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The whole idea is to put my story of hurt into God's salvation history. That is our tag line. That tag line is you and I have hurt, that's your story, you and I have pain that's our story and what we are going to do today is to take that story of pain and put it into God's story. That's the big picture. The small picture is your story of your suffering and pain, the big picture is God's salvation story and I am going to fit that in and that's why we call it gospel centered caring.

RECAP:

The first session was an introduction to basically biblical counseling and Paul Tripp puts it this way

The role of Gospel Centered counselling is not so much to fix you up but to root you in Christ - Paul Tripp.

You are not here to solve everyone's problems, you cannot. If they come to you and you help them, the danger is they are dependent on you. You have become their God. They are no longer looking at God, they are looking at you. You give advice they don't like; you get blamed for their problems. So our job is to tie people to Christ, and we saw this in how Jesus reach out to the Samaritan woman. Let me just give you a quick roundup.

Why is that particular story important? Because the Samaritan woman was obviously a person with a lot of baggage. She had five husbands. She was a social outcast and she was in a spiral downwards. The last person she is staying with is not even her husband. Jesus not only rescued her from that, here is the thing, Jesus made her a disciple. So caring for people has a discipleship context. You must understand that. We are not here to care people per se, we are here to make everybody disciples of Christ.

Number two, she went out to the city and she told everybody, she says, come and see this man who told me everything I did. Wow! That's saying a lot. That means caring for people or biblical counseling has a missiological aspect. It is not just discipling, it is outward going, it is going out. So we are going to come today to look at how we do that.

The second session we did which for me was very helpful. We went into a bit of the pragmatics about it and we looked at this video, it is called, 'it's not about the nail'. In this video, there is a woman who had a nail and because the husband doesn't empathize with her pain, she cannot see the nail and biblical counseling really deals with the idea of empathy.

- "Rejoice with those who rejoice. Mourn with those who mourn." *Romans 12:15*
- "Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering." *Hebrews 13:3*

So this is biblical empathy. It is to go to a person where they hurt, instead of expecting that person to come to where you want them to be, that's the foundation. You go to where they hurt. You don't expect them to come to where you want them to be and this is what Jesus did with the Samaritan woman. It tells you about the heart of Jesus. The classic case is, that is the story of the gospel

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us - John 1:14

So today we are going to look at the gospel story and we are going to see how when you care for someone, how is that wrap into the gospel and when we look at the gospel we tend to just say, it is about Jesus dying for me for my sins. It is not. The gospel story begins at Genesis. It begins from creation to bondage to recreation. That's the way we look at it. So you need to understand the entire spectrum of the gospel. How from Genesis man sinned and how because of that we live in a fallen world. In a fallen world, there are mental issues and this is the area the church has long overlooked and the church has subcontracted that out to the secular world. So:

- The church doesn't know how to deal with people with epilepsy.
- The church doesn't know how to deal with people with depression.
- The church doesn't know how to deal with people with anxiety attacks.
- The church doesn't know how to deal with people with so many issues and they say is the role of the secular world and we split the two.

That's completely against Ephesians 1. In Ephesians 1, at the end of the chapter Paul is very clear, God put everything, the whole cosmos is under Christ. So the church has to grapple this. Grapple with clear mental health issues and then the psychological issues. People who deal with loneliness, people who deal with anger, people who deal with insecurity and the key is the gospel. We are going to look at how that happens. So let me just give you the whole breakdown of this before we go to the chart.

We can breakdown the gospel simply into this. There is a gospel story. What is it? It deals with sin. It deals with redemption. The article that you have shows system of self redemption. That gives you a key of why we have compartmentalized the life and how we often try to redeem ourselves instead of letting Christ redeem us.

So we are going to explore that later. So the sin, redemption. Redemption leads to discipleship and then there is church and consummation. Consummation simply means, the day will come where perfection will arrive. So some people struggle with mental issues and they need medication and they will always need that medication until Jesus comes again. That is something that church has to recognize. Not every problem can be solved by prayer.

