

“MEETING GOD IN OUR DEEPEST PAIN”

A STORY OF GOD MEETING A WOMAN IN HER ANGER . . . WITH HIS “ARMS OF LOVE”

Having worked with hundreds of individuals since 1995, there are many occasions when we have had the privilege of seeing God manifest Himself—sometimes in profound ways—to heal and reveal His love to His hurting children. One of these occasions that stands out in our memory from a number of years ago was when He revealed His presence in a very significant way when we did not expect it. Actually, it “blew us away.” Let us explain. We were working with a woman who was in the midst of processing some very deep pain associated with childhood sexual abuse from her father, as well as deep hurts from others. In preparation for a particular session we had asked her to prepare a list of people from her past whom she felt she needed to forgive. (NOTE: We encourage our clients to forgive from the “cost” of the perceived injury, for example, the betrayal, abandonment, rejection, etc.). As she began to forgive her father for the abuse, she became very angry. As the anger intensified, the object of that anger moved from her earthly father to God, feeling very upset for what she perceived as His lack of protection or indifference regarding the abuse she incurred as a little girl. At the very moment of her most profound anger with God—rage mixed with her tears—the presence of the Lord entered that counseling room in such a way that all three of us present were overwhelmed! In that moment of this woman’s deepest acknowledgement of her pain—which included her anger with God—He came and poured out His compassionate love on her! We were all immediately in tears and this woman melted immediately in the Father’s presence, expressing that it was like He came and put His arms around her and held her.

A STORY OF GOD MEETING A MAN IN HIS ANGER . . . “YOU’RE THE APPLE OF MY EYE”

On another occasion we were working with a man who had a very significant problem with anger and rage, and actually, was quite intimidating in nature. As we worked with this man over time it became apparent that he had incurred some very deep wounding in his childhood, which was providing the “fuel” for his anger. During one particular session this man shared with us a situation that had occurred the week before whereby he was in his truck and was expressing a great deal of anger with God. This man was connecting more with his deep-seated pain and had become so angry with God that he was “inviting him into the ring to fight it out.” The man shared that as he yelled this indignant invitation to God, he heard the following words inside of him saying, “You’re the apple of my eye.” He had no idea what that meant but he was immediately undone as he sensed it was God “breaking in” to his heart . . . his pain. And he wept. When he got home he told his wife what had happened and she told him that the phrase “the apple of my eye” was in the Bible (see Deut. 32:10; Ps. 17:8; Zech 2:8). Figuratively, this phrase means “someone cherished above others.” In Hebrew, it is a reference to the “tiny reflection of yourself that you can see in the other person’s pupils.” To be the “apple of God’s eye” we are in the center of His vision. We are **that** important to Him. And these words were Father God’s response to this man’s anger!

THE ISSUE OF ANGER AND SCRIPTURE

We are aware that many people are angry inside and may either deny its existence or attempt to minimize or rationalize it away. In our experiences with helping people find healing and restored intimacy with God, denying or suppressing such anger only inhibits and delays the process. But is the expression of anger Biblical? We know there are many examples as well as cautions in Scripture whereby anger is destructive and sinful. Yet, there are many other examples—especially in the Psalms—where anger was expressed and would not be considered sinful (see Ps. 69; 109). The prophet Jeremiah openly expressed his anger with God (Jer. 20:7-18). Jesus, himself, openly expressed his anger but of course, did not sin (John 2:13-16). Scripture clearly states that we, too, can be angry and yet not sin in our anger (Eph. 4:26).

ANGER IS A POINTER . . . TO OUR PAIN

Although anger can become destructive and take on a “life of its own,” it is often only a pointer to something else. It points to deeper emotions of pain, fear and/or disappointments that are rooted in our woundedness—whether it is from childhood wounds or wounds that have come along life’s journey. Feeling betrayed, rejected, abandoned, unaccepted, insecure, or inadequate stem from these wounded places. Often it is the anger we feel that allows us to know that something deeper exists—our pain—and the Father desires to bring healing to those deeper places.

AND GOD WILL MEET US IN OUR PAIN

I (Jerry) have shared with many that some of the most intimate times in my relationship with God occurred during a season of deep pain as I pursued emotional and spiritual healing. It was during those years that in my brokenness He met me many times in many different ways. And many of those times my pain was being expressed from a place of anger—feeling anger from the wounds of others and sometimes feeling anger with God. Having a father who himself had anger issues when I was a child caused me to reject anger altogether. Yet, the anger (pain) that was inside of me needed to be dealt with and actually, God was the initiator of that process. He wasn’t and isn’t as concerned about the anger (as long as we don’t hurt others with it) and is more interested in revealing and healing the underlying roots or causes. We must, however, invite Him into the pain—including the anger—and allow Him to do what He does best . . . “heal the brokenhearted and set the captives free.”

PRAYER

Please pray with us . . . Father, I desire to trust You more with my heart and I want to invite You into those places where I am not experiencing the fullness of life that You have for me. I don’t want to suppress anger yet I also don’t want it to direct my life. I am willing to allow You to reveal places in me that need more of Your healing love. I am willing to allow You to show me where anger—whether it be too much or too little—is pointing to deeper places that need healing. And when You allow me to feel the pain and grief that is connected with those wounds, please come and meet me there. I need You. In Jesus’ Name. Amen.

From the Father's Heart,

Jerry and Denise Basel