

# Healing Spiritual Pain

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Talking about Dorothy's knee surgery in the announcements, a number of years ago (about eight or nine years ago) I was giving a class and went from the classroom and moved into the lab. I kneeled down on a fairly hard floor and I crunched my left knee. It just kind of cracked. I didn't think much about it, but it started swelling and swelling. I was anointed and finally went to a doctor to have it examined. I had iced it and did all the normal stuff you would do for such an injury, but it didn't do any good. I finally had to have arthroscopic surgery. The surgery was pretty easy and I went through it with flying colors. I came home and it felt pretty good that day. I had a big elastic bandage on my knee and a couple of small incisions, but Boy, the next morning I woke up and the mother of all pain was in that left leg. Of course, when you wake up, it's kind of an "old guy" thing. I had to go to the "sand box". I had severe rigor mortis in that leg and I had to go about twenty-five feet to the bathroom. It probably took me ten minutes to get there. I spent several weeks in a lot of pain. So, I just can't image how Dorothy is doing so well with hers. Compared to what I had, it's radical surgery.

Anyhow, the point of that little story is we've all dealt with the physical pain that we have from time to time, but there is also another kind of pain that we have and that is spiritual pain. Sometimes we have spiritual injury, we have trials and it can come in just about any form. It can be a severe physical problem or trial, and I think we've all seen that and experienced it in some way. I kind of explain spiritual pain as anything that impacts our spiritual health and that's my approach for this message. Again, it can come in many forms. We may not be healed of some kind of ailment. It could linger on and on. Sometimes people get angry and bitter with God and we have to deal with that.

We can have other kinds of spiritual pain. It can be an offense or something like that, but the point again is, if it affects our spiritual health, and I consider that spiritual pain, there is a way that we need to deal with that. It can affect us individually or as a body, as God's people.

We have a number of Bible examples in talking about the good and the bad ways to deal with spiritual pain. The major point I want to make is that the way we deal with it has everything to do with the outcome. It's either going to be good for us spiritually or it can be bad for us. It depends on how we deal with it. There are a number of points in the Bible on how to handle spiritual pain and to obtain that spiritual healing we need.

Paul gives us a good example in II Corinthians, Chapter 1, verses 3 and 4.

***II Corinthians 1:3*** *Blessed [be] God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies (compassion), and the God of all comfort;*

4) *Who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. (KJV)*

It talks there in verse four about the comfort who comforts us. The Greek means *beside* or a *drawing to*. Think of a little child. If a little child comes to you and they're hurt, what's the first thing you want to do? You want to pick them up and hold them. That's kind of what the Greek implies in that particular word. He says He is the God of all comfort. He wants to treat us like children and comfort us like children. It also says in that verse, "Comforts us in all of our tribulation." It doesn't mean that God's going to take the trial away. He will comfort us while we are in that trial or tribulation, and again the point being that when we're in spiritual pain, God will comfort us if we approach it in the correct way.

"All our tribulation," the Greek means *every kind and variety*. That's what the Greek implies. Again, it goes on, "That we may be able to comfort them who are in trouble, by the comfort that we receive from God." Paul's going to go on in the context here and I'm sure we're familiar with that, about the suffering he went through and it was considerable even to the point of fearing for his life on numerous occasions. The point he is trying to make is that if we have gone through certain trials, if we've suffered certain amounts of pain whether spiritual pain, physical or whatever, we might be able to comfort or help someone in a similar situation. Actually, if you read through the context, the kind of comfort that Paul is talking about is when we can't solve our own problems, when we get to the point we just can't do it anymore, it's out of our control. We'll go on to see that here. Paul is helping us to put this in perspective. He's telling us that these spiritual trials and sufferings can turn out to be a positive thing if we approach it in the correct way. We'll see that Paul did that on a number of occasions, and actually it's amazing to me the way he did it. He just tells us and keeps pointing us to God and keeps pointing us to Christ, to go to the Father and the Son for the help we need. Paul is also pointing out that if we go through some of those trials and we handle it correctly and come out the other side, that we will be able to comfort others. That is a very crucial point to all of this. Paul knew that God made those promises and we will see that as we go along. I know I'm repeating myself, but once again he always points us to God for the comfort that we need.

