

A Seminar for the Pressed and Stressed

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Feeling Helpless in Hopeless Circumstances?

Isaiah 61

Scripture: Isaiah 61:1a

Introduction

Jesus' message to his contemporaries was one of hope, forgiveness, restoration and acceptance. His wrath was reserved for those who were religious with no relationship with God, who were legalistic without mercy, and who condemned others for what they themselves were guilty.

People crowded about him because he accepted them, then healed them.

Matthew 4:25 And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and [from] Decapolis, and [from] Jerusalem, and [from] Judaea, and [from] beyond Jordan.

Matthew 9:36 But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

Matthew 12:15 But when Jesus knew [it], he withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all;

Luke 5:15 But so much the more went there a fame abroad of him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities.

I. Good news Jesus proclaimed

Matthew 11:28-30 Come unto me, all [ye] that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke [is] easy, and my burden is light.

Hebrews 4:15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as [we are, yet] without sin.

A. Jesus came to carry your load

1. He came to give humanity rest
 - a. From legalism
 - b. From religiousity
 - c. From guilt
 - d. From habits
 - e. From addictions
 - f. From circumstances
 - g. From environmental factors
2. He came to lighten your load

B. Jesus came to give you freedom

C. God is a God of:

1. Hope
2. Forgiveness
3. Restoration
4. Acceptance

D. God will help with your infirmities

Matthew 8:17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare [our] sicknesses.

Luke 5:15 But so much the more went there a fame abroad of him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities.

Luke 7:21 And in that same hour he cured many of [their] infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many [that were] blind he gave sight.

Luke 8:2 And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils,

Romans 8:26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

II Corinthians 12:9 And he said unto me, {My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.} Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

II. Why we refuse His help

Luke 5:8 When Simon Peter saw [it], he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

Matthew 8:34 And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they besought [him] that he would depart out of their coasts.

A. We think we have to change before we come to him

Hebrews 11:6 But without faith [it is] impossible to please [him]: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and [that] he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

B. We are so damaged we do not think He will want to help

John 6:37 {All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.}

C. Characteristics of God Our Resistant attitudes

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Love | 1. Unlovable |
| 2. Forgiving | 2. Unworthy of Forgiveness |
| 3. Gracious | 3. Works will make God accept me |
| 4. Compassionate | 4. He can't understand how I feel |
| 5. Accepting | 5. I don't even like myself |

III. How Jesus Christ will help you

James 5:16-17 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. 17 Confess [your] faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

I John 1:7, 9 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us [our] sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Psalms 32:1-2, 5 Blessed [is he whose] transgression [is] forgiven, [whose] sin [is] covered. 2 Blessed [is] the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit [there is] no guile. 5 I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.

A. He will deal with the root problem

1. Temporal values

Mark 10:21-22 Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, {One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.} 22 And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.

2. Lust

James 1:15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

3. Resisting God's grace

James 4:6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

I Peter 5:5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all [of you] be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

B. He will deal with the cause of guilt

1. By forgiveness
2. by regeneration

Still Recovering From Broken Relationships?

Isaiah 61

Scripture: Isaiah 61:1b

Introduction

It is characteristic of our society that people have disposable relationships. Marriages and families are ripped apart as men and women try to find fulfillment in a string of broken relationships. Sexual permissiveness and promiscuity are common.

Jesus came into such a world. His approach was not condemnation. Instead he gave acceptance and answers. John 4:1-26 gives such an account.

I. Relationships

A. The power of relationships

1 Kings 11:4 For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, [that] his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as [was] the heart of David his father.

1 Kings 21:25 But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the LORD, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up.

1. Five kinds of relationships
 - a. Family - father/mother/brother/sister/extended family
 - b. Marriage - husband/wife/son/daughter
 - c. Friends/Acquaintances
 - d. Spiritual - God/pastors/other Christians
 - e. Business - boss/associates
2. Damage each can do
 - a. Family
 - 1) Self esteem/image
 - 2) Concept of God
 - 3) Sibling rivalry/competition
 - 4) Parental favoritism
 - 5) Physical/emotional incest
 - b. Marriage
 - 1) Financial
 - 2) Codependency
 - 3) Sexual Defiling/Infidelity
 - 4) Abuse/Usurpation of Authority
 - 5) Physical/Emotional Abuse
 - c. Friends/Acquaintances
 - 1) Deception/trust
 - 2) Reliability
 - 3) Divisive of other relationships
 - 4) Bad influence
 - d. Spiritual Leaders
 - 1) Judgementalism
 - 2) Breach of confidence
 - 3) Legalism
 - 4) Moral/Ethical failure
 - e. Business
 - 1) Sexual/Emotional harassment
 - 2) Advancement Politics
 - 3) Pressure to overwork
 - 4) Insecurity
 - 5) "Power tripping"

B. The impact of relationships

Genesis 2:18 NIV The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make him a helper suitable for him.

