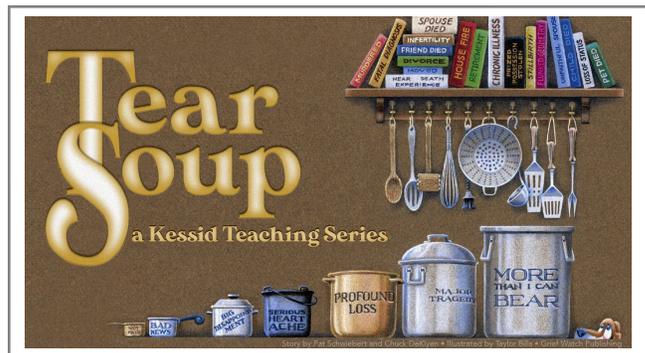


“THE SWIRL”

Date: June 20, 2021

Speaker: Danny Clinton



Today will be an easy service to skip emotionally. Here’s why...

- It’s one thing to make and even smell Tear Soup... It’s a whole other experience to sit and taste it.
- Today we are going to talk about what that’s like...
- ... And I’m going to serve each of you just a bit of my own Tear Soup.
- **Important!** You don’t have to partake... You can take a pass.
- No one should force you to eat either their or your own Tear Soup.

“Tear Soup can ONLY be consumed voluntarily.”

- Still, it will not be easy to partake... **Because the Church has been giving sermons and classes on how to skip Tear Soup for years!**
- A woman I know struggled with infertility - Three rounds of in-vitro!
- She asked, “Why did God allow this to happen?”

Pastor’s Quote:

“Maybe God saw something in you that you weren’t ready to be a mother.”

- This happens because the Church doesn’t know how to sit in the room with both Great Loss and Great Life at the same time...

“The Church has more often than not refused to taste the Tear Soup of Others.”

- This incredibly human, swirling place of emotion can’t be allowed to exist as it is, so we try and Fix, Clarify, Excuse, or Explain everyone’s pain away...
- **And, the saddest part is, we do it with great care and thoughtfulness.**

Rembrandt’s “The Lady and Gentleman in Black” – 1633

- It was only recently that x-rays revealed that sitting within this empty space before them, there once was the image of a small child playing with a dog that was chasing a ball...
- It’s presumed the child died and the parents asked Rembrandt to come back and cover the boy and his pet.
- Only Rembrandt, with his incredible skill/care, could erase the boy and his dog with so much perfection, just as **“Only the Church would be able to cover so much emotional pain with so much spiritual distraction.”**

- We must get better at sitting with “The Swirl” of Loss and Life with each other... But first we must start with being able to sit with it within ourselves.

My Father passed away unexpectedly October of 2019 from complications following his open-heart surgery.

- I shared a bit about him at the time; how he was a man of great struggle...
- That how he was both a Scoundrel and a Saint.
- I shared last time that he was married 10 times... but I was wrong. We found out a few months after his death that it was 11!
- He was a carousing, and often manipulative man...but he was also very funny and loving. Often encouraging me to seek God, even as he chose not to.
- Much of this loving side would be expressed through his music, both secular and worship. And so, this is something he passed down to all of us kids...
- Every child in my immediate family can sing... We are a family of vocalists!

For many years, I was privileged to lead Worship with my Uncle Dave – Who sings with us here at Kessid. (Dave is my Father’s Brother)

- As you can see this was when my father was in his Dog the Bounty Hunter phase. – I’m sure all your dads have gone through that phase!
- **Side Note:** If you are wondering why this voice might sound familiar to you, that’s because we found out a few months after my father’s death that he had been doing some work ghost writing and ghost singing music for someone else...
- During Covid, that person got into a bit of trouble and so my father’s lyrics and voice went worldwide... as the voice of the now infamous ‘Tiger King,’ Joe Exotic.
- That’s right ladies and gentlemen... My Father is the voice of the Tiger King! (Which, by the way, makes me a Tiger Prince!)

Now all these complicated pieces of my father’s story are what make up the ingredients of my Tear Soup...

