

CALLED TO COMFORT

Isaiah 61:1-11



SYNOPSIS

This past Sunday, our guest speaker, Dr. Paul Minifee shared with us how there is a divine purpose to our emotions and how we are to harness those emotions to comfort others and bind up the broken-hearted. We are emotional beings and there is a divine purpose for that. People associate strong emotions with signs of weakness or instability. And though it can wreak havoc at times, we need to know how to harness our emotions, understanding that we are emotional beings and acknowledging that it was given for a divine purpose.

Our emotions can be harnessed for purposes beyond us. There is a powerful and profound effect when someone comforts us and advocates for us. But how can we feel compassion and conviction about something we are not conscious of? We are less likely to fulfill God's calling to heal the broken-hearted if we don't understand what we are crying for.

And so we must be people who take our call to compassion seriously. Jesus demonstrated compassion for us by coming down to sacrifice and be with us and experience pain and rejection so that he could be the Father of comfort. In the same way, we are to be like Christ, to act with compassion, step out of our comfort zone, mourn with those who have lost their sense of purpose, whose dignity has been disgraced, who feel hopeless and defeated. We are to anoint them with the oil of joy and cover them with the garment of praise, and then we can all walk together to the promised land.



OUTLINE

1 WE ARE EMOTIONAL BEINGS

We are emotional beings, and there is a divine purpose and reason for that. We need to remove the stigma of 'you're just being emotional' by acknowledging our emotions that were given for purposes beyond us. Though our emotions can wreak havoc at times, we need to learn how to steward and harness our emotions for the sake of comforting others and binding up the broken hearted.

2 HARNESSING OUR EMOTIONS TO COMFORT OTHERS

If we are called to be people that 'bind up the broken-hearted,' we need to understand what we are crying for. Do we mourn for those who suffer injustice? Do we mourn for the oppressed? Do we mourn so that we can comfort others? We need to harness our emotions so that we are able to bring comfort to others.

3 OUR CALL TO COMPASSION

The original word for compassion actually comes from the passion of Christ - to sacrifice and to suffer on someone else's behalf. We look to Christ, who demonstrated compassion for us by coming to be with us and experience the pain and rejection of humanity so that He could be the ultimate comforter. And as we become more like Christ, we need to learn how to act with compassion, stepping out of our comfort zone to mourn with others so that we can comfort others. Often times, that starts from a place of sacrifice and discomfort, but discomfort can be the avenue in which we are catalyzed to be in a place where we are able to comfort others.



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1

Do you have a negative stigma against being "emotional" and why do you think that's the case?

2

What emotions or thoughts were evoked as you listened to Dr. Paul's stories facing racism?

3

Why do you think it can be uncomfortable for us to comfort those who are in need of comfort?

4

What are some pains, sufferings, or trials that you have experienced that lend you empathy and compassion for others?

5

How can we have true compassion for and comfort those who are mourning?

6

What are ways you can love those who are different from you? Ask God to break your heart for what breaks His.



BIG IDEA

We are called to comfort others. We look to Christ who demonstrated compassion for us (enduring suffering and rejection on our behalf). As we seek to become more like Him, we also need to understand how to harness our emotions - to sit in the pain of others, to mourn so that we can bind up the broken-hearted, to understand what we are crying out for. And as we do so, we are further able to live out our calling to be a comfort to others around us - not just in our midst, but in our communities and the places we are called to.