1. Family

- a. Self esteem/image --> Failure
- b. Concept of God --> Inability to accept forgiveness and grace
- c. Sibling rivalry/competitn -->Divisiveness
- d. Parental favoritism --> Feelings of rejection and insecurity
- e. Physical/emotional incest-->Aborted maturation

2. Marriage

- a. Financial -->Premature liquidation of assets
- b. Sexual Defiling/Infidelity-->Sexually transmitted diseases, distrust
- c. Codependency --> Skewed/distorted roles
- d. Abuse/Usurp. of auth. -->Fear, danger, fosters dependency / Poor decisions and guidelines, unprotected
- e. Physical/Emotional Abuse -->Emotional/mental breakdown

3. Friends/Acquaintances

- a. Deception/trust --> Suspicious, distrustful, self centered
- b. Reliability -->Rejection, damaged self worth
- c. Misplaced priorities --> Devisive of other relationships, latent homosexuality
- d. Bad Influence

4. Spiritual Leaders

- a. Judgementalism--> Guilt, inadequacy
- b. Legalism -->Works, inability to accept God's grace
- c. Breach of confidence --> Damaged faith/trust in God/others
- d. Moral/Ethical failure

5. Business

- a. Sexual/Emotional harassment
- b. Advancement Politics
- c. Pressure to overwork
- d. Insecurity
- e. "Power tripping"

II. Roles

1 Corinthians 11:3 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman [is] the man; and the head of Christ [is] God.

A. Male

1. Husband

1 Timothy 5:8 But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

Genesis 2:24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

Proverbs 5:18-19 Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. 19 [Let her be as] the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love.

Ecclesiastes 9:9 Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that [is] thy portion in [this] life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun.

Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

Ephesians 5:28-33 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. 29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: 30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. 31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. 32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and

the wife [see] that she reverence [her] husband.

Colossians 3:19 Husbands, love [your] wives, and be not bitter against them.

1 Peter 3:7 Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with [them] according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the race of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

- a. Provide for her
- b. Protect her
- c. Love his wife as himself

2. Father

Colossians 3:21 Fathers, provoke not your children [to anger], lest they be discouraged.

Ephesians 6:4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Genesis 18:19 For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

Deuteronomy 4:9 Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons;

Deuteronomy 6:7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

Deuteronomy 11:19-21 And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. 20 And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates: 21 That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the LORD swore unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth.

Proverbs 4:1-4 Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding. 2 For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law. 3 For I was my father's son, tender and only [beloved] in the sight of my mother. 4 He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live.

Proverbs 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

1. Teaching and training
2. Discipline

B. Female

1. Wife

Proverbs 31:10-28 Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price [is] far above rubies. 11 The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. 12 She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life. 13 She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands. 14 She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar. 15 She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens. 16 She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard. 17 She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms. 18 She perceiveth that her merchandise [is] good: her candle goeth not out by night. 19 She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff. 20 She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy. 21 She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household [are] clothed with scarlet. 22 She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing [is] silk and purple. 23 Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land. 24 She maketh fine linen, and selleth [it]; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant. 25 Strength and honour [are] her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come. 26 She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue [is] the law of kindness. 27 She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. 28 Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband [also], and he praiseth her.

Ephesians 5:22-24 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. 24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so [let] the wives [be] to

their own husbands in every thing.

Colossians 3:18 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.

Titus 2:4-5 That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 [To be] discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

1 Timothy 5:14 I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.

1 Peter 3:1-6 Likewise, ye wives, [be] in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; 2 While they behold your chaste conversation [coupled] with fear. 3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward [adorning] of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; 4 But [let it be] the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, [even the ornament] of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. 5 For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: 6 Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

- a. Manage the household
- b. Submit to her husband
2. Mother
 - 1 Timothy 5:14; Titus 2:3-5
 - a. Nurture
 - b. Teach
 - c. Correct
 - d. Discipline

III. Recovery

Psalms 34:18 The LORD [is] nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

Psalms 38:8 I am feeble and sore broken: I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart.