Let's break this down.

- **The Gospel story:** "How does my story of hurt fit into God's salvation story?"
- **Sin:** "What's the root source of our hurts?" "Where do we place sin in our hurting?"

There are two issues to sin. One, you live in a fallen world. In a fallen world, there will be things that require medical attention and physiological attention and there are things where it is a sinful heart and the two are connected. We will look at that today.

- **Redemption:** "How does Christ bring us peace with our hurts?" "How does Christ change people?"

If I am depressed, whether it is clinically depressed, or I am not clinically depressed, but I feel empty my life and these are the things that saddens me. You see people come to church for 20 years, 30 years and they don't like they have a victorious life. So something is not right. So this is the key area we will look at. Redemption has a purpose.

- **Discipleship:** "How can our inner life increasingly reflect the inner life of Christ?" "How does bearing good fruit or bad fruit reveal areas we have to change?"

In psychological terms, they always like to use the issue of the root and the tree. The problem is the symptom, you look at the root. In fact, the Bible brought it up already in Galatians. It talk about good fruit and bad fruit. Good fruit is the Holy Spirit, the bad fruit is all these symptoms of fallen world and how do you bear good fruit, you must have good roots. Function of discipleship is good fruit and we are reminded again, you never do this alone, you require the church.

- **Church:** "How can we as spiritual family help each other in dealing with our hurts?"
- **Consummation:** "How does our future destiny with Christ make a difference in our lives today as saints who struggle against suffering and sin?"

So let me just give you a brief. When people have problems. This is what they do? They split. So I have a depression because I am Asian, I don't tell anyone, I will see a doctor, a therapist, whatever it is. The psychotherapist, a psychologist, a psychiatrist, I get some medication, I don't tell anybody because no face. That maybe on one day when I am not feeling so proud, I will go up to either when Arnold is speaking or Pastor Leon is speaking or one of the pastors, can you pray for me.

The pastor prays for you and then every day you are just you and maybe your family or your wife and they provide support. Now what is problem with this diagram. They are completely separated, and the biblical model is this. They are interconnected. I give you an example. I have been spending a lot of time looking at other churches and like I said, what I am going to speak to you today, I had the privilege of sitting into Adam Road Presbyterian Church. They had a camp here. They had a very strong mental health department and the counseling session, the first session all three must attend. The therapist must be there, the pastor must be there and what they call the buddy system must be there and I am trying to implement that.

Okay, let's break it down a little bit. Because there is such a wide scope, we are just going to look at three areas and hopefully we spend time to go deep. We are going to look at perspective. You see when you have an issue, your perspective is critical. So now everyone is happy but suddenly you loose your job, things go bad in the marriage, things go on and if it goes one after the other, you feel really-really bad, I push you a bit to the edge, you get suicidal thoughts. Perspective is key. So we are going to look at what we call a gospel perspective of our problem. That's foundational.

What happens is that, perspective becomes you. So when your problem consumes you, your problem becomes your identity. You are the sum of your problems. So we have to look at our identity struggles and that's in Ephesians 3. We will be jumping little bit here and there. Lastly, we will look at the diagram and we look at gospel redemption versus self-redemption.

Let me give you the key. The key is worship is key to our perspective in life. You either worship God or we worship what we need to feel happy. That's in Romans 1. Here is the thing, we Christians believe we are worshipping God but we are actually worshipping something else. You can come to church, you can recite that Jesus died for my sins and you can actually believe God is king in your life. Actually, He is not. You see, all of us at one point are on the quest. We define our worth and I tell you how we define our worth and we go on a quest to put value to our worth and they key sinful proposition is, what must I do. That's the root problem of sin. Actually God is telling you, you can do nothing but on a subconscious level what must I do to be okay. That's why you have the key verse and Romans tells us, it is I want, I will, I must. If I don't have this, whatever it is, I will not be happy, I will not be happy, I will not be a man, I will not be this or that. Then the danger is, because it involves other people, the other person you should and you didn't and because you didn't, I will and this is one of the reasons why marriages breakup.

