

“Love Hurts”

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- We often have an inaccurate view of love, believing it should only make us feel good, and that it can only bring happiness.
- “Our greatest joy and our greatest pain come in our relationships with others.” *(Stephen Covey)*

“Love Hurts”

- “You cannot protect yourself from sadness without protecting yourself from happiness. Love is painful, but the pain is certainly a blessing. Love is painful because love brings growth. Love demands, transforms and is painful because love gives you a new birth. Love brings your heart into relationship -- and when the heart is in relationship there is always pain. If you avoid the pain, you will miss all pleasures of life. With love are problems. But with problems is growth -- the greater the problem, the greater the opportunity. More and more pain, too. That's why many people never love -- it is so painful.” *(Jonathan Foer)*

“Love Hurts”

- That is why the highest, most mature form of love is a choice.
- It is the decision motivated by love to actively care for the best interests of the one who is loved, even if such care requires sacrifice and loss and brings sorrow and pain.
- Only those who love in this fashion truly understand love in its fullness.
- Therefore, it is essential to know that our commitment to love another will hurt from time to time, and that if we avoid or abandon love when it hurts, we are not worthy of being loved by the other in return.

When God Chose To Love Us, He Knew He Would Experience Pain

- God loved humankind and created and blessed us.
 - Gen. 2:27-28, 31 - “So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth’ ... 31 Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good.”

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- Imagine His joy in creating Adam and Eve and gifting them with elements of His Divine Nature.
- Imagine how carefully, lovingly He prepared a perfect home for them.
- Imagine the love He felt for His children as He met them in some form and walked with them in the garden.

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- Now imagine how He felt when the children He loves did something that vastly, violently distanced themselves from Him.
 - Gen. 3:7-13 - “Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings. 8 And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. 9 Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, ‘Where are you?’ 10 So he said, ‘I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.’ 11 And He said, ‘Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?’ 12 Then the man said, ‘The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.’ 13 And the LORD God said to the woman, ‘What is this you have done?’ The woman said, ‘The serpent deceived me, and I ate.’”

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- Their innocence was lost -- “they knew they were naked.”
- Had they ever had the desire to hide from God before?
- Had they ever been afraid of God before?
- Had Adam ever tried to blame God before?
- Everything God did for them was out of His love for them. How do you think that made Him feel?

When God Chose To Love Us, He Knew He Would Experience Pain

- God was saddened because of how far from Him His children grew to be over the years.
- We love our children dearly. We are sad when they leave home, sadder still when they move a distance away, and the saddest of all when they shut us out of their lives.
- This is also the price of God's love for humankind.
 - Gen. 6:5-6 - “Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.”

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- At some point, to ease the pain in and damage to our hearts, we must let our children go on with their lives, hoping one day they will return.
- And so must God allow them to go, desiring that they would come home to Him, but consigning them to the fate they have chosen if they do not.

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- Jesus loves God and left the glory of heaven for the pain and rejection of this world to do His Father's will.
 - John 1:18 - "No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him."
 - John 4:34 - "Jesus said to them, My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work."
 - John 6:38 - "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me."

When God Chose To Love Us, He Knew He Would Experience Pain

- Jesus loves us and went to the cross taking the pain we earned.
 - John 15:9-13 - “As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. 10 If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. 11 These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. 12 This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.”
 - 2Cor. 8:9 - “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.”

When God Chose To Love Us, He Knew He Would Experience Pain

- The Father and Son love us, knowing that their love would leave Them vulnerable to being hurt by those They love.
- They were willing to take the risk, not just for the reward of the relationship, but their love for the other made their wellbeing paramount.

When We Choose To Love Another, We Will Experience Pain

- Spouses love one another, but occasionally experience pain in the relationship, stress and strife in crises, and agonizing loss when one passes from life before the other.
 - Ezek. 24:15-19 - “Also the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 16 ‘Son of man, behold, I take away from you the desire of your eyes with one stroke; yet you shall neither mourn nor weep, nor shall your tears run down. 17 Sigh in silence, make no mourning for the dead; bind your turban on your head, and put your sandals on your feet; do not cover your lips, and do not eat man's bread of sorrow.’ 18 So I spoke to the people in the morning, and at evening my wife died; and the next morning I did as I was commanded. 19 And the people said to me, ‘Will you not tell us what these things signify to us, that you behave so?’”

When We Choose To Love Another, We Will Experience Pain

- Parents love their children, make sacrifices in order to raise them, and subject themselves to the potential to be hurt when they leave or die, and especially if they should depart the faith.
 - 2Sam. 18:5, 14, 31-33 - “Now the king had commanded Joab, Abishai, and Ittai, saying, ‘Deal gently for my sake with the young man Absalom.’ And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains orders concerning Absalom... 14 Then Joab ... took three spears in his hand and thrust them through Absalom's heart, while he was still alive in the midst of the terebinth tree... 32 And the king said to the Cushite, ‘Is the young man Absalom safe?’ So the Cushite answered, ‘May the enemies of my lord the king, and all who rise against you to do harm, be like that young man! 33 Then the king was deeply moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept. And as he went, he said thus: O my son Absalom-my son, my son Absalom-if only I had died in your place! O Absalom my son, my son!’”

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- Elders and preachers love the local church and commit themselves to serve it sacrificially regardless of the personal pain they and their families experience from the unkind, or the unfaithful, or the ungrateful.
 - Acts 20:31, 36-38 - “Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears... 36 And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. 37 Then they all wept freely, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, 38 sorrowing most of all for the words which he spoke, that they would see his face no more.”

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- The sorrows and sacrifices occasionally experienced by our commitment and love as members for others in the local church.
 - Phil. 2:25-30 - “Yet I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier, but your messenger and the one who ministered to my need; 26 since he was longing for you all, and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. 27 For indeed he was sick almost unto death; but God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. 28 Therefore I sent him the more eagerly, that when you see him again you may rejoice, and I may be less sorrowful. 29 Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such men in esteem; 30 because for the work of Christ he came close to death, not regarding his life, to supply what was lacking in your service toward me.”

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- 1Cor. 16:15-18 - “I urge you, brethren--you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints-- 16 that you also submit to such, and to everyone who works and labors with us. 17 I am glad about the coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, for what was lacking on your part they supplied. 18 For they refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore acknowledge such men.”

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- 2Cor. 11:23-29 - “Are they ministers of Christ? --I speak as a fool--I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. 24 From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26 in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; 27 in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness-- 28 besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches. 29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation?”

Love Hurts

- “Too often we define love as something that we feel verses something that we give. Sacrifice is the pinnacle of our humanity. Yet, so many of us stay in the basement of our greed. Sacrifice is assumed to be the giving away of that which we need for our own survival. But have we considered that survival, in the spiritual sense of the word, is not based on what we keep, but on what we give away? I am thankful that there are those among us who have sacrificed dearly on behalf of us. And I ardently pray to God that I might be less like myself and more like them. I would much prefer the ‘wealth of impoverishment’ (where I have spent my life giving to others), over the ‘impoverishment of wealth’ (where I have squandered my life giving to myself). By far, the best way to find myself before I end up losing myself is to put someone else before myself.” *(Craig Lounsborough)*

Love Hurts

- Yes, love hurts. But when we experience that pain when loving another, we are giving them the most they could hope for in that relationship, and doing for them the very best a human being can to lift them up.
- How often in the past did the unconditional love of others lift you out of a dangerous or dark place?
- When you suffer loss to lift up another, you are behaving just like your Father in Heaven.
- We who have been lifted up by the love of God, must reach out and risk the pain to lift up others.