

Why Jesus Is the Only Answer for These 6 Broken Areas of Your Life

Khalil Gibran said, "Out of suffering have emerged the strongest souls the most massive characters are seared with scars."

Come on, let's be very honest, at times, life can downright hurt, I mean big-time ouch! As much as we wish it weren't so, being a believer in Jesus does not insulate us from the pain and wounding that this world can throw our way. There's the emotionally tattered marriage, the son or daughter who's strung out on opioids and is not only breaking your heart but also your savings account, and then the depression and anxiety you face nearly every day but are ashamed to talk about lest you're labeled as not being a strong Christian. And then there's the sexual addiction issue you may be facing that has taken you to a dark place of perpetual self-condemnation, guilt and shame and maybe even the affair that has left you confused, heartbroken and emotionally devastated. These aren't manufactured optics to dramatize an article, but rather real-life circumstances of Jesus followers that my colleagues and I face every day in our counseling practice. Sad, yes, but real nonetheless.

So what do we do in situations like this? Who can really understand what you're going through without them heaping more condemnation on you than you've already heaped on yourself? Where do the hurting, the beat-up and the emotionally disabled go to look for "oil and wine" to be poured into their wounds?

The struggling soul of man is as old as Adam and as recent as each morning when you wake up to face your day. Job rightly said in Job 7:1, "Is not all human life a struggle?" Now,

brother, ain't that the truth!

I think there's something that we as followers of Jesus need to reckon with and that is that man took a very hard fall in Genesis 3:7, and we've been trying to crawl back into favor with God ever since.

"Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked" (Gen. 3:7). At that very moment in history, man literally fell apart in six areas: the physical, physiological, emotional, psychological, neurological and spiritual. The terrible ramifications of that fall produced human cataclysmic devastation the likes of which only God, through Christ, is capable of repairing. So to lay it out plainly, we are all messed up!

As you can see, the struggle is real, the pain is genuine but God refuses to leave us there. Because of His vast *agape*, unconditional love for us, Jesus journeyed through the darkness of human misery to connect with each and every one of us so as to feel our pain, identify with our human weakness and experience our tears.

"For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who was in every sense tempted like we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15).

Jesus gets it! He gets our sadness, our questioning, our temptation, our pain. He empathizes with our feelings of abandonment, rejection, depression, anxiety and trauma. He's a intimately relatable Savior who is so intensely in love with us that He gave up His place of divine, omnipotent power to come to fallen earth and rescue the souls of His corrupted depraved human creation. And He did this not because of some required obligation but because of love. Brennen Manning expressing God's heart said, "Come now, wounded, frightened, angry, lonely, empty, and I'll meet you where you live. And I'll love you as you are, not as you should be, because you're

never going to be as you should be.” It is in this kind of struggle where each of us live at times that God wants to show up and prove Himself an empathetic champion advocate in our lives.

We need to understand that through the struggle, God’s beautiful grace provided for us in Christ, is like a hand that that lifts us up, not beating us to righteousness but leading us. Not pounding us to righteousness but pardoning us as we walk this human condition out while on this journey called life. It is the great attempt of balancing holiness with our humanity. The battling contradiction that all believers in Jesus face. Even the Apostle Paul struggled with this in Romans 7 where he says, “I’m not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate” (vs 16). Then in verse 21 Paul hits the “human condition” issue; “I find the principle that evil is present in me.” Then in verse 24 he gets down and dirty with the truth; (paraphrasing), “Wretched [messed up, miserable, depressed] man that I am! Who’s going to set me free from the body of this death?”

Here’s the ultimate answer to the struggle: “Thank you God for Jesus, He’s my answer!”

When we read this, we’re actually seeing the autobiography of Paul’s own personal faith walk as a broken struggling follower of Messiah. It is a clear picture of the apostle’s actual experience of trying to walk out his day-to-day battle between holiness and his humanity, his faith and his failures. We have to get it. Paul is us and we are him! The felony and wickedness of Genesis 3:7 has no less transgression in it then it has today. The same force of sin that Paul came up against is the same force of sin that we experience. Stuff happens and stuff hurts, and sometimes the pain can be substantial. But here’s the beauty of all of this: In the end, as it was with Paul it is with us—Jesus! It may take some pastoral counseling or even some clinical Christian therapy, but His grace and endless *agape* love will inevitably thrust us through the

curtain of darkness into a place of, help for today and hope for tomorrow. The antidote for struggling well. {eo}

Fred Antonelli, Ph.D, LPC, is a licensed Mental Health therapist specializing in crises marriage, a former senior pastor of 23 years, author and speaker. He is founder/director of Life Counseling Center and has four offices on the Eastern Shore of Maryland and Delaware.