of us have been through it before, when God seems far away, and our prayers seem to bounce off from the ceiling.

Here is an excerpt from the book, A Grief Observed, by C. S. Lewis, which describes how it feels like to suffer pain and God seems absent.

*“…where is God? This is one of the most disquieting symptoms. When you are happy, so happy that you have no sense of needing Him, if you turn to Him then with praise, you will be welcomed with open arms. But go to Him when your need is desperate, when all other help is vain and what do you find? A door slammed in your face, and a sound of bolting and double bolting on the inside. After that, silence. You may as well turn away.”*



Pain is real, and pain has a function. Physical pain tells you that something is wrong, that there is something wrong somewhere, so you can address the problem and tend to it. Emotional pain, the pain of the heart, is a signal that something is wrong or missing, due to a broken relationship or the death of a loved one.

Pain calls for attention that is crucial to health and healing. Guilt drives us to right what is wrong, loneliness drives us to seek genuine relational connections, emptiness and meaninglessness drives us to seek meaning in life, spiritual hunger drives us to seek God, inadequacy and lack drives us to the One who makes us whole.

# Pray your pain honestly

How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever?

How long will you hide your face from me?

How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and day after day have sorrow in my heart?

How long will my enemy triumph over me?

Look on me and answer, Lord my God.

Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death,

and my enemy will say, “I have overcome him,”

and my foes will rejoice when I fall.

(Psalm 13:1-4)

Four times the psalmist cries out, “How long?”

Humanity comes through in the Psalms, a place where you can find real people with real emotions.

David offers an honest conversation to God through this psalm, and in this way, he drew closer to God. God is not turned away by our honest prayers.

Moses returned to the Lord and said, “Why, Lord, why have you brought trouble on this people? Is this why you sent me? Ever since I went to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has brought trouble on this people, and you have not rescued your people at all.” (Exodus 5:22-23)

Moses was honest with God about how he felt, he was honest about his frustration.

Our honest-to-God prayers are needful for our health and healing. God sees order in our disorder, He already knows our pain even before we tell Him. We will unload a lot less on the people around us, when we unload them to God. Our faith is restored when we bring our honest doubts and questions to God.

When we share our ‘naked wounds’ with God, we grow in intimacy with Him. In a relationship, there can be no intimacy until you open up your hearts to each other, both the pleasant and unpleasant parts.

Intimacy with God comes by opening up our hearts to Him. When we come before God in prayer, He will grant us peace. Pray your pain honestly.

# Carry each other’s burden of pain

Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. (Galatians 6:2)

Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. (Romans 12:15)

We as a church are called to carry each other’s burdens, to share in each other’s joy and pain. Church is not just a mere gathering of people to sings some songs and listen to a message. Church is a community where people share life together, to share the ups and downs of life. There are no lone ranger Christians.

By carrying each other’s burdens, we bring healing to each other. We are called to show love to each other. For those who need love and feels as if God does not love them, we need to show them by our love that God’s love is real. God makes His presence known through His agents, which is us. That is why it is important for us to show love to one another. Love is never more needed than when people are suffering and in pain.

Here are some practical pointers for ministering to people who are suffering:

**Do:**

* Acknowledge the loss.
* Give the mourner permission to grieve and express emotion.
* Free the grieving person to talk about the loss.
* Offer practical forms of help.
* Follow up for an extended period.

**Don’t:**

* Make careless statements.
* Attempt to answer the “why” questions.
* Tell them to “get over it”.
* Be shocked by off-the-wall statements by the mourner.

# Trust and hope in God

But I trust in your unfailing love;

my heart rejoices in your salvation.

I will sing the Lord’s praise,

for he has been good to me.

(Psalm 13:5-6)

In the last part of the psalm, the psalmist turns his eyes and focused on God. We are to live on the promises of God, and to believe that these promises are unchanging, as He is.

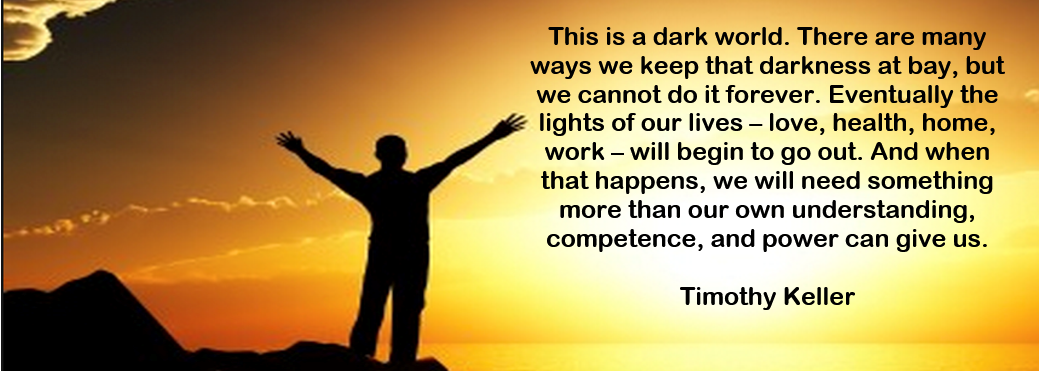
Our trust in God presently must be rooted in the ‘past’, our past of experiencing God’s goodness for ourselves, and our salvation past. We need to trust that the God who sent His beloved Son to die for us, and thus proving His eternal love for us, will never leave us or forsake us or let us down.

Our present hope in God must be rooted in the future. The disciples had to live through Holy Saturday, which was the day between Good Friday and Resurrection Sunday. They did not know that Jesus was going to be resurrected on Sunday. The time between Jesus’ death and resurrection was one of the darkest times for the disciples. They were broken and in despair. Many of us are living in this time as well, going through the Holy Saturday of our lives.

There is a need for eternal focus, because when we lift our eyes up, it makes present troubles less definitive.

Conclusion:

Do not hide your pain. Pain is like a blaring neon sign that tells that something is not right, and that we need God. Pain drives us closer to God, the only One who can meet all our needs and heal all our pain. God wants us to be real and honest with Him about how we feel. When we see others who are suffering, we need to remember the love and comfort God has given us, and reach out to them with that same love and comfort. Put your trust and hope in the Lord, the One who loves you, who will never fail you or let you down.



Sermon summary contributed by Anthea.