Psalms 51:17 The sacrifices of God [are] a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

Psalms 69:20 Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked [for some] to take pity, but [there was] none; and for comforters, but I found none.

Psalms 147:3 He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.

Proverbs 15:13 A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.

Proverbs 17:22 A merry heart doeth good [like] a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones.

Jeremiah 23:9 Mine heart within me is broken because of the prophets; all my bones shake; I am like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine hath overcome, because of the LORD, and because of the words of his holiness.

- A. Understand the reasons for your "love hunger"
 1. There are areas in your being only God can fill
 2. Use the Overhead to show the love tank
- B. Can God sanction the relationship?
 1. Determine whether or not the relationship is scripturally acceptable
 - a. Scripture does not accept:
 - 1) Homosexual/lesbian relationships
 - 2) Marriage between believers and unbelievers (EXPLAIN)
 - b. Is there "unequal yoking?"

2 Corinthians 6:14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

1 Corinthians 7:14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.

2. Could God bless this relationship?

3. Is it morally pure?
 4. Does the relationship causes spiritual damage?
- D. Clear your conscience
1. List their offenses
 2. List your offenses
 3. Relive your offenses (through their eyes)
 4. Purpose to ask for forgiveness

Matthew 5:22-24 {But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.} 23 {Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;} 24 {Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.}

Mark 11:24-26 {Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive [them], and ye shall have [them].} 25 {And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.} 26 {But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.}

5. Fully forgive them

Do Destructive Choices You've Made About Your Life Seem Repetitive?

Isaiah 61

Scripture: Isaiah 61:1c

Introduction

In this study we want to deal with destructive choices which lead to addictive or compulsive behaviors. These addictions can come in three forms: behaviors, people or substances.

I. Biblical examples of repetitive behavior

A. Samson, Saul and Solomon

Judges 16:1 Then went Samson to Gaza, and saw there an harlot, and went in unto her.

1 Samuel 15:17 And Samuel said, When thou [wast] little in thine own sight, [wast] thou not [made] the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel?

1 Kings 11:1-3 But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, [and] Hittites; 2 Of the nations [concerning] which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: [for] surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love. 3 And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart.

1. Practices which compromise the decision making process

- a. Self indulgence --> Sensuality/
- b. Self importance -->
- c. Self gratification --> Sensuality

2. Samson

Judges 13:25 And the spirit of the LORD began to move him at times in the camp of Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.

Judges 14:12 And Samson said unto them, I will now put forth a riddle unto you: if ye can certainly declare it me within the seven days of the feast, and find [it] out, then I will give you thirty sheets and thirty change of garments:

Judges 16:4 And it came to pass afterward, that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name [was] Delilah.

- a. Spirituality
- b. Excitement
- c. Sensuality

3. Saul

1 Samuel 13:12 Therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the LORD: I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering.

- a. Self as authority
- b. Not accountable

4. Solomon

Ecclesiastes 1:17-2:11 And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit. 18 For in much wisdom [is] much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow. 2:11 said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also [is] vanity. 2 I said of laughter, [It is] mad: and of mirth, What doeth it? 3 I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine, yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom; and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what [was] that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life. 4 I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards: 5 I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all [kind of] fruits: 6 I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees: 7 I got [me] servants and maidens, and had servants

born in my house; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me: 8 I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces: I gat me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, [as] musical instruments, and that of all sorts. 9 So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me. 10 And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour: and this was my portion of all my labour. 11 Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all [was] vanity and vexation of spirit, and [there was] no profit under the sun.

- a. Education
- b. Party
- c. Alcoholism
- d. Workaholism
- e. Wealth
- f. Power
- g. Pursuit of the arts

B. Three women

1. Woman at the well

John 4:16-18 Jesus saith unto her, {Go, call thy husband, and come hither.} 17 The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, {Thou hast well said, I have no husband:} 18 {For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.}

- a. Temporary relationships
- b. Unfulfilled spiritual quest

2. Mary Magdalene

Luke 8:2 And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils,

- a. Delving into the occult

3. Rebekeh

Genesis 27:46 And Rebekah said to Isaac, I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth: if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these [which are] of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me?

