

sermon study guide

Speaker: Jason Hague

Date: October 26 / 27, 2019

Sermon Title: The Way of Aching Joy

PURSUE RELATIONSHIP: Opportunities to connect and pray as a group

1. What is an activity that is best done with others? How does doing something together make it a better experience?
2. What has been your experience with the body of Christ coming around you in a time of difficulty?

PURSUE GOD: Time that is devoted to the Word of God

Read Psalm 55:1-3, 16-18, 22

1. In his message, Jason said when his son Jack was diagnosed with autism, his first reaction was to give God the “silent treatment.” But when he finally opened up to God and was honest about how he felt, it was the first step of his healing. How honest are you with God in prayer? How do you feel praying “out of bounds” prayers?
2. From these Scriptures, what do you think God’s reaction is to our “out of bounds” prayers?

PURSUE MISSION: Seek to be the community of God’s people in your community

1. Jason said the second step in his healing was to be as honest with his church community as he was with God. What might it look like to be vulnerable in your church community? How vulnerable would you say you are within your church community?

Read Romans 12:15

2. Jason said, “Compassion is a magnet for those who are marginalized”. How does “mourning with those who mourn” draw people? Who is someone in your life, or the life of your church community, with whom you can “mourn”?

For Personal Reflection/Prayer:

In what ways might God be calling you to be vulnerable in your church community? In what ways might God be calling you to reach out to someone who is marginalized?

THE WORD (NIV)

Ps 55:1-3

- ¹ Listen to my prayer, O God,
do not ignore my plea;
- ² hear me and answer me.
My thoughts trouble me and I am distraught
- ³ because of what my enemy is saying,
because of the threats of the wicked;
for they bring down suffering on me
and assail me in their anger.

vv. 16-18

- ¹⁶ As for me, I call to God,
and the Lord saves me.
- ¹⁷ Evening, morning and noon
I cry out in distress,
and he hears my voice.
- ¹⁸ He rescues me unharmed
from the battle waged against me,
even though many oppose me.

v. 22

Cast your cares on the Lord
and he will sustain you;
he will never let
the righteous be shaken.

Romans 12:15

- ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.

This week’s writers: Edi Dygert, Deb Matiko and Jared Harrison

sermon study summary

The Way of Aching Joy

Jason Hague

Pastor Jason Hague gave this message at the end of the Umbrella Conference designed to equip and support the CSC special-needs members and their families. The context was a community of inclusion - the unity of Christ with all others, engaged regardless of ability, all contributing to the body of Christ: 1 Cor 12:12. The Break the Barriers team demonstrated many astonishing examples of the results of believing that no one is useless. Even those perceived as being weaker are indispensable to God's purpose. Debbie, founder of Break the Barriers, praised CSC for bringing the sick, the lame and the blind into church community.

Pastor Jason's message began with Romans 12:15: "Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep." Rejoicing tends to come easily; weeping not so much. Yet it is by embracing both that we become a compassionate and diverse community. Jason told his story of joy and pain. He grew up in a godly environment and anticipated a life of wholeness: a good job, a happy marriage and two girls; then a son. A video showed Jack learning to walk – he looked great! In the second video, he looked absent. And at three years old, Jack was diagnosed as autistic. Jason responded very negatively. He had ugly feelings, was disappointed with God and terrified about the future; and berated himself for feeling like this. Around him, people wanted to help. But we don't always respond well, sometimes with platitudes that hurt deeply. "God never gives you something you can't handle" isn't biblical. Many things come into our lives that we can't handle, or were ever meant to do so. We must turn to, not minimize, that pain to be able to give it to Jesus.

Jason tried giving God the silent treatment. His daughters, hiding under a blanket in the middle of the floor for a game of hide and seek, would coax Daddy to find them, unaware he knew exactly where they were. Neither could Jason hide from God. He finally decided to tell God exactly how he was feeling, how angry he was. He prayed his own psalms of lament. Lightning did not strike him.

There are more Psalms of lament in the Scriptures than Psalms of praise. David had ugly "out of bounds" feelings. We all do. David brought all those feelings to the Lord, (Psalm 55:1-3, 16-18, 22). Is it "out of bounds" to say that to God, when he already knows? Or is Jesus waiting for you to bring it to him in all its ugliness? This is the first step of healing: facing the pain and turning to Jesus.

Jason needed to do the same with his faith community. Instead of hiding the pain, he learned how to cry. As he opened up, broken and vulnerable, everyone pulled together. Vulnerability is the place where we let Jesus and people into our pain. People fell in love with Jack; and community where it's OK to struggle and to hurt surrounded them. In a 5K Run for Autism, this community showed up for "Team FlapJack". Jason was not running alone.

God meets us with comfort, turns it into compassion: a magnet for the marginalized, the misfits, those that don't seem to belong. When we're free to cry, we're free to celebrate the joy we've been missing in our pain. We no longer have to pretend that we're fine. It starts by crying together, celebrating together, then running together.