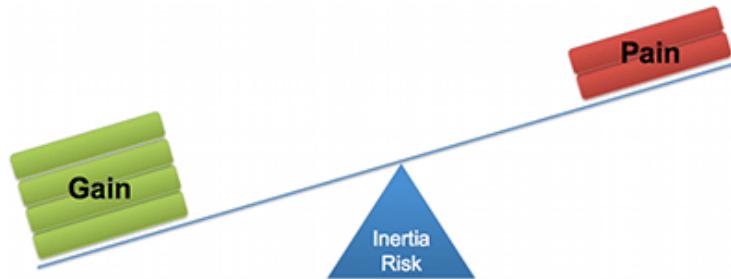


## **NO PAIN, NO GAIN!**

Disciples of Jesus, we need to learn to use the pain that is upon us and the pain that will come for the glory of God!



Over the door leading to our locker room in the Abilene High School Field house was large printed words, "NO PAIN, NO GAIN!"

As a first semester sophomore I recall those printed words over the door... and to this today (2019), I still vividly remember it as much as I saw it for the first time in 1957. I had been involved in sports throughout my late elementary and junior high years (4th through the 9th grades). I did not, however, understand the truth to this statement until I met Coach Bob Groseclose, the track coach for the Abilene Eagles of Abilene, Texas. He helped me understand the meaning, in no uncertain terms, of the terms "no guts, no glory" and "no pain, no gain." He spoke about it practically every day. He coached it, believed it, and he lived it through the eyes of his unstable and skinny, "unlikely to be champion" team members.

To be on the Abilene Eagle track team one must give 100% every day during workouts and 100% when you were on the track field in competition. Losing was not in Coach Grose's vocabulary. He expected every team member to give it all. He stated many times, "Boys, you win races on the practice field and you win field events by training, preparing both physically and mentally, and practicing, practicing, and practicing."

There wasn't a weather related time when we had a reprieve from going all out. If it was stormy and wet, we would practice and weather the weather... whether we wanted to or not. The first words we would hear when we walked into the field house were "Good day today boys." It could be a tornado on the horizon and we would hear those words. Then, if it

was a storm with lightning and thunder and deemed unsafe outside, we went to the gym and would run the stairs until dark thirty. High jumpers, broad jumpers, pole vaulters, shot put, and discuss throwers in the track game of life at Abilene High would all run the stands (stairs) along with the sprinters and distance guys. Regurgitation from one or more of the track boys was observed every day. "If you ate right and lived right you would not have a problem," Coach Grose would say. Mom was a good cook and we had some great meals for breakfast and dinner, but I knew what the term and experience of "regurgitation" was many times in my athletic life in high school. I guess it was the "living right" part of the equation that I failed to pass the test of our Dr. Coach Grose.

During the off-season, Coach Groseclose would have all boys who were out for track run distance cross-country races. Indeed it was "cross country." For 2.8 miles we ran through the fields and clover every day we were in school. ALL boys ran the 2.8 miles and he would have someone to time every one of us. Our goal was to improve our time every day. To our surprise, we did improve (maybe not every day)... but definitely over a period of time. In fact, it became a joy in lieu of a dreadfully intimidating experience.

Coach Grose could not high jump 3' nor pole vault 5', but he taught the boys to do it. "Do as I say and not as I do" was Coach Grose's motto and daily theme... as well as being an extreme verbal expression of his understood by all of us. He came out in shorts that were pulled up higher than his waste-line and the boys "secretly" made fun of the way he dressed. But, Coach Groseclose achieved results that were phenomenal. He would get boys out of a P.E. class that had never run a race in competition before and tell them they had the potential to be a winner. Many of them believed what he said and became exactly like Coach Grose said, "Winners." They understood the saying, "NO PAIN, NO GAIN" better than many of the boys that were athletically gifted.

Coach Grose had teams that won state (Texas) in 1954, 1959, and 1960. He had state track winners in practically every event during his stay at Abilene High as the Head Track Coach. He coached the world's best and most well-known pole vaulter at the time (John Pannell) from 1961-1968 (1964 and 1968 Olympics) as the head track coach of Northeast Louisiana State, Monroe, Louisiana. I know because I had to compete against John Pannell many times in my College/University days. John Pannell was the first to master the fiberglass pole and held the world's record many times during the 1960's. There is no doubt, Coach Bob

Groseclose carried the "NO PAIN, NO GAIN" philosophy with him when he left Abilene High School to go into the college and Olympic coaching field.

C.S. Lewis wrote: *"God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world."*

What are the motivating factors that cause you to make changes in your life? As you think back to a time when you made a major change in your life, contemplate on the question, "What motivated me to make that change?"

As long as I can remember, I have been interested in what motivates people to make changes in their lives; therefore, let's research some motivating factors on the topic. As we look at those factors for change, most of us will come to the conclusion that "pain" has been the greatest motivator in taking action to bring about change.

For instance, if we have hunger pains, we are probably motivated to find something to eat. If we are experiencing financial pain (no money), we soon get motivated to look for and find a job. Also, if we experience excruciating or long-term physical pain, we are motivated to go to the doctor or the closest hospital.

