How to pray for someone – 5 Step Model (Proclamation is never divorced from Demonstration)

1. The Interview
2. Diagnostic Decision
3. Prayer Selection
4. Prayer Engagement
5. Post Prayer Directions

Discovering the Treasures Buried in Grief 2

Often, what appears to be a catastrophic ending becomes instead the foundation of a great new beginning—if we follow God's pathway for our grief. I've experienced this in my own life and witnessed it in the lives of countless others over the years. In fact, miraculous shifts take place in us as we follow God's radical pathway of paying attention to the pain that comes with losses and waiting on him when everything in us wants to run away from him.

Recap of last week: How do we respond to grief?

- ✓ Pay attention to pain
- ✓ Wait in the confusing in-between
- ✓ Allow the old to birth the new

In his book Doing Reconciliation, Alexander interviewed me. Here is an excerpt from his book:

A Vineyard pastor who planted a church in Johannesburg in 2002, Andrew Christie, has been led to Christ in his teenage years but had wandered far from God in 1998. Andrew's father was attacked by thieves while he was opening his business. One held a gun to his ribs while the other thieves grabbed his mobile phone and personal valuables. Then a short went off. Andrew's father fell to the ground and died – the bullet passed through his lungs and heart. It was devastating for the family. Andrew was shaken to the core. But he turned to God, and God received him and helped him. Andrew became a fully devoted follower of Jesus, and now winning many people to Christ and leading God's people. Through Andrew, this evil has come back on the devil's head. Satan is now paying for it and will continue to pay for it through eternity.

The following are five treasures of resurrection that I have experienced in my own life and have seen become a reality in the lives of countless others who have bravely lamented in God's way.

1 - GOD OFFERS US REVELATION OF HIMSELF.

Embracing our losses enlarges our hearts to how incomprehensible, incredible, amazing, untraceable, infinite, transcendent, inexhaustible, and perfect God is. God's ways are much higher and more expansive than we can imagine.

And like Jeremiah during the disaster of Jerusalem's destruction at the hand of the Babylonians:

Lam 3:22-25 Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. (23) They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. (24) I say to myself, "The LORD is my

portion; therefore I will wait for him." (25) The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him;

We discover the depths of his love and faithfulness that are new every morning. We realize that we will never stop progressing or growing in the inexhaustible life of God.

2 - GOD MAKES US SOFTER AND MORE COMPASSIONATE.

Sadness softens our defences, and people experience us as safer containers of Jesus. Author and theologian Henri Nouwen rightly says that *the degree to which we grieve our own losses is in direct proportion to the depth and quality of the compassion we can offer to others*. He writes:

"There is no compassion without many tears . . . To become like the Father whose only authority is compassion, I have to shed countless tears and so prepare my heart to receive anyone, whatever their journey has been, and forgive them from the heart."

Peter encourages us this way…

1Pe 3:8 Summing up: Be agreeable, be sympathetic, be loving, be compassionate, be humble.

Absorbing our own pain, we can enter the pain of others. We become mature lovers and true mothers and fathers of the faith.

3 - GOD GIVES US A GREATER REVELATION OF OURSELVES.

Grieving reveals to us the extent to which self-will remains deeply embedded in us. I never understood, at least on a heart level, Jesus lying on the ground in Gethsemane struggling and overwhelmed by the will of the Father until I experienced my own grief.

Loss cuts something out of us, much as a gardener cuts back a plant for greater fruit.

John 15:1-2 I AM the True Vine, and My Father is the Vinedresser. (2) Any branch in Me that does not bear fruit [*that stops bearing*] He cuts away (trims off, takes away); and He cleanses and repeatedly prunes every branch that continues to bear fruit, to make it bear more and richer and more excellent fruit.

God does something in us through the fire of sorrow that enlarges our capacity to wait and surrender to his will. This breaking detaches and empties us so he can fill us with his life. And then, out of union with Jesus, he can fill us with a new and extraordinary capacity for fruitfulness.

4 - GOD MAKES US MORE OF OUR TRUE SELF IN CHRIST.

Sorrow has a remarkable power to wear away the masks we present to the world. Accomplishments or gifts with which we over-identify, give way and disintegrate. We are more liberated from having to impress others and freed from an adolescent avoidance of pain. We find ourselves able to follow God's plan with new freedom and can now rid ourselves of the unimportant things in life that others so desperately want. Something truer—Christ in and through us—slowly emerges.

You are accepted. You are chosen. You are free You are forgiven. You are a new person. You are a child of God. You are made in God's image. You belong to Jesus. Romans15:7 | John 15:16 | Galatians 4:7 | 1 John 1:9 | 2 Corinthians 5:17 | John 1:12 | Genesis 1:27 | 1 Corinthians 3:23 |

We acknowledge our brokenness and vulnerabilities rather than covering them over. And we break free from the illusion there is something richer or more beautiful than the gift of loving God and being loved by him.

5 - GOD MAKES US MORE TRULY ALIVE TO OUR ASTONISHING WORLD.

We enjoy a new, vivid appreciation of the sacredness in all of life—the changing seasons, the wind, the falling of the leaves, the holidays, the inner beauty of people. Our hearts are expanded to experience depths of life beneath the surface. And we find ourselves marvelling at the wonder and miracle of life more often.

A thief has only one thing in mind—he wants to steal, slaughter, and destroy. But I have come to give you everything in abundance, more than you expect—life in its fullness until you overflow! **John 10:10**

We are not the same people after this final phase of the grieving process. We finally realize that, just as the risen Jesus showed his wounds to the disciples following his resurrection, He sends us into the world to show our wounds as well.

Wounded Healer: We are all wounded healers. What is a wounded healer? The term is explained well in the following story: A man hears Jesus is in a particular village and decides to go and see this Messiah for himself. He embarks on the journey and once he arrives at the village, begins to look for Jesus. He looks in all the likely places, churches, synagogues, and Bible schools, then, upon not finding him, he thinks that possibly Jesus could be hungry, so he goes to the local coffee shop, and then he looks at a few restaurants. Eventually frustrated at not being able to find Jesus he asks a woman in the street: "Where is Jesus?" She replies, "He is outside the town in the leper colony." As the conversation goes on, he asks how he will recognize Jesus because everyone will be wrapped up in bandages. She replies, "Oh, that's easy, he is the one who is bandaging up his own wounds, and then bandaging up someone else's." He is the wounded healer.

Let today be a powerful reminder of what God can do when we are willing to embrace loss and grief. We discover that God has given us treasures on a pathway through grief that we never anticipated or chose for ourselves. They are treasures hidden in darkness. As the prophet Isaiah says:

Isa 45:3 I will give you the treasures of darkness, riches stored in secret places, so that you may know that I am the LORD, the God of Israel, who summons you by name.

When we make disciples who learn how to grow through pain, the rich fruit of godlike compassion toward others will flow from us to the world. Modeling our lives after Jesus who loved people in extraordinary ways now becomes a real possibility for us.

When we deal with our grief in God's way…

FIVE TREASURES OF RESURRECTION

1 - GOD OFFERS US REVELATION OF HIMSELF

2 - GOD MAKES US SOFTER AND MORE COMPASSIONATE.

3 - GOD GIVES US A GREATER REVELATION OF OURSELVES.

4 - GOD MAKES US MORE OF OUR TRUE SELF IN CHRIST

5 - GOD MAKES US MORE TRULY ALIVE TO OUR ASTONISHING WORLD