- For the last 20 months, I’ve been making this soup on and off. Some days have been easier than others... But that doesn’t mean I’ve tasted much of it, until recently!

These are my wife’s parents, David and Midge Ruiz!

- Since the loss of my father, I have found great solace sitting with these two-loving people.
- David, as a Physician, Husband, and Father, especially has played a critical role in helping me to better understand what a less chaotic father figure might be like.
- I’m grateful for the place he’s allowed me to hold within his family.

Then out of the blue, just a few months ago, the family was told that David would have to undergo an even more complicated open-heart surgery than the one my dad had passed away from...

- The initial emotion for the family was of course traumatic, but for me it was quietly frightening... I just lost one and could potentially lose another!

Fast forward and I'm happy to share that David's surgery was a great success!

- ...But because of Covid we weren't allowed to see him until well after he was on his way to recovery.
- I'll never forget the afternoon we went over to visit for the first time with him Post Op...
- **We walked in...** He looked great! He was smiling! He was Talking! So, why was I so instantly sad?
- Over the next hour David updated Erin and I about his procedure and his recovery and so on, and I just kept getting Sadder!
- It wasn't until he began to share how thankful he was, to reflect a bit about all this experience had awakened within him, that I finally realized why I was feeling the way I was...
- I was sitting in the room with Great Loss and Great Life at the same time!

The Swirl rushed upon me, and I Tasted the Soup I had been making for over a year...

- David was sitting before me... ALIVE (And, I was so happy for that!), but my Dad was nowhere to be found... He was DEAD (And, I was also so sad about that).
- Both these powerful feelings swirled within the same space at the same time!
- David would smile, share, and even Laugh, all bringing me great comfort, while also reminding me that I would never experience any of those things with my own father again...

Later that night, I had a good cry, and an honest talk with The Lord...

- I thanked God for David's recovery. I also told him how sad I was about my own Father... how much I missed him.
- And then something new, for me at least, happened... It was as if, while I was eating this Soup that had taken me months to prepare, God pulled up a chair, poured Himself self a bowl, and started eating with me... Bite after Bite... Memory after Memory... He was just with me as I was... Swirling and Unhidden... Just Danny with Just God...

A Verse I've always loved...

*(Vs) Psalm 113:2-3 – "Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and forevermore!
From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the Lord is to be praised!"*

- For me, blessing the Blesser is a lot like feeding the Feeder.
- It reminds me that God the Father accepts all of what I bring, even if what I bring is messy, sad, angry, and grief-ridden... And you know what, afterwards I felt just a bit more whole. A bit revitalized!
- Now, this certainly doesn't mean everything is better or even back to normal.

I believe that this is the purpose of eating Tear Soup...

- Intimacy and Healing

Fathers in the room: If you can refuse to take a pass from tasting...

- God will meet you in your mess.
- You can meet your own children within theirs.

The Tasting, and not just The Making of Tear Soup, has become a regular part of my healing from loss...

- I'd like to show you what this looks like for me. I'd like to invite you to have just a small cup of my regularly made and tasted Tear Soup.
- I shared with you earlier that my family was a family of vocalists, well, that seems to be true not just for my father's family, but for my own as well.
- About 6-7 months after my dad died, my daughter Elena came to me and said she was going to step out and sing a solo song at church... She been singing a little bit in youth group, but that was it.
- I was, of course, ecstatic! She practiced and practiced, and then the service came for her to sing...
- The lights lowered, she stepped forward, opened her mouth, and her beautiful voice rang out... Almost Instantly, I was overwhelmed with sadness, but I didn't take a pass. I've been getting better at eating Tear Soup...
- So, while everyone else was standing, I sat down... and let The Swirl take me away.
- My Daughter was a Singer, like me, and like my dad... She was wonderful!
- And my father would never get to hear her. He'd never know...
- In this sense, every time my daughter sings it hurts me... And, every time my daughter sings my heart swells with how grateful I am for her, my father, and the love God has for us.

And so... because I'd like to share a bit of my Tear Soup with you... I've asked my daughter Elena, to close our service with a song.

- I hope it encourages you to not just make but taste your own as well.