

(Supplement teaching to WK1 Lesson 4 and WK 4 Inner Healing Care)

From - *Healing the Wounds of Trauma - Grieving*

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The Story of Pastor Ndri

In the district of Bingola, there had been much fighting. Many people had been killed, women and children as well as the men in the fighting. Ndri was pastor of a large church in the town. As the situation got worse, many of his church members were killed and those remaining were in hiding.

Finally Pastor Ndri left with a group of 100 people to walk to the next country for safety. On the way, Pastor Ndri's wife fell sick, and because there was no medicine, she died. Because of the danger, they buried her quickly and continued the journey. As they walked more people became sick and died.

Eventually they found a place to stay in a large church. After a few weeks other members joined them. They still came to Pastor Ndri for help and every day met to read the word and pray together.

Ndri soon became concerned about the state of some of the believers. Some who had lost family members were very sad and wouldn't try to find work or even help find food. They had lost interest in life. One man kept saying, "if only I had taken medicine with me, my wife would be alive." A woman who lost her husband said she could hear him speaking to her. Another woman, said her son had not died, even though she had seen his dead body. She kept expecting him to arrive.

Often Ndri himself had really bad nightmares and woke up crying out for his wife. He was also angry inside, though he knew he shouldn't show this. He was angry with God, and even with his wife for dying and leaving him. He was also very angry with the rebels who had caused the war. Because he didn't show his anger openly, it was burning inside him and giving him bad headaches and stomach aches.

What is Grieving?

Grieving is mourning the loss of something. This might be the loss of a family member or friend, a body part or the function of a body part, a property or position. Whether small or enormous, all losses affect us and make us experience some degree of grieving.

When people lose someone or something very important to them, they may lose a sense of who they are. This is particularly true when a spouse dies, or when someone loses part of their body or sight. Through the grieving process a person's sense of who they are changes and adjusts to a new way of life. This takes time.

Because Adam and Eve sinned, death came into the world, and grieving is part of the normal process of recovering from loss. Only in heaven will there be no more crying (Rev 21:4). Because Christians have the hope of heaven, when they grieve they do not despair. (1 Thes 4:13) They are sad but not afraid.

How Can we Grieve in a Way that Brings Healing?

Death was never part of God's plan for us. It was never His intention that we would experience death. Death is part of sin. It is the penalty of disobedience in the world. But Jesus Christ has taken the sting of death on Himself. Those who have believed in Jesus will no longer die but live. However, for those of us who feel the impact of death, through the loss of a loved one, the impact is deep on our soul and in our spirit. It causes us to grieve deeply. Grieving takes time and energy. It's like a journey through several villages:

1. **Village of Denial and Anger:** After a loss, people are often numb, not completely aware of what is going on around them. They can't believe the person has died, or that the event actually happened. At other moments they may suddenly start to cry or erupt in anger. They may be angry with God, or with the person who has died, for leaving them alone. They may have many questions such as "if only I had done this or that he wouldn't have died" or "why did this happen to me." They may try to find someone to blame for the death, and try to take revenge. This often results in conflict and broken relationships which increase the pain.

Sometimes people refuse to believe that the person is really dead. They think the person is still there. They dream of seeing or hearing the dead person. Their subconscious may believe their loved one is coming back, that they have simply left on a long journey, but will return. This happens all around the world and is not necessarily connected with evil spirits. This stage may last for a month or longer after the loss.

2. **Village of No Hope:** When people get into this village they often feel sad and hopeless. They might find it hard to organize their lives. They still continue to long for the dead person to come back. They may feel very lonely and neglected and may want to kill themselves. It is possible they may feel guilty – as though it were their fault the person died – even when there is no reason for it. Often people stay in this village for 6-15 months.
3. **The Village of New Beginnings:** People who have accepted and grieved their loss can move to Village 3. At this point they begin to think about making a new life for themselves. They are ready to go out with their friends, live again. Those who have lost their spouse begin to think about other marriage. If they lost a child they may want to have a new baby. But people are changed by the loss; they will not be the same as before. If they have grieved well, they will be stronger people to help others.

It is normal for people to revisit previous villages for a short period of time. Someone who has arrived at Village 2 may re-experience a few days of feeling angry and then leave it behind again. Sometimes, people may start in Village 2 and go back to Village 1 later. Someone may have arrived in Village 3 but move back to the hopelessness of Village 2 in response to an event like an anniversary of a death. This may last for a week or two. All this is normal. Gradually a person moves more and more to the Village of New Beginnings.

What is not good is for someone to stay in Village 1 or 2 for a very long time. For example, a woman who may think she can still see or hear her husband a year after he is dead. A mother of a dead child may keep his clothes ready for him and won't give them away. A man may be unwilling to go to social events two years after his wife has died. These people stay in Village 1 or 2 too long and may need special help to move on.

What Can Make Grieving More Difficult?

Grieving is hard work, but some things can make it even more difficult. These can be things about how the loss happened or beliefs people have about grief.