In short, when we are in a situation that is painful, we seek ways to reduce or eliminate the cause of pain.

Conclusion: Pain, though unpleasant and unwanted, is a strong motivator for action.

The Word of God gives us some good examples of this truth. Hebrews 12:11 says, "No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it."

1 Peter 4:12-13 states, *"Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ."*

As we experience life in general, we realize that pain and suffering are normal. This normal process, however, is not something we long for with

joyful exuberance. To most human beings, Christians included, we want to avoid pain at all costs.

Yet, James 1:2-4 states, *"Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."*

If my goal as a Christian disciple is to mature in the faith, then according to the "No pain, no gain" truth I need to not run away from pain and problems. I need to use them to develop and challenge my faith. In short, I need to use the pain as a catalyst for action and change.

Luke 8:40-56, *"Now when Jesus returned, a crowd welcomed him, for they were all expecting him. 41 Then a man named Jairus, a synagogue leader, came and fell at Jesus' feet, pleading with him to come to his house 42 because his only daughter, a girl of about twelve, was dying. As Jesus was on his way, the crowds almost crushed him. 43 And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years, but no one could heal her. 44 She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped. 45 "Who touched me?" Jesus asked. When they all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you." 46 But Jesus said, "Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me." 47 Then the woman, seeing that she could not go unnoticed, came trembling and fell at his feet. In the presence of all the people, she told why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed. 48 Then he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace." 49 While Jesus was still speaking, someone came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. "Your daughter is dead," he said. "Don't bother the teacher anymore." 50 Hearing this, Jesus said to Jairus, "Don't be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed." 51 When he arrived at the house of Jairus, he did not let anyone go in with him except Peter, John and James, and the child's father and mother. 52 Meanwhile, all the people were wailing and mourning for her. "Stop wailing," Jesus said. "She is not dead but asleep." 53 They laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. 54 But he took her by the hand and said, "My child, get up!" 55 Her spirit returned, and at once she stood up. Then Jesus told them to give her something to eat. 56 Her parents were astonished, but he ordered them not to tell anyone what had happened."*

Our passage of Scripture tells us that it was pain that led two very different types of people to Jesus.

Verse 41-42 of our passage states, "... a man named Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, came and fell at Jesus' feet, pleading with him to come to his house because his only daughter, a girl of about twelve, was dying."

Jairus, a religious leader of the Capernaum Synagogue, had not been previously known to be friendly toward Jesus. In fact, Jesus had been quite controversial during his previous visits. This had not impressed Jairus at all. However, please note that something had changed. Jairus was now desperately in mental and emotional pain. Though he may have detested Jesus before, the anguish of his daughter's imminent death now caused him to come to Jesus because he had heard Jesus was healing the sick and raising the dead.

It was not his love for Jesus that brought him, nor was it what he hoped to do for Jesus that brought him. What brought him to Jesus was his desperation.

We have found that in so many situations today... despair, pain and fear are often the prelude to grace, hope and faith. It often is when people find life beyond themselves that they look to someone bigger than themselves. They realize that they don't have all the answers to life... and, in this hour of extreme need, Jairus came and "fell at the feet of Jesus and begged him to come to his house."

It was during this time of great anguish and emotional pain that this man of prestige and position cast aside all of his pride and selfishness... and fell face first at the feet of Jesus with the hope that He might get Jesus to save and heal his little girl.

This Capernaum synagogue leader now joined the ranks of a woman who just a few weeks before had wiped Jesus feet with her tears and her hair in the same town, but was considered an outcast, a woman of the streets.

And what drew this connection between the two, what connected these two people, one a synagogue leader and the other a woman of the street? Pain!

Pain was the motivating factor. Their pain caused them to look for a solution, an answer, and a way to alleviate the strain and pain they were experiencing.

Jesus immediately went to help this man in need. As He made His way through the crowd, a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up from behind Jesus and touched the edge of his cloak. Immediately her bleeding stopped. What was impossible with man was possible with the Son of God who came to save and to heal a broken world in pain.

Mark 5:26 records that this woman had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse.

For twelve long and agonizing years she had steadily grown weaker and weaker suffering from terrible hemorrhaging, which not only caused her to suffer physically, but socially. The Jewish Law rendered her condition as "unclean" according to Lev. 15." Therefore people treated her like a leper and no one could touch her. She was ostracized from society, barred from going near the temple, and possibly divorced by her husband and abandoned by her children (not in the Scripture, but could be another part of the story). She was desperate and in despair for her life!

Though she was barred from contact with people and was disallowed from the crowds that gathered to see Jesus that day, she nonetheless, pushed through the crowd and touched Jesus' robe. Why? Because she was in pain!

This poor woman who was a cast away and cut off from her family, friends and even her faith and who had spent everything she had on doctors was in pain and that pain caused her to act. It caused her to take a chance! It caused her to activate that mustard seed of faith that was lying dormant on her heart that had been trampled under so many feet. That is truly the essence of faith!

James 2:22 says that faith is made complete by what we do (we act on our faith). Faith without works is like a car without gas. It expects from God what is beyond expectations and faith is looking to God for help when you're tired of looking to yourself.

