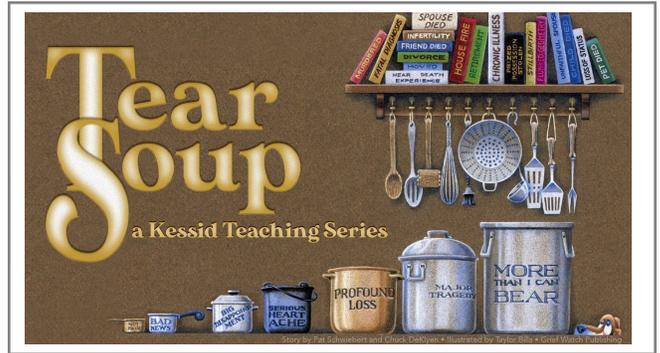


“HEALTHY GRIEVING”
Date: July 11, 2021
Speaker: Byron Kehler



Grieving recognizes value, promotes compassion for others, invites intimacy, fosters our own healing, and aligns our hearts with God’s heart.

Healthy Grieving: How do we do it? What do we do with it?

- If you grew up in a family where grief wasn’t modeled well, where you didn’t get to watch what healthy grieving looks like, then you might find yourself wondering how are people supposed to grieve?
- What does healthy grieving even look like? Tear Soup describes some of that, but I would like to add to those ideas today.

First: Be intentional with your grief.

- Grieving is most helpful when we engage it in a purposeful and intentional way.
- Take inventory of the loss.

Second: Tear Soup needs to simmer.

- Grieving requires space and opportunity. We must slow down, get quiet, provide an opportunity for the feelings to make their way to the surface. Reflect, reminisce, remember. In Tear Soup, she describes it as adding memories.
- Grieving takes as long as it takes. Conventional wisdom suggests that soup often needs to simmer, sometimes for years as we visit and revisit it.

Third: For most people, grieving involves crying.

- That is commonly how we express our grief in healthy ways.
- Crying washes our hearts.
- Did you know that the chemical composition of tears when we are grieving are actually different than tears your eyes cry when there is something in your eye.
- There are three types of tears:
 - **Basal Tears:** These are typical tears that keep the eye hydrated, clean, and nourished. The salt content of these tears is comparable to that of blood plasma. Lysozyme in basal tears protects against infection.
 - **Reflex Tears:** Reflex tears are produced in response to irritation from chemicals, bright light, or foreign matter. Although the chemical composition isn’t appreciably different from basal tears, a much larger volume of tearing occurs. The same reflex that causes watery eyes is linked to coughing, yawning, and vomiting.

- **Weeping Tears:** The tears you cry when your heart is hurting are chemically different than the tears you cry when your eyes are hurting. The tears that we cry as an emotional response or from pain contain the protein-based hormones that act as a natural painkiller. Those chemicals are intended to aid in healing, and even provide some pain relief. Crying these tears helps us relieve stress, move through our pain, and heal.

Fourth: Memorialize your losses.

- I watch people do that with tattoos, poems, pictures, sending balloons into the sky, buying toys, writing prayers, and making tokens. My office is filled with trinkets and treasures that document, record, and memorialize the stories I have heard, the hurts I have experienced, the tragedies I have witnessed, and the sad places I have been.
- We do that with the cross. When you think about it, it's a little odd that as Christians we wear crosses as jewelry. We wear the very instrument that killed our savior. Why do we do that? We do that as a reminder of His sacrifice, what He lost and we gained. We memorialize the wound.

Fifth: Grief is best processed in community.

- Tear Soup is a meal best shared. Community can look a variety of ways. You can talk authentically with a friend, lean on a loved one, share in a small group, or meet with a therapist. We process best when we sit in it with others.

Through the gates of pain we enter joy. Those that grieve well, live and love well.