

When Life Implodes: Helping Others During Tragedy
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We don't need to go looking for it. Sooner or later it will come find us. The horrible, the unthinkable, the unimaginable—it will show up in our lives and change everything. And what then? This breakout session will equip us to help others during the inevitable tragedies of this life. The gospel changes how we relate to sufferers—from being their critics to being their allies, so that they can hope again.

1. Rather than assume we are strong and then be surprised by our weakness, let's begin by facing our weakness as a pervasive and inescapable reality, especially in tragedy.

"The Spirit helps us in our *weakness*" (Rom 8:26). Not plural "weaknesses" but singular "weakness," as the platform down beneath all our experiences.

2. Rather than perceive the Lord as impatient and demanding that we quickly "get it," let's dare to believe in his gentle and lowly heart for sufferers.

"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for *I am gentle and lowly in heart*, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt 11:28–30).

3. Rather than hurry to escape from the anguish of tragedy, let's deeply accept it and allow its pressing weight to take us to new depths with the Lord.

"For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: 'I dwell in the high and holy place, *and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit*, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite'" (Isa 57:15).

4. Rather than accept shallow, disposable relationships with one another, let's resolve not to abandon one another but to walk faithfully together through tragedy.

"Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, *with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel*, and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer

for his sake, engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have" (Phil 1:27-30).