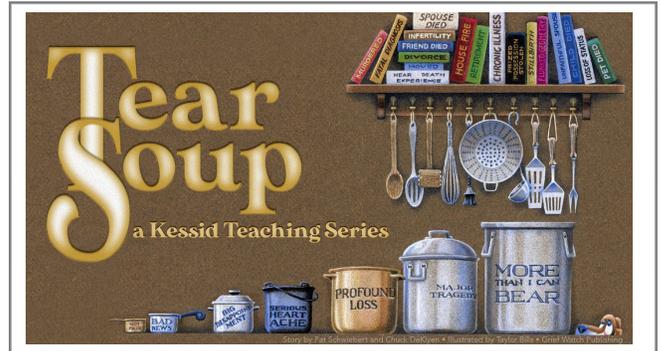


“MISERABLE COMFORTERS”

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Speaker: Chris Potter



- Over the last 4 weeks that we've spent in this series, we have talked about the benefits of healthy grieving, about how we should grieve, and why not grieving can be so damaging, using the Bible as our guide and our Tear Soup book as a valuable resource.
- We have even heard about stories of grief and tasted some Tear Soup together. Many of you have bravely reached out sharing your own grief stories as well...
- Today, building on those ideas, I want to shift our focus to the idea of grieving well together, and to the role we can play in coming alongside each other in this process.

How can we love each other in and through our grief?

- There is no "one right way to come alongside someone in their grief, but there are definitely wrong ways.
- Could it be that some of the scripts we have been given to meet others in their grief subtly pressure them to get through the Tear Soup process quicker than is healthy, and even misrepresent God Himself?

We see one example of this in the life of Job.

- In the first 2 Chapters of the Book of Job, we see him go from a place of blessing to losing everything that he holds dear (family, health, possessions, security). In this deep grief and despair, he is visited by 3 friends who just want to help...
- These three friends have names (Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar) but we are going to call them Job's "**Miserable Comforters.**"

(Vs.) Job 2:11 – "Now when Job's three friends... heard about all this adversity that had come upon him, each of them came from his home, and they met together to go and sympathize with Job and comfort him."

- Their hope is to bring him from grief to comfort.
- The do what friends do, they show up! But they do so in a way that isn't helpful. For 30+ chapters, they discuss this suffering with him. Instead of sitting with their friend in his suffering, they want to explain why God would do something like this, because they "know."
- They explain that God must be punishing Job because of his sin, as they believe that if you are a wise/good person and you honor God, only good things will happen to you. But if you are evil and unwise, only bad things will happen to you.

Thankfully, Job eventually turns from these “miserable comforters” and to God Himself... and Job and God engage in a messy, raw, and ultimately beautiful exchange with one another...

In this exchange Job is...

- At times very confident that God is wise and just
- At other moments, he is doubting God’s goodness
- He even comes to accuse God of being reckless, unfair and corrupt.

But He is now not with his “miserable comforters,” but instead with “The Father of compassion who comforts us IN ALL our troubles”...

(Vs.) Job 42:7 (NLT) – After the LORD had finished speaking to Job, he said to Eliphaz the Temanite: “I am angry with you and your two friends, for you have not spoken accurately about me, as my servant Job has.

- **This is really important...** God honors Job’s struggle and how he came honestly before to Him with all of his emotion and pain and simply wanted to talk to God himself.
- The messy way was the “accurate way” but the messy way is uncomfortable, for both the person in grief, and the comforter. Yet this is exactly where we are called regularly to go.
- Communion – a little different today

This cup is a grief story...

(Vs.) 1 Cor. 11:23-26 – For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for^[b] you. Do this in remembrance of me.” ²⁵ In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Jesus, through communion, regularly calls us... “From our comfort and into Grief”

- Anyone that has grown mentally, physically, or spiritually knows that growth is not found in comfort. This is exactly where we are called regularly to go... But to do so we need guides, and I can’t think of a better guide than Pat Schwiebert, - Tear Soup Author.

Pat’s ‘You’re not Helping’ Card

- Don't try to fix me
- Let me be sad
- Trust me to know how to grieve
- Mention my loved one's name
- Let me cry
- Help me remember