Because you are in idolatry, but you don't realize it. If all the Christians were spewing out one another, never underestimate this, the number of Christian leaders and we are not even talking about sin, we just breakup Charles Stanley, people who write books. There is a key reason why Peter Scazzero wrote a book, emotionally

healthy spirituality and his key tag line for discipleship, you cannot be spiritually mature unless you are emotionally healthy. That's the function of this gamma classes that we try to do this. These are the key words in your subconscious mind. Ask yourself, I want, I will, I must. That happens at your subconscious level, idols are coming in.

Number two, when you impose it on your spouse, you should, you didn't and because you didn't I will. They are all subconscious. Idolatry is creeping you and you are worshipping something pagan, but on the conscious mind you see you are worshipping God.

Let's say honestly. I am a guy who is not having a good time. He says, what is my view of self. I am inadequate, very common. Why am I inadequate. Two things shape that. Your past and your present. One, my parents never gave me much attention. I got good results, I went back home, dad never spoke, they favored my brother. And what happens is that, that after a while because you are young, the prefrontal cortex is malleable, it forms you. That's why childhood trauma is such a big issue, but it doesn't have to go so extreme and what we are, we are what we call we interpret issues. So you interpret your relationship with your parents. Why did my parents not give me attention, but gave attention to my brother and my sister, so there must be something wrong with me? That's the interpretation and the interpretation begins when you are a kid and it cements itself in your subconscious.

Then we look at the present. You go up, you hate your job man. And what you do, you interpret that. That's what you do. So you combine the two. My identity is this. You pause and you think about that. You can write anything in there. These things shape you. That's on the mind, because the mind isn't renewed, Romans 12, but scripture is very clear. Scripture is always talking about the heart and the heart has got to do the issue of hurts. So you pause and you ask yourself, how do I feel and these are things you write in an honest moment. You don't write it, what we call it consciously, that's why you do it privately. I feel invisible. What that does it bounces off the identity. So your past and your present and your emotions, you shape your self to this. Now what that does is that, it comes out, out of the heart of man comes out, so emotion spill out. You are sad, lonely, you look at someone else who has got something you didn't have, you get jealous. What I do when I was young that my life turned out like that, you get bitter. They are called reactive emotions and there is a trigger mechanism because this is just emotion. So after that they consolidate, you think through it, it goes to behavior. Because the emotion is just an emotion. A behavior is action. So it pulls and you get withdrawn. Why do you get withdrawn? It is your coping mechanism, because you are invisible, don't want anyone to come to me, because I have been broken too many times, I was guarded and when you push too much I freak out, I break out in cold sweat or certain things happen.

You begin to track your behavior because what this does is that, it helps you link everything. It is a very simple tool that Tim Keller developed. It is very gospel

centered and I found it for me, it was very eye opening because of the simplicity of it. Now that after a while consolidates and it leads you to what he calls, they call a self-redemption strategy. Because you need to survive. You need to feel happy. So my surface idol is this. The first one is, I have a different personality, because I don't want you to know who I really am, so I church I am one person, at work I am another person, it could be anything but is a surface thing. That means easily tracked. Some people they come from a very poor family, their surface idol is simply money. I need money to feel full. Some people they need to have friends around, they need praise, that's the surface idol. Because it is easily identified. The one that you all really need to spend time to look at is the deep idol. Because the deep idol is so hidden, you don't see it. It comes across like it is healthy but it is not and here is one they keep picking up, ministry.

Now that's painful. How can you say that, I am doing it for God. Arnold Lim standing up here, I can be standing here, doing this because I want to glorify God or they are doing this for my ego. Here is the problem, can I differentiate between the two. I can tell you I am differentiating that may not be true, because the subconscious is very powerful. It takes meditation to sit and pause. My ego would tell you know, I am doing it for the glory of God and when I say now I believe it, but God knows everything. I like standing up here in front of all of you, I feel electricity when I talk, when people look at me I am fulfilled. That's a deep idol and what happens is that, it goes on.

