

GOD'S ANTIDOTE TO YOUR HURT
Stressbusters - Part 6
Rick Warren

"You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows."
Psalm 23:5

I. WHAT NOT TO DO WHEN YOU HURT

1. DON'T _____

"I kept very quiet... but I became ever more upset. I became very angry inside, and as I thought about it, my anger burned." Ps. 39:2-3 (NCV)

2. DON'T _____

"I wish I had wings like a dove. Then I'd fly away and rest. I would hurry to my place of escape..." Ps. 55:6+8 (NCV)

3. DON'T _____

"When I kept things to myself, I felt weak deep inside me. I moaned all day long." Ps. 32:3 (NCV)

4. DON'T _____

"To worry yourself to death with resentment would be a foolish, senseless thing to do." Job 5:2 (GN)

5. DON'T _____

"You are only hurting yourself with your anger." Job. 18:4 (GN)

II. WHAT GOD SAYS TO DO WHEN YOU HURT

1. LET JESUS _____ THE SCORE.

"You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies."

"Never pay back evil for evil. ... never avenge yourselves. Leave that to God, for he has said that he will repay those who deserve it." Rom 12:17+19 (LB)

"Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy." Mt. 5:7

2. LET JESUS _____ MY WOUNDS.

"You anoint my head with oil"

"God heals the brokenhearted and bandages their wounds." Ps. 147:3 (NCV)

3. LET JESUS _____ MY NEEDS.

"My cup overflows"

MY CUP WILL OVERFLOW...

WITH _____

"God will help you overflow with hope in him through the Holy Spirit's power within you."
Rom 15:13 (LB)

WITH _____

"...May the Lord make your love to grow and overflow..." I Th. 3:12 (LB)

WITH _____

"Ask, using my name, and you will receive, and your cup of joy will overflow." Jn 16:24 (LB)

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We're continuing in our series called Stressbusters. We're going through Psalm 23 verse by verse. We're looking at God's Antidote to Your Hurt. Because we live in an imperfect world, you're going to be hurt. You'll be hurt by accidents, by illnesses. But the deepest hurts you'll have in your life will come from people. Relationships are the greatest source of stress in our lives. They are also the greatest blessing and the greatest joy. But people do hurt us, sometimes intentionally, sometimes unintentionally, sometimes accidentally, sometimes on purpose.

The problem is our response to those hurts is usually the wrong thing. Before we can look at God's antidote to the hurts I need to tell you five things to not do when people hurt you. These things mess you up. These things cause problems in your life:

I. WHAT NOT TO DO WHEN YOU HURT

1. DON'T IGNORE IT

This is the Clint Eastwood approach to pain. Suffer in silence. Bite the bullet. Macho man. Pretend it doesn't exist. Hope it will go away. We often try to cope with our hurt by pretending it doesn't exist. There are several ways to do this:

- 1) Flat out denial -- I don't have a problem; I'm not hurting. We deny how we really do feel. People hurt us and we say, That didn't hurt.
- 2) Minimizing it -- It was no big deal. It didn't hurt me that bad.
- 3) Procrastinate -- We postpone doing anything about it. Sweep it under the carpet. One of these days.... We keep putting it off. We keep postponing it because we always try to postpone the unpleasant.

Ignoring your hurt never heals it. The hurt that you're trying to ignore right now won't get any better. People say, "Time heals all wounds" -- sometimes time makes them worse if we keep putting it off. Ps. 39 "I kept very quiet... but I became even more upset. I became very angry inside, and as I thought about it, my anger burned." Procrastination turns minor problems into major ones. It gets worse. It festers. The wounds get infected and spread when we don't deal with them immediately.

2. DON'T RUN FROM IT

This is the Don Knotts approach. Runaway. Escape. Mr. Chicken. Retreat. Run from your problems. Don't face anything. David tried this too. Ps. 55, "I wish I had wings like a dove. Then I'd fly away and rest. I would hurry to my place of escape..." This is human nature. When we face difficulty we run from it. It's not by accident that all doors in public buildings open outward. When people panic, they run. We try to get away from our pain. There are many different ways to escape: movies, television, alcohol, drugs, divorce, Disneyland. The problem is that you will still have the same problems when you return. You can get high but when you come down from the high, get over the hangover, nothing is solved, nothings is changed.

