

# Pastor Rick Warren's Message After Son's Suicide: 'Never Waste Your Pain'

Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Church and author of the best-selling book *The Purpose Driven Life*, this weekend completed his seven-week sermon series "How to Get Through What You're Going Through."

Beginning with Warren's July 27 return to the pulpit from a four-month sabbatical following the death of his son, Matthew, who struggled with mental illness, each message in the series focused on the various stages of grief—shock, sorrow, struggle, surrender, sanctification and, finally this week, service.

In a sermon entitled "Never Waste Your Pain," Warren challenged members gathered at the main Saddleback campus and via video at the seven satellite campuses and live-streamed on the Internet by saying, "Our deepest life message often comes out of our deepest pain."

Warren explained that God often uses pain to fulfill His purposes in our lives.

"I can endure pain if I see a purpose in it," he said. "But sadly, most people squander their suffering, don't profit from their problems, never learn from their losses and are unable to advance from their adversity or gain from their pain."

Warren challenged that we can use our pain to draw closer to God and to others and that it can also make us more like Jesus, who learned obedience through suffering.

"God didn't spare Jesus, His only Son from pain. What makes you think He will spare you?" he said.

“The secret of every winner, whether in business, sport, love, finance or relationships, is resilience—the ability to bounce back from setbacks or failure,” he added. “Winners have the same problems losers do, but they get back up while losers stay down. The secret to a person’s resilience is perspective.”

According to Warren, the highest and best use of our pain is to help others.

“Don’t waste your pain; let God heal it, recycle it, utilize it and use it to bless other people,” he said. “Use your pain as a model for your message and a witness to the world. But to touch other people, you need to be honest—with God, yourself and others—and you need to be vulnerable.”

“The world is impressed less with how we handle success than how we deal with suffering and adversity,” he said. “I could tell you about all the awards I have received, but when I tell you authentically about what I have been through with my son’s battle with mental illness for 27 years, that gets your attention.”

During his sermon, Warren got transparent about the recent pain in his own life since the suicide death of his son, Matthew, in April.

“The fellowship of suffering is the deepest of all,” he said. “Odds aren’t good for a couple who loses a child, as nearly one-third of these marriages end in divorce. But Kay and I give each other a lot of grace, are closer today since Matthew’s death, and I am more in love with my wife than ever before.”

Warren also shared that the way he has leveraged that pain to help others is to use his social media platforms, reaching more than 1.5 million individuals to help encourage hurting individuals and families. He recited 2 Corinthians 1:4-6, the same Scripture passage he used to start the series, explaining

that he intends to continue comforting others with the same comfort he has been given.

In recognition of Suicide Prevention Week, the Warrens decided after more than five months since the tragedy that they would finally speak about the loss of their son and related issues, including removing the stigma of mental illness. They have elected to grant a broadcast-exclusive interview with CNN on *Piers Morgan Tonight*, which airs Monday, and an exclusive print feature in *People* magazine to run the following week.

Founded in 1980 by the Warrens, Saddleback Church is located in Orange County, Calif. With an average weekly attendance of 22,000, it is one of the largest churches in America.