I'd like to read this over again from the Living Bible. We'll read down to verse 10. The New King James that I use is a little awkward here. I don't mind the paraphrase as long as it doesn't lose the meaning.

***II Corinthians 1: 3.*** *What a wonderful God we have. He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the source of every mercy and the One who so wonderfully comforts and strengthens us in all of our hardships and trials.*

4) *And why does He do this? So that when others are troubled, needing our sympathy and encouragement, we can pass on to them the same help and comfort that God has given us. (Living Bible)*

5) *You can be sure that the more we undergo sufferings for Christ, the more He will shower us with His comfort and encouragement.*

*6) We are in deep trouble for bringing you God's comfort and salvation (Paul didn't mean that he was bringing salvation) but in our trouble, God has comforted us and this too to help you, to show you from our personal experience how God will tenderly comfort you when you undergo these same sufferings. He will give you the strength to endure.*

*8) I think you ought to know, dear brethren, about the hard time we went through in Asia ... (Living Bible)*

Of course, if you go back to Acts 19, he's referring to Demetrius the silversmith. They incited a riot against Paul and people with him. They were in a situation where they were going to be beaten to death. That's just one of the times that Paul actually feared for his life. Continuing on in verse 8,

*8b) We were really crushed and overwhelmed and feared we would never live through it.*

*9) We felt we were doomed to die and saw how powerless we were to help ourselves.*

Have we ever felt that way, kind of powerless and to the end of our rope? I did when I was in all that pain that time because there wasn't a thing I could do about it. They gave me some medication, but it didn't touch anything. To compound that, shortly after that I blew a disc in my back, had a herniated disc. It just compounded everything. It really ruined my golf game, (laughter) actually for about a year and a half. But anyhow, we can get to the point where things are beyond our control. We're just absolutely helpless.

*9b) but that was good.*

Again, it's amazing to me that Paul can turn this to a positive slant; it's just amazing for the things that he went through.

*9c) for then we put everything into God's hands, who alone can save us. For He can even raise the dead.*

*10) And He did help us and save us from a terrible death. Yes, and we expect Him to do it again and again.*

He learned that throughout his life of service to God, that God would rescue him time and time again, and even comforted him right up to his death, I'm sure. We can only surmise the agony and the things we went through. But obviously this was not only for them at that time in Corinth, but it's for us today.

So there are two basic points that we're coving.

One is...

Whenever we are faced with a problem or trial or anything that causes spiritual pain, we take it to God and put it in His hands because He's the only One that can ultimately make it come out in the end, the way that we need.

The second point is ...

He encourages us. He encouraged all of God's people and he did that continually in his writings as we can see. He tells us that if we endure the trials, if we endure that spiritual pain and we come out of it, that we can help others with similar problems.

So we need a support group, right? That's the reason for the body, to support one another. Therapists understand that. There are all kinds of support groups for all kinds of trauma and pain that people experience. Sometimes it's severe mental pain that they go through. Therapists understand that this works, it helps.

If you've been in a situation where you've had people praying for you, people say that they can tell when they are being prayed for. I think we've seen the results of a lot of that here and in all the Churches of God. Sometimes I think we are a bit hesitant to mention this. It admonishes us in James to tell each other our trials and problems. I know it's speaking in a sense of physical healing, but that can also include spiritual healing, to share that. I think the ladies do a better job at that than the men. We don't want people to know anything is wrong with us or that we're having any kind of problem, so we don't confide in anyone. We try to bottle it up and take care of it and handle it ourselves. Hopefully we are taking it to God.

My own example, I remember years ago when I received a hurt in the Church, it came from a direction that I never expected and from someone that I never expected. I kind of withdrew and brooded over it for a while. That wasn't the best way to handle it, but that's the way I did it at the time. I sulked over it and tried to sort it all out. I'd pray about it. Someone finally convinced me and said, "Jack, you need to fellowship. You need to be with the brethren." At first, I balked at that, but people can support you. They can help you, and this is right. When I stopped sulking and started serving again wherever I could, then things improved. God will allow you to continue in whatever kind of pain you're going through, so you learn a lesson. I think I did. I hope I did.