In psychological term, they call this an emotional loop. It is a vicious circle. So at the end of today, we are just going to do this exercise, because it is very powerful, because if you can't audit who you are you have no starting point.

So gospel centered caring, we look at perspective. I want you now to see what the perspective does. If you look at the previous thing. It forms your identity. If I am inadequate I need to prove to anyone that I am adequate. So the need to proof I am adequate comes out in many ways. It could come out in this way, it could come out in being successful at work, it could come out because I need to be very successful in ministry, so people praise me. Then I become very possessive of the ministry. The ministry then defines me, my job defines me, my marriage defines me. So let's look at identity struggles and the key issue with identity, Paul Tripp puts it this way, you need to recognize is it vertically formed or horizontally formed. Horizontally formed, it stretches from what you don't want to be and what you want to be and it could be things like career. That's the most obvious. That's why man when they lose their job, most of them go into depression, you get a guy and he loses his job, he can't find a job, here is the thing, a guy who was young, thought he was going to rule the world, everyone say, he had a lot of potential, he could do very well, he screws up big time, he loses his identity.

Most obvious is marriage. Your marriage breakdown, you come and say, what is wrong with me, something is wrong with me, your identity is broken. You grab on

maybe for Arnold Lim because he can talk here. That is my idol, maybe it is music, it looks as whatever but the key one I think is ministry because that's the most subtle idol. I am doing it for God, no you are not, yes you are a bit but really you are doing for self. So identity Paul Tripp says, you have to recognize that your identity first is subconsciously formed by your past hurts, your current struggles and this, but the gospel gives you a way to look at our identity and it is not just a simple shift from horizontal to vertical, that's a cliché answer. The way to look at it is to look again at the gospel story. Because the gospel story tells you three things, you are made in the image of God then there is bondage and then God is trying to reimage you back. So the way to look at it is image, bondage, reimage.

We are in the process of being reimaged. Why is it important? Because you have to recognize your bondages. The function of this kind of diagram is to bring to the surface your bondage and know that God now is trying to reimage you back and that's why Ephesian calls it a new identity. What's interesting about the book of Ephesians is that, it starts off with chapter 1 by telling you God puts everything, the whole cosmos under Christ including your hurts. Then of course it talks about the family of God. Then it goes to chapter 4 he begins to talk about the tension. Old self and new self. Then he goes to chapter 5 and he defines the identity in your work, in your marriage and it ends up with the armor of God. It tells you, you are always going to be at war with this. You are always going to have a fight with your old self and your new self. So image, bondage, reimage and there is always that tension. So that's where we get our vertical relationship.

So my identity is not formed by a horizontal recognition of my peers, my marriage but by my vertical relationship with God and I will tell you that is so difficult to do. I stand here and I tell you, it is so difficult, it is so tempting to define yourself by your success and your gifts and your friends and is so hard to just say, I am a child of God loved by Him and I start there and I end there. It takes every fiber and that's why when you look at the pray, the fantastic doxology in Ephesians, Paul before he describes about the love of Christ how wide and long and high, he says this. I pray that Christ in his glorious riches will strengthen you in your inner being through the Holy Spirit. That means not my effort and how does he strengthen you, so that Christ would dwell in your heart and then he describes it, in the fullness of Christ, how wide and long and high. So redemption is three things; one you cry with Jesus when you have sufferings. Number two, you get a taste of the cross. So when you are hurt and you are drowning in your hurt, take a moment and think of the nails and maybe compare that pain to the pain of the nails. It gives you a different perspective. That's why Jesus is called the wonderful counselor. So when you are hurt, think of the nails, you get a taste of it and then you don't just think of the nails, you think of the purpose of nail and you wallow in his love.