3. DON'T HIDE YOUR HURT

Some people don't run from it or ignore their hurt; they hide it. They keep it to themselves. They don't tell anybody. They wear a mask. Some of you are quite good at camouflaging your pain. You wear nice clothes and have a pleasant smile but the fact is you've been hurt by somebody very deeply. Sometimes we play a game called "Is something wrong?" We always answer, "No, nothing's wrong." We hate to admit it when we're hurt. We'll admit it when we're angry, but not when we're hurt. We don't like to

admit that somebody hurt our feelings. So we disguise it. Sometimes people camouflage their pain with materialism. They buy nice cars and homes and surround themselves with things and when they hurt they go shopping. Possessions never compensate for pain. When you hurt all the possessions in the world won't soothe that hurt.

"When I kept things to myself, I felt weak deep inside me. I moaned all day long." Hiding a hurt only intensifies it. It only makes it worse.

Here at Saddleback we are committed to building an atmosphere of openness and honesty and authenticity. We want to create a safe place where real people can share real problems without being judged, and by being accepted and loved. They can find safety and be able to share. There is healing when you're able to share. When you find out somebody else has the same problem you do it makes you feel better. But we can't share unless we stop hiding.

James 5:16 "Confess your faults one to another that you may be healed." Revealing your feeling is the beginning of healing. When you share your hurt, that's the starting process for getting over it. As long as you hold onto it and hold it in, you hide it in your heart and you can't get well. Some of you are holding onto hurts that happened years and years ago. You can't get well if you're still hiding it. The best place to share is in a small group and that's why we believe in small groups.

Everybody has a hurt. It's different for each but everybody has hurts. You're not alone. You're not even the only one with the hurt you've got. You may think you are. You may think you're the only one in the world with the hurt you have. But there are others that have the same hurt you do. If you could somehow get up the courage to share the hurt, you would find relief and you would start on the pathway to healing. You don't heal yourself by ignoring it, running from it or hiding it.

4. DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT

Worry is an attempt to control the uncontrollable. You're trying to control something you can't control so you worry about it. Worry is playing God. When you play God it makes you more miserable because inside you know that you're not God. You can't control everything. You can't change the world by yourself.

Job 5:2 "To worry yourself to death with resentment would be a foolish, senseless thing to do." Worry never solves problems. It never heals hurt. All worry does is increase the size of your pain. Every time you worry about it, it's like playing a bad video in your mind. It gets bigger. When you worry about something it exaggerates, it magnifies. Every time you rehearse it in your mind you let it get bigger. The more you worry about a hurt the bigger it gets.

5. DON'T RESENT IT

Resentment never helps. Yet we do this when people hurt us. We become bitter, angry, cynical. We get all closed in and self-pitying. Job 18:4 "You are only hurting yourself with your anger." Bitterness hurts you far more than any hurt you will ever receive. No matter what anybody has ever done to you. Rape, rejection, molested, maligned. But there is something worse than that. That is bitterness. Bitterness is a poison that will kill you. It eats you up on the inside.

What resentment does is it perpetuates the hurt. It takes an event and keeps it going. It just prolongs the pain. Every time you think about it and resent it, it prolongs the pain. Bitterness allows the past to control your present. Bitterness allows people who hurt you in the past to continue to hurt you. We are resentful because we think by being resentful we hurt those who have offended us. But resentment never hurts anybody but you. It doesn't hurt your offender. You can be so upset with them in your mind and so resentful that it keeps you preoccupied with the hurt and they can go on about their merry way.

Resentment is a self defeating attitude. It doesn't work. You're only hurting yourself with your anger, you must let go.

If none of these approaches will heal my hurt what do I do?

Ps. 23:5 The scene changes from a field to a feast. David uses the image of a banquet and he gives us three illustrations or symbols that illustrates three steps you need to take in order to let God heal your hurt.

"You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil. My cup overflows."

These are symbols that represent how to get healed from hurt.

1. LET JESUS SETTLE THE SCORE

Don't try to get even. Don't seek revenge. Don't retaliate against those who hurt you. Trust God to even the odds. Give it to God. Let God settle the score and He will. David says "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies."

Sheep have many natural enemies -- wolves, coyotes, bears, snakes, ticks... Sheep are very defenseless animals. They cannot defend themselves from anything. They don't have teeth that are sharp that they can bite with. They don't have claws. They can't kick. They can't run fast. They are absolutely the most defenseless animal there is. They don't know how to do anything. They can't be safe unless somebody protects them.