The False Bridge can prevent people from grieving:

Some Christians think that since they have the Gospel and all the promises of God, it would be wrong to feel angry or sad about loss. Some call this the false bridge, because it appears a straight path from the moment of loss directly to New Beginnings without passing through 1 and 2. This is not biblical and will not bring healing. God made us with the need to grieve our losses. Jesus expressed painful emotions on the cross when He said My God, My God why have you abandoned Me? (Matthew 27:46). He also wept when Lazarus died (John 11:35).

Facing the pain of loss takes courage. We are tempted to avoid it. Sometimes we get busy doing God's work as a way to avoid feeling the pain. This is dangerous because if we do not grieve a loss when it happens, the grief will stay with us. It will not go away and it can cause problems for many years.

People should not hold their tears inside nor should they cry for show. As much as possible they should let their tears flow naturally. Sometimes the sadness comes at unexpected moments even months after the loss.

Tears are a way God has provided for sadness to leave our body. Weeping can be an important part of grieving, for men as well as women. Even Jesus wept over his close friend's death. The Psalmist wept (Psalm 6:6; 39:12, 42:1) as did the prophets (Isaiah 22:4; Jeremiah 9:1). Ecclesiastes says there is a time to weep. God notices tears, they are precious to Him.

The Role of Unseen Ties – Soul Ties:

Many things can hold us spiritually tied, disabling traumas, wrong beliefs, wrong behaviors, wrong relationships. When we realize relationships are not just a physical meeting of two people, we begin to understand that some of our relationships might have affected our lives in a negative way. We may find ourselves tied and damaged, in a place of bondage from which God wants us to be set free.

A way of describing this unseen hold that ties us to relationships is a soul tie. It is a tie in the spirit realm that holds us to the soul. The good news of Jesus is that His death on the cross has brought freedom for those who are spiritually captive to ungodly soul ties, just as He announced at the beginning of His ministry.

Because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captive to open doors for the prisoner, to bring praise for heaviness, joy for mourning. (Luke 4:18).

The realization that the human spirit of a person does not die at physical death is important in recognizing the far reaching effect of these ties, even holding us bound to someone who has died. Jesus makes it clear that physical death is not the end of man's existence (Luke 16:22-23). Understanding this helps us bring healing to some people who may be experiencing unusual distress relating to the death of someone with whom they had a deep relationship. Jesus committed His spirit, to the point of death, to the authority of His Father: "Father into Your hands I commit My Spirit". Luke 23:46

We need to recognize that death is a time of separation from our earthly bodies, but not an annihilation of our spiritual being, and the powers of darkness seek any opportunity to hold us in bondage across the divide of death. When someone has died and it's been particularly difficult for the relative to find godly peace in the grieving process, it can be very healing for them to speak out the releasing or committing of the human spirit of that person to God's authority.

There can be many types of relationships where we have willingly or unwillingly yielded control that has left us spiritually ensnared to the other person. This can be affecting us years later, even when the other person is out of our physical sphere of contact, or has died.

The depth of relationship and intensity of the ungodly tie is dependent on the extent to which we wrongly gave ourselves or were wrongly controlled by the relationship. Various activities can intensify the significance of this control. For example an ungodly surrender of our identity to another person.

Not every soul tie is bad. The deep bond between a husband and wife in a godly marriage is precisely what God intended to provide a safe place to protect and provide for their family. We may not see a soul tie with our eyes but we may be very familiar with the way it feels as it pulls at our lives. Just like the yoke that joins two oxen together it is the bond in the spiritual realm that ties our soul to the soul of another. Because it is established in the spiritual realm it is not limited by time of place.

Through the Lordship of Jesus we can be deeply bonded to other believers whom we have not seen for years and may be living far from us. This would be a godly soul tie. Unfortunately, we can still be deeply affected today by a controlling abusive relationship which happened long ago. It can still have a powerful hold on the way we think and react to situations today. This would be an ungodly soul tie. The good news is that God can always clearly see whatever wrongful yokes exist on the backs of His people. As we acknowledge the truths that He shows us and we choose to receive His authority and covering over our lives and our relationships, the damaging bonds can be broken and a place of freedom can be found. Through Ezekiel God promises:

"Then they will know that I am the Lord, when I have broken the bards of their yoke, and have delivered them from the hand of those who enslaved them" Ezekiel 34:27.



The enemy wants us to believe our pain is God's fault, that He could have prevented it, that He abandoned us at our worst moment and that He is not good. He uses the bonds which tied us to the person we have lost making us believe we will never be free.

Healing is possible when we begin to have confidence and trust in God's power to redeem our story of pain and loss for good. *"You meant it for evil against me, but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day to save many people alive"* (Joseph's testimony; Genesis 50:20.) Joseph released his pain and his family to God and trusted Him though he was abandoned, accused and persecuted. And God turned it for his good and the blessing of many others, including his family.

If we will release the loss and the individual dead or alive, or the circumstance to God, He will deal with our grief and turn it to something beautiful in our lives, which He will use to strengthen us and help others. In the midst of the darkness and pain, we may not see any hope of deliverance or restoration. But GOD. Suddenly, at the end of a long road of mourning, of pain, of rejection, God in His perfect timing will appear to deliver us and set us free – if we will let Him, by trusting and waiting on Him and believing in our darkness that all His ways are perfect.