Recognizing that takes time and for some it would never be full, now and not yet because we struggle with this. Okay, so lets break it down a little bit. We need to distinguish between what you cannot do and what you will not do. Sin reminds us

the fallenness of mankind, there are mental health issue, there biological issue, the sociological issues, certain issues which have affected you and you need to see a doctor because you need to be prescribed serotonin or whatever. It is a medical condition. Some things is a fallen world and it will only be made perfect when Christ comes again. So some people have got medical depression. So lets not be too idealistic. That is fallenness, but here is the thing. There is sinfulness of the heart and is pride and bitterness and overdependency. So let me give you an example, how they interconnect.

You could have a case where somebody had a physical problem, lets just say he couldn't walk very well. It is a physical problem, it is fallenness. You can take him for every healing seminar, he cannot walk means he cannot walk. But what happens, because he cannot walk the son forms a dependency relationship with the father. That's where sinfulness of heart comes in. Because dependency moves to overdependency and the son will call the father at 3 in the morning, whatever and the father will grow up until 60 years old, he can't even carry the son, the son expects him to do it and when the son can't get what he wants he puts the father into a guilt trip. I have seen this in many manifestations. So there is fallenness which you cannot do but the sinfulness of heart which you can handle and the two are connected. You recognize your limitations but more critically you recognize the connections and that's very important.

We are going to know break this with the gospel. Let the cross settle us. This is what we felt of just now. We are now going to read a vertical relationship into ours, we are going to read a gospel perspective into ours and we are going to find redemption on a daily basis. So let's go, one, my identity is shaped by my past and my present but I claim this promise by Christ. I am precious in his sight, he knows the hair on my head, I claim this promise. I claim this, I feel this again, I claim something. I claim on the cross. He came to save his own but was rejected.

Let me go back, number one, first I try to break my past and my present. Because my past is telling me I am inadequate, my present is telling me, I am a nobody, but I remind myself the paradox of the gospel. God takes the weak things to shame the strong, so I am precious in his sight, so I break my past and my present with scripture. Here is another one, I feel invisible, I feel rejected. You can tell me whatever I fill out, how do I break it. I break it again by going to the gospel, that He came to save his own but was rejected, I feel the pain of the cross. You go back a little bit, so that helps him break this thing. So now, let's go back to all this vicious circle and lets try to break it.

I am weak but he is strong, that's the paradox we are talking about and because of that I claim joy, I embrace my spiritual family, I learn to be more thankful, I learn to feel loved. Now what we are trying to say is that, your emotions will make you, so you claim emotions that are coming out from the gospel. I claim the joy of the cross. Out of the cross, I claim my spiritual family because I have brothers and sisters. I

claim thankfulness. That's why Colossian tells us and I wallow in his love and from that, that kind of change, it shifts my behavior a bit. I learn to sit with Jesus daily. I learn this small habit because habits become me. So instead of every day wallowing in my pain, instead of everyday waking up in the morning and say I am this and this, I let the gospel remind me, I am precious and then I sit at Jesus's feet every day and I slowly change and I recognize walls are dangerous and as I go on I now am more concerned of what pleases God then what others think and as I go on I try to grow deep roots to bear good fruit and then we go on.

So what you are trying to do now, you are trying to break a vicious circle with a positive circle or I will call it a God-centered circle. It is very simplistic to do but it is a starting point. Now what does it do in the gospel, in the end once you are able to shift it, you replace a vicious circle with a growth circle. So now let's look at it positively. From my past, the past is, I am daily breaking this hold on me, how do I do that, I forgive my mother or father who did this. Every day I say, lord I forgive and I do it every day, I say Lord I forgive and at one point you turn the corner. At the present, I reclaim the promise of Ephesians, I work for Christ and not for my boss. I do it, I do it, I put on a new self and things change and I let God's love sit in me so deeply so that my roots are there, I am holy, he loves me and it comes out and I seek to grow and I bear fruit and I root in him and then I repeat and I repeat and I repeat and from a vicious circle I go to a circle of growth.