

PERSONAL STORY

On April 23, 2012, I found my finance', lifeless in his garage. Just 30 minutes before that he had said 3 words to me: "I'm so sorry." That's when I knew I had to go to him.

Nothing could have ever prepared me for the next hour, day, week or months to come. That night was a blur. The following month or so was a blur. I knew he was wounded and that he needed counseling but no amount of talking or begging could convince him otherwise. His standard answer was always, "I'm fine." I did my best to "fix" him. Prayed for him, went to church with him and just tried to give him and show him the love I truly felt for him. He was my love. He had to be OK. But he wasn't. And I believe he knew that.

At some point, he gave up on life. I believe that's because he was a "young" Christian and he could not see the amazing

HOPE

AUGUST 15 & 16, 2015

STUDY QUESTIONS

What's your favorite comeback story - either in sports, a movie or life event? Why?

Which of the four seasons of the year do you enjoy the most? Why?

The book of Ecclesiastes is widely believed to be the thoughts of the wise King Solomon. He reminds us that regardless of the season, God is in control.

Read *Ecclesiastes 3:1-8*

What season of life are you in? What is God teaching you through this season?

Read *Ecclesiastes 3:11*

How has God turned a difficult season into something beautiful in your life?

Read *Genesis 26:24, Isaiah 41:10 and John 14:26*

The most frequent promise in the Bible is: "I am with you!" God is the "paraclete." "Para" means "come alongside." God sent us the Holy Spirit to come alongside of us and help us. How do we know that God is with us? How has the Holy Spirit guided or helped you in the past?

Read *Romans 8:1*

"We are not saved because of our goodness. We are not saved by a lack of sin. But only because of God's mercy! Jesus took all of our sins to the cross."

Christ made hope readily available for all people.

Have you ever known someone that you were absolutely shocked when they surrendered their life to Jesus? Why were you shocked at their response?

What does it mean to belong to Jesus? How does belonging to Him give you hope for your life?

Pastor Steve recently shared the story of Olympian, Derek Redmond. Due to a severe muscle injury, his father came down to the track and he helped him finish the race. When was a time when you let God carry you?

Read *Romans 8:38-39*

How does this verse bring you hope?

PERSONAL STORY

future that God had for him...no matter what the circumstances of life brought. I also believe that mental illness is an illness like cancer or heart disease. It's real and it's serious.

Over 3 years later, I can say that God is restoring my heart. There will always be a hole in it. My life was forever changed that night. Many lives were forever changed that night: his families, his friends... Suicide touches so many of the survivor's lives forever.

I clung to the truth of *Psalm 30:5*, "...joy comes in the morning." I CLUNG to it! Nights were dark & hard. But Jesus was always there. Always. He is real. There were nights I felt like I could reach out and touch His love, His real, unending love. There is always hope. Do we dare to share it with those who need it most? The hurting? "Authenticity ministers far more than togetherness." I think it's time we start being authentic.

STUDY QUESTIONS

How has belonging to a Christian community been beneficial to you? How would your life be different if you didn't have Christian community in your life? Who is someone that has helped you stay invested into this community?

We are created for community. Do you have close enough relationships to recognize and identify the season of life others are in right now? Who is someone who has recently experienced tragedy that you could reach out to?

Read *Psalm 34:18*

Who do you think this Scripture is referring to as the "brokenhearted?"

Share a time when someone encouraged or reached out to you during a difficult time. What did that mean to you?

What sacrifices can you make this week to bring hope to the brokenhearted? What does it mean for the church to be a hospital of hope? What are ways that you can focus on your hope in Christ this week?

How can you bring the hope of Christ to someone else this week? Is there someone God has placed on your heart that needs hope and prayer?

PERSONAL DEVOTION

Growing up, I loved spending time at my grandparents' house. They moved from time to time, but they always managed to live in some sort of small house on or near a lake. As a kid, this was a dream come true! It meant hours and hours of fishing, swimming, "king of the raft", riding on the boat and late night board games.

Once I hit my teenage years those activities seemed to get a bit dull, but I always had this hope that I would get to drive the boat. One day, my hopes and dreams came true when my grandpa said, "Let me show you how to drive this boat!" Later that day, after I learned how to drive the boat, my cousin and I took the boat out on the lake. We drove it around and then decided to go swimming in the middle of the lake. It seemed like a good idea, until after twenty minutes of swimming, we realized we had forgotten to drop the anchor. The boat was drifting away at a rapid rate. It took us a couple of hours to catch up to the boat and we eventually had to have another person with a boat help us retrieve it.

Lesson learned: "Drop the anchor!"

RESOURCES

Depression: Looking Up From the Stubborn Darkness by Edward T. Welch

The Truest Thing About You by David Lomas

Side by Side: Walking With Others in Wisdom and Love by Edward T. Welch

With this series we've chosen to provide what we believe to be valuable resources that can facilitate the spiritual growth and development of our people. By recommending these resources, Connection Pointe is not necessarily endorsing or agreeing with every aspect or teaching associated with them. If you have questions, please contact Brandon Faust, Brandon.Faust@connectionpointe.org.

Hebrews 6:19 reminds us that we have a strong and trustworthy anchor for our lives in God: *"This hope is a strong and trustworthy anchor for our souls. It leads us through the curtain into God's inner sanctuary."*

Read *Genesis 22:1-18*

All throughout Scripture we see situation after situation that God brings hope to. In verse 17, God promised Abraham, *"I will certainly bless you. I will multiply your descendants beyond number, like the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will conquer the cities of their enemies."* We are reminded of God's faithfulness and the hope that Abraham put into God... despite the fact that it seemed hopeless for Abraham and his wife, Sarah, to have children at their age.

Hebrews 6:15 says, *"Then Abraham waited patiently, and he received what God had promised."*

God instructed Abraham to bring his only son as a sacrifice to Him. (What?) Abraham had anchored himself to God and His promises, so he took his son, Isaac, to the mountain...but God intervened and provided a ram for the sacrifice of worship.

Abraham's hope and trust was in God.

What have you put your trust and hope in today? Are you tethered to God as your anchor, or do you feel like you are drifting and being pushed around by waves of life, anchorless?

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 encourages us, *"All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us."*

God is our anchor. He is our merciful Father and source of comfort. He is our hope in every situation and we can share that hope with others this week.

Write down 3 situations, issues or struggles that you want to give to God, our strong anchor, this week. Refer to last week's personal devotion on practicing His presence, and pray about those 3 situations daily.