The job of a good shepherd is to go find a good table land, a mesa, a field of green grass, and drive out all the enemies. Then he brings the sheep and gives them a safe place to eat. He scouts out the pasture and drives out the enemies.

God says, "Let me handle those who've hurt you." Romans 12 "Never pay back evil for evil. ... never avenge yourselves. Leave that to God, for he has said that he will repay those who deserve it." God knows the people who've hurt you. He saw it and He cares. He can settle the score. The Bible says one day He will settle the score. There is a heaven, there is a hell, there is a judgement day. He has far more resources to settle the score than you do. He says you cannot recover from your hurt as long as you're seeking revenge. You've got to decide, are you going to get revenge or are you going to get well? You can't do both.

Today, revenge is big business. Revenge doesn't work. It always backfires. It keeps the hurt alive. When you retaliate against the hurt all you do is escalate the pain. It doesn't relieve the pain, it escalates it. There's only one way you'll ever get the relief and that's forgiveness. Forgiveness doesn't mean that you say "It's OK that you hurt me." Forgiveness is not saying, "What you did is not a bad deal." Forgiveness is not saying it didn't hurt. Forgiveness is not denying that evil is done in this world.

Forgiveness means giving my hurt to God and letting Him settle the score. Just trust God to handle the situation and not try to get even. Let Him prepare a table before you in the presence of your enemies. Don't try to get even.

Why should I forgive?

- 1) You've been forgiven by God. God's forgiven you and He wants you to forgive others.
- 2) Resentment makes you miserable.
- 3) You're going to need more forgiveness in the future yourself. Matthew 5:7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy." Only as I am forgiving to others is God able to forgive me. What you dole out is what you get back.

The longer you try to get revenge, the longer you'll hurt.

2. LET JESUS SOOTH MY WOUNDS.

"You anoint my head with oil."

Shepherds put oil on the heads of sheep for two reasons: to sooth and to heal. The worst enemy of sheep is flies. They hate flies. They can't shake off the flies either by their hooves or their tail. Summertime means fly time for sheep. The flies get up in their nose and lay eggs. And the larva drives them crazy. Sometimes in the summertime you'll see a sheep banging its head against a rock because he's going crazy from the flies. He can't do anything about it.

Isn't it amazing that it's the little things in life that really irritate you? What shepherds do is take olive oil and mix it with sulfur and anoint the head of the sheep and it's like an insect repellent. This represents the shepherd saying, "I'll take care of the irritations. The things that irritate you, I'll take care of them."

The other way oil is used is as a salve, an ointment. When a sheep has an open wound the shepherd would use it as an ointment. It would protect them and it was soothing. When David says, "You anoint my head with oil" he is saying God is going to sooth my wounds.

This is the same thing Jesus Christ wants to do with the hurts in your life. Ps. 147 "God heals the brokenhearted and bandages their wounds." He says, "Not only will I settle the score, but if you'll come to Me and let Me have your hurts, I'll settle the score and then do a little repair work -- a little work on restoring your spirit. I can sooth those hurts. I can bandage them up." Once you've forgiven a person who's hurt you, does that mean all the pain has gone away? No. Even after you've forgiven them, you still hurt. Forgiveness is instant but restoration takes time. Forgiveness is instant but restoration may take years or months or weeks depending on the hurt.

"God heals the brokenhearted and bandages their wounds." When you get a small cut you don't need a bandage. The deeper the wound in your life (divorce, rejection by parents, molestation, taken advantage of and a partner stole your business) -- those things don't heal quickly. A deep wound must be bandaged and dressed. Many Christians expect that once they've forgiven a hurt they are immediately well. You're not. You've taken the first step of forgiveness. Now comes the healing where He sooths your soul. It takes time to heal.

How does Jesus heal our hurts? What kinds of bandages does Jesus use to heal our emotional wounds when people hurt us?

1) He uses fellowship. When you get together with other Christians, you find support. When you're able to share your hurt, you get emotional support. The first thing you need to do when you've been hurt by somebody is you need to share it with a Christian friend. Don't isolate yourself. You need fellowship. You need to be in a support group.

2) God uses prayer. When you're hurt you need to talk it out. If you don't talk it out to God you'll take it out on your own body. Tell God how you feel. Unload. David, in the Psalms, was very honest about his feelings. He unloaded to God. That is OK. He accepts our prayer.

3) God uses worship. There is healing power in praise. Have you ever come into a church service when you were down, the music started and tears begin. This is emotional healing. God uses praise and His word to build us up and bind up our wounds.