And such was the case of Jairus. The pain of watching his little girl ebb away before his eyes was too much. He was desperate for a solution to the pain of possible losing his treasure... his little girl. Basically, it was

his pain that caused him to act. It was his pain that caused him to take a chance on Jesus. It was his pain that caused him to find and fall at Jesus feet... begging him to come to his house.

What was common between these two people who were from different sides of the track? What bonded these two together as they fell at the feet of Jesus?

It was their pain! Both of them were beyond human help and so they came to Jesus for help. Jesus does the impossible. We know because we were there when we realized that our sin was more than we could handle. We could not save ourselves... we had to fall at Jesus' feet, repent of our sins, and ask Jesus to save us.

Faith, my friend, must be activated. Faith is more than just waiting on God, it's expecting an answer. It is the gate between man's peril and God's provision.

I hope the person reading this devotion understands that the greatest pain that was ever experienced was the crucifixion of Jesus. Jesus suffered such agonizing pain one cannot fathom or express in words such torture. Yet, our Lord did it where we can be with Him in glory forever. His love for us was and is more than our minds can comprehend.

Frederick Lehman penned the following verse in the anthem "The Love of God" and it truly gives the essence of the marvelous work (pain and love together) that God the Father and His Son through the Holy Spirit's power had for mankind (God's creation). Think about it as you read!

*"Could we with ink the ocean fill, And were the skies of parchment made,  
Were every stalk on earth a quill, And every man a scribe by trade;  
To write the love of God above Would drain the ocean dry;  
Nor could the scroll contain the whole, Though stretched from sky to sky.  
Oh, love of God, how rich and pure! How measureless and strong!  
It shall forevermore endure-The saints' and angels' song."*

What attitude, thought or excuse are you using to block your faith in coming to Jesus? Maybe instead of a crowd of people- it's finances, riches, pride, or shame. What is it that is keeping you from reaching for the hand of Jesus? What is standing in the way of you falling at His feet?

Jesus Himself tells us to, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest." Matt. 11:28

Hebrews 4:16, *"Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."*

Jeremiah 29:13 says, *"You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart."*

This woman with the issue of blood wasn't just reaching out with her hand; she was reaching out with her heart. Jesus knew it and He felt it. He always feels it when we reach out with our heart.

You can sit on a church board, be the head of the church nominating committee, lead the spiritual life committee... and take mission trips to the neediest of places in the world and still never have a touch from the Lord.

Religion won't save you! Even believing all the right things won't save you! Only Jesus can save you as you willfully and deliberately reach out to Him. Reaching out to Jesus is an act of faith and this woman used her pain to activate her faith.

Is your pain of living life with no joy causing you to look for something that will relieve you of the suffering?

Fear is to be met by Faith. Faith is not the belief that we will always get what we want but the belief that God always knows what is best! Faith is assuring, insuring and enduring. Faith is following the Lord even in the darkness of our fear and pain.

C.S. Lewis stated, *"Pain removes the veil; it plants the flag of truth within the fortress of a rebel soul."*

Pain and problems create crisis in our lives. Crisis comes from a word that means "decision", a fork in the road that requires us to make a decision and act.

Pain can be that crisis in our lives. The question is, which way will we go with the pain? Will we take the road to restoration and recuperation or will we continue to stay on the road to desperation and deterioration?

The pain you face will either defeat you or develop you. It will either move

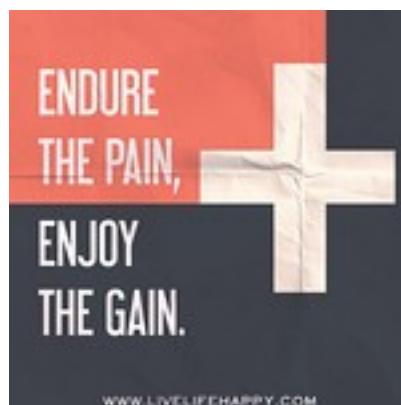
you toward Jesus or away from Him. Unfortunately most people fail to see how God wants to use their pain for good in their lives. They react foolishly and resent their pain rather than pausing to consider what benefit it might bring.

One of the worst concentration camps in Germany during WWII was Ravensbruck. Fleas and lice were so thick that upon entering the bunkroom, one became swarmed in them. Nonetheless, Corrie and Betsy Ten Boom had smuggled a Bible into the camp and traded it back and forth during the day. If the guards found caught anyone having meetings, they were to be executed. At first, the women held these meetings very timidly and, of course, secretly. But as the weeks wore on with no guards coming into the bunkroom, they grew bolder. Corrie was puzzled at this and marveled as to why the guards did not come into their bunkhouse to check what they were doing.

One day, Betsy excitedly told Corrie, "Corrie, Corrie... I found out why the guards did not check out our bunkrooms. I overheard two guards and they will not step foot in the bunkroom because of the FLEAS! Thank God, Corrie, for the fleas!"

*"Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me." Ps 23:4.*

Disciples of Jesus, we need to learn to use the pain that is upon us and the pain that will come for the glory of God!



Much of the information above was from a sermon; No Pain, No Gain; Dr. George Calhoun, 2008 series of sermons. -  
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