- a. Manipulation
- b. Deception

II. The generational connection

Exodus 34:6-7 And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, 7 Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear [the guilty]; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth [generation].

A. Dysfunctional dynamic

--->Dysfunctional parents product dysfunctional children<---

B. Damage of denial

- 1. Maintains the dysfunctional status quo
- 2. Allows the dysfunction to deepen

C. Merits of confrontation

- 1. Calls an end to the damaging games
- 2. Signals an end to confronter's participation

D. Examples of healing

1. Mary Magdalene

Mark 16:9 Now when [Jesus] was risen early the first [day] of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.

2. Woman at the well

John 4:28-29 The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, 29 Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?

3. Jacob ---> Israel

Genesis 32:27-28 And he said unto him, What [is] thy name? And he said, Jacob. 28 And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.

Genesis 48:16 The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.

III. Steps of healing

- A. Acknowledge/accept you are powerless to control your lives and that your life has become unmanageable

Romans 7:18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but [how] to perform that which is good I find not.

- B. Believe that only through God's power and the truth of His Word can order and hope be restored in your life

Philippians 2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of [his] good pleasure.

- C. Make a decision to turn your life over to God, and honestly accept that taking responsibility for yourself is the only way growth can take place in you

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, [which is] your reasonable service.

- D. Take an inventory of yourself, looking for your mental, emotional, spiritual, volitional and social assets and liabilities. Look at what you have, how you use it, and how we can acquire what we need

Lamentations 3:40 Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the LORD.

- E. Admit to yourself, to God and to other caring persons the exact nature of what is within that is causing your pain

James 5:16a Confess [your] faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

- F. Give God all your former pain, hurt and mistakes, resentment and bitterness, anger and guilt. Trust that you can let go of the hurt you cause and receive

James 4:10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

- G. Ask for help, support and guidance, and be willing to take responsibility for ourselves and to be responsible to others

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us [our] sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

- H. Begin a program of living responsibly for ourselves, acknowledging our feelings, mistakes and successes. Become responsible for your part in relationships with others

Luke 6:31 {And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.}

- I. Make a list of persons to whom you want to make amends and commence to do so, except where doing so will cause further pain for others

Matthew 5:23-24 {Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;} 24 {Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.}

- J. Continue to work your program, each day checking out your progress, and asking for feedback from others in your effort to recover and grow. You do this through support groups.

1 Corinthians 10:12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

- K. Begin to see yourself as God sees you. Through prayer and meditation on His Word, seek a deeper understanding of Him, a knowledge of His will for your life and the power to carry out His will

Colossians 3:16a Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

- L. Having experienced the power of growing toward wholeness, you find your body, mind and spirit awakened to a new sense of physical and emotional relief. This awakening leaves you open to a new awareness of God's love for you and your own self worth. You then are able to relate in a healthy way to others and share yourself honestly with them. Becoming who you are is a lifetime task and must be accomplished one day at a time

Galatians 6:1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an

one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

Feeling Trapped and Cheated by the "System"?

Isaiah 61

Scripture: Isaiah 61:1c
Genesis 18:25

Introduction

Play the tape by Sandi Patti of "Upon this Rock". Show the contrast between Christian philosophy and the philosophy of the satanic system. Show that God is at work in our lives when we are going against the grain.

I. Cheated by an unfair system

Mark 6:24-25 And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist. 25 And she came in straightway with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptist.

Genesis 39:17-20 And she spake unto him according to these words, saying, The Hebrew servant, which thou hast brought unto us, came in unto me to mock me: 18 And it came to pass, as I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled out. 19 And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spake unto him, saying, After this manner did thy servant to me; that his wrath was kindled. 20 And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners [were] bound: and he was there in the prison.