4) God uses ministry. This is helping others who have been hurt too. When you help others who have been hurt it helps you. God set up the universe that way. In our Celebrate Recovery program we take people and share what we've been through. We help them and in doing so we find healing ourselves. We are a hospital for the hurting. The church gives fellowship, prayer, worship and ministry.

Those of you who are hurting from a major hurt right now must understand two things:

1) Healing occurs in two phases. You know this physically but it's also emotional. When you are hurt -- surgery or you break a bone -- there are always two phases to the healing.

First is the "be still" stage -- you lay in the bed after the surgery. Or they put a cast on your arm so you can't move it.

After a while they cut the cast off and tell you to move your body. That's the second stage -- the "get moving" stage. There are people who are trained to do this -- physical therapists. We always get mad at physical therapists because they challenge us and make us do stuff we don't want to do.

I know people in this stage who have been going through a healing. You've gone through "the quiet" stage long enough. Now God is starting to prod you and you're getting angry at Him. He wants you to get out in ministry, in service. You're never going to get healed until you get out and start helping other people. There was a time for you to be quiet, to be still and "know that I'm God" but many of you have stayed in this "be still" stage far too long. God is saying you need emotional therapy -- you need to get out in ministry. That's where the healing is going to come from that hurt.

2) Even after you've been totally healed, you're going to have a scar. There are always scars after you've been hurt. When you have a scar you have a choice: every time you look at the scar -- because you're going to see it -- you can either remember your hurt or you can remember your Healer and the healing. That's your alternative. Look at the scar and think of God's grace. When you remember the defeat, the failure, that divorce, that hurt, you think "I am a trophy of God's grace". Instead of focusing on the hurt, focus on the Healer.

3. LET JESUS SATISFY MY NEEDS

"My cup overflows". In the Bible, an overflowing cup, is a symbol for total satisfaction. It means, "I've got everything I need.." In the Middle East, it's mostly desert. When some one gives you a cup that is overflowing, it means they're wasting something -- water or wine. You don't waste water or wine in the desert unless you've got more than you need.

When you need to get over a hurt, you need to look to God to meet all your needs. Why is that so important? The major reason we get hurt is we expect other people to meet needs only God can meet. No person can give you absolute security in life. No person can give you all the love you need. No person can make you complete happy. If you expect that from somebody you're going to be bitterly disappointed and you're going to be hurt. God never met for you to have all your needs met by another human being. You have needs that only God can meet. When you expect other people to meet those needs you're going to get resentful because they can't do it. They can't love you unconditionally 24 hours a day. They can't make you secure 24 hours a day. They can't make you happy 24 hours a day. They can't meet all your needs. They're not God.

On the other hand, God can meet all of your needs. He never runs dry. He never has a bad mood. He never lets you down. If you look to Him your cup will overflow.

Overflow with what?

1) With Hope

Romans 15:13 "God will help you overflow with hope in him through the Holy Spirit's power within you." You never run out of hope because you know He's never going to let you down.

2) With love

"May the Lord make your love to grow and overflow." I Thes. 3:12

3) With joy

"Ask, using my name, and you will receive, and your cup of joy will overflow." John 16:24

Have you ever wondered when you go to somebody's house how long you're supposed to stay and when you're supposed to leave? Or have you had someone come to your house and you didn't know how to tell them to "get lost". There is a custom in the Middle East that everyone knew that had to do with filling the cup. If you came to somebody's house, even if you were a total stranger (in the desert strangers take care of strangers), the first thing you do is offer them a cup of water or wine ... They drink the cup and you refill it. They drink that cup and you refill it. ... As long as the cup kept being refilled it meant you were welcome to stay. If you came to somebody's house and after several refills, they left the cup empty, it meant your time was up -- it was time to leave. If the host decided he really liked the person and wanted him to stay a long time, they would take the cup and fill it -- not only to the rim but they would let it overflow. You don't waste water or wine in the desert. But when an overflowing cup was shown it was a symbol that you can stay as long as you want. It meant you are special.

When God says to you, "I'm going to fill your cup to overflowing" it means you matter to God and you're special to Him. If you're hurting because somebody has hurt you badly, Jesus invites you to a banquet. He says "I'll prepare a table before you in the presence of your enemies. I'll anoint your head with oil. Your cup will overflow." He will settle the score, sooth your wounds, satisfy every one of your needs. It's a deal you can't refuse. It's a banquet of wholeness, help, salvation.