

Rick, Kay Warren Discuss Son's Suicide in First Interview Since Tragedy

Less than six months after their son took his own life, Rick and Kay Warren spoke about their tragic loss in an exclusive interview with CNN's Piers Morgan.

After a lifelong struggle with mental illness, 27-year-old Matthew Warren shot himself to death on April 5. Warren, who had a borderline personality disorder, used a gun he had bought illegally online.

"The day that I had feared might happen one day, since he had been born, and the day that I had prayed would never happen, happened," Rick Warren said in a taped broadcast of *Piers Morgan Live* that aired Tuesday night.

"I have cried every single day since Matthew died, but that's actually a good thing," the Saddleback Church pastor said. "Grief is a good thing. It's the way we get to the transitions of life. And I find if I don't cry, then I stuff it."

But in the midst of their struggle, the Warrens have stayed strong in their faith.

"I never questioned my faith in God; I question God's plan," Rick Warren, best-selling author of *The Purpose Driven Life*, said. "I know God is a good God. Nothing can shake that from my life. I know God is a loving God."

He went on to explain that not everything that happens in life is God's will.

"God isn't to blame for my son's death," he said. "My son took his life. It was his choice, and if I chose to go out and get drunk and get in a car and I was in an accident, killed

somebody, I can't blame God for that."

Kay Warren added, "Our faith is currently what's got us—that foundation [is] what's gotten us through, and it's solid and strong."

The Warrens told Morgan that they kept their son's lifelong struggle with mental illness out of the public eye for the sake of his dignity.

"We've always known, since Matthew has lived his entire life with mental illness, that one day we would be spokespeople for mental illness. Kay and I have known this for years and years," Rick Warren said.

"The reason we were quiet was primarily to protect Matthew's dignity. It was his story to tell," he continued. "We were always praying that either A, he would be healed miraculously, or B, will get treatment, therapy, medicine that helps him manage his disease for the rest of his life, and then he can tell this story."

Kay Warren added, "We didn't want him to endure the scrutiny that's being thrown at Rick. He was already struggling. To be in the public spotlight, have people scrutinize him ... he didn't need that."

Rick and Kay Warren started Saddleback Church Orange County, Calif., in 1980, and it has since become one of America's largest ministries. The Warrens said the church's people have been overwhelming in their love and support.

"Kay and I had given 33 years to this church," Rick Warren shared. "And I felt like they all gave it back at the moment. It was just a very tender moment for me as a pastor. I have walked through the valley of the shadow of death with thousands of people. I have walked, I've stood at bed sides and seeing lots of people take their last breath. I have been there for those people for 33 years. And they were there for

us when we needed them most.”

At the end of the show, Morgan told the couple it was a privilege and honor to do the interview and said, “My heart goes out to you; it’s a heartbreaking story.”

Kay Warren responded by saying, “There’s hope. It’s so important that people know no matter how desperate their despair, there is hope. There is—and not to give up, not to give up.”

The pastor shared on his blog that the couple decided to go on *Piers Morgan Live* because it offered them a full hour to share their thoughts, rather than short sound bites.

“Piers Morgan was unusually sensitive to the moment, allowing us all the time we needed without interruption,” Warren wrote. “At lunch, Piers shared that it was the most moving interview he’s ever done.”

The interview follows the conclusion of Warren’s series, “How to Get Through What You’re Going Through,” which began July 27 when he returned from a four-month sabbatical following Matthew’s death.

In Sunday’s 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.”