Daniel 1:1-8 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it. 2 And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god. 3 And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring [certain] of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes; 4 Children in whom [was] no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as [had] ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans. 5 And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king. 6 Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: 7 Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel [the name] of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abed-nego. 8 But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself

- A. Biblical examples of an unfair system
 - 1. John the Baptist
 - 2. Joseph
- B. Some unfair circumstances you may be facing
 - 1. A job related injury
 - 2. A major illness
 - 3. A divorced single mom juggling mothering and job
 - 4. A divorced father paying child support
- C. Definitions
 - 1. The Seducer -- Satan
 - 2. The "system"

The Big Lie:

- a. Outward beauty
- b. Unisex
- c. Finding self/Introspection
- d. Mother Earth
- e. Man is god
- f. Man redeems himself
- g. World peace

God's Truth:

Inward Character
Men/Women distinct
Finding Him
God the Creator
Man created by God
Christ redeemed man
Christ, Prince of peace

II. Knowing God is there when you're "under the circumstances"

Genesis 39:21 But the LORD was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

Job 23:8-10 Behold, I go forward, but he [is] not [there]; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: 9 On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold [him]: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see [him]: 10 But he knoweth the way that I take: [when] he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.

1 Thessalonians 5:24 Faithful [is] he that calleth you, who also will do [it].

A. Your circumstances will:

1. Give new direction
2. Cause you to find creative alternatives

B. Finding God present in your circumstances

Acts 27:23-25 For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, an whom I serve, 24 Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. 25 Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.

III. Responding properly in difficult circumstances

Exodus 23:9 Also thou shalt not oppress a stranger: for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Leviticus 25:17 Ye shall not therefore oppress one another; but thou shalt fear thy God: for I [am] the LORD your God.

Deuteronomy 32:4 [He is] the Rock, his work [is] perfect: for all his ways [are] judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right [is] he.

Jeremiah 7:5-7 For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour; 6 [If] ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt: 7 Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever.

Malachi 3:5 And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in [his] wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger [from his right], and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts.

James 2:5-9 Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? 6 But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? 7 Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called? 8 If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: 9 But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.

Matthew 23:37 {O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, [thou] that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under [her] wings, and ye would not!}

Joshua 24:15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were] on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

Psalms 91:1 He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

- A. Realize there is purpose in trial
- B. Ask God what He wants you to learn through your trial
- C. Seek for creative alternatives
- D. Understand God's loving concern
- E. Identify with the greatest injustice of all - Christ's crucifixion

Disappointed in the Direction Your Life Has Taken?

Isaiah 61

Scripture: Isaiah 61:1c
Hebrews 12:1-2

Introduction

God uses the misdirections our lives to build character, remove blemishes, and polish us so we can reflect Him.

I. Understand the purpose of your "misdirection"

Hebrews 12:3-4, 12-13 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. 4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. 12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; 13 And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

Jeremiah 1:5 Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, [and] I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.

Hebrews 12:22-24 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, 23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than [that of] Abel.

- A. God mapped out your life even before you were born
- B. He uses even the "misdirections" to accomplish his purpose
- C. He is bringing us to perfection (maturity)

II. Understand the changes He wants to make

Hebrews 12:5-9, 11 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. 7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? 8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. 9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected [us], and we gave [them] reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? 11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

- A. The "misdirections" may be part of His discipline for you
- B. Discipline is a sign of your belonging to God
- C. Discipline is never fun, but painful
- D. His discipline creates the changes He wants to make in us

III. Allow God to remodel your life

1 Corinthians 2:9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

1 Peter 4:19 Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls [to him] in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

Hebrews 12:1-2 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset [us], and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of [our] faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Hebrews 12:25-13:1 See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more [shall not] we [escape], if we turn away from him that [speaketh]

from heaven: 26 Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. 27 And this [word], Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. 28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: 29 For our God [is] a consuming fire. 13:1 Let brotherly love continue.

Hebrews 13:6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord [is] my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

Hebrews 13:13-14 Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. 14 For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

James 1:12 Blessed [is] the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

1 Peter 1:5-7 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: 7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

1 Peter 1:17-19 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning [here] in fear: 18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, [as] silver and gold, from your vain conversation [received] by tradition from your fathers; 19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

1 Peter 2:1-2 Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, 2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

1 Peter 2:19-21 For this [is] thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. 20 For what glory [is it], if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer [for it], ye take it patiently, this [is] acceptable with God. 21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

1 Peter 4:12-13 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: 13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

1 Peter 4:17-19 For the time [is come] that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if [it] first [begin] at us, what shall the end [be] of them that obey not the gospel of God? 18 And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? 19 Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls [to him] in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

- A. He wants to change you with eternity in mind
- B. Catch an eternal perspective
- C. Participate in His remodeling program