That brings us to one of the major sources of spiritual pain, both in the past and present. Has anyone ever suffered at the hands of the Church? If you think that, that may be part of the problem. We were never hurt by the Church actually, if we want to get technical about it. We were never hurt by the Church. We are the Church, right? We are the Ekklesia; we're the Church. A lot of us have had to sort that out and I think everyone has their own story to tell about that. I won't go into my boring stories about it. We started fellowshipping again. My wife handled it better than I did. I learned a lesson when I started looking into what was causing the hurt, where it was coming from. I had put too much faith and trust in an organization and in a man. I suffered for that.

If we have that kind of pain and we don't deal with it in the correct way, it's going to affect our spiritual life. It's going to affect our relationship with God. When I got to looking into it, I realized it was the mindset of the Church and that we had of Church. I kind of fell into that trap and again relied too much on individuals and relied too much on an organization.

I remember well a comment when I was baptized. The minister said when I came up out of the water that I was now part of the body. I didn't really understand that at the time and

it wasn't thoroughly explained at the time either. I probably couldn't have understood it if someone had tried to explain it to me. I understand it more thoroughly these days.

A lot of times we have folks that get hung up on the contrast between the first century Church, the Ekklesia, and how it functioned. We wouldn't understand the way that it functioned and they wouldn't understand us these days. To them, they wouldn't understand if we were talking about Church. They wouldn't understand what we were talking about, because they knew they were part of the body. They knew that their head was Jesus Christ. We weren't confused with some of the things that we are confused with today.

The seven Churches of Revelation, Christ recognized all of them, right? They all had some different beliefs and when you really think about that and study Revelation 2 and 3, they had some starkly unscriptural doctrines and Christ still recognized them and worked with them. They needed to learn some lessons.

Again, we have folks that get hung up on the cultural differences between then and now. If we were back in the first century Church, we probably wouldn't understand at all the way they do services. They wouldn't understand the situation we are in here right now. They wouldn't understand what it means to have someone preaching and teaching. They wouldn't understand that at all. Of course, when you look back at the days when Mr. Armstrong started the Church. He just had the other Churches to go by. We do a lot of things somewhat in the format of the Protestants. A lot of people would call what we do a "hymn sandwich". We have two or three hymns, then we have a sermon and then we have another hymn. They may have a service and have a number of hymns and singing during the service. It's kind of interesting to look back on that. Again, the point being that they wouldn't understand our concept of the Church of the organization being an entity. They wouldn't understand that at all, because they were the Church. They were scattered. They met in homes and there could be a number of Churches; they met in small groups. Not that we should do that today. I'm not implying that. I know some folks think like that.

Again, the point is, it was like a hundred years later that the whole idea and the whole structure of the Church started to develop. The Greek, Ekklesia, is used 114 times in the New Testament and it never refers to a building or an organization. The English we used for Church actually evolved into referring to a building. What the Greek meant was just belonging to God. That's all that Greek word that we use for Church meant. That evolved into a house of God which later became a building. That's how we got the idea that we have the "Churches" being a building.

I used this in a sermon long ago, but there's a whole list of Church governmental structures.

There's *Episcopalian* which is a hierarchical system. The Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox use that. It's probably the most widely used by traditional Christianity today. We may recognize again, like I mentioned, some of the elements of that structure.

There's the *Presbyterian Government*. It's a system operated by a board of elders and emphasizes their importance. We may also recognize some of those aspects.

There's a *Congregational Government*. That's a democratic system in which the congregation actually makes the decisions for the organization.

There's the *Apostolic Government*. You may recognize that from Herbert Armstrong's writings years ago. The Church of God uses that, the seventy elders and board of twelve and all that. That is the Apostolic form of government.

Rick's talking about a consensus form of government which may be a combination of these.

The point here is that all these forms of government are theoretical. One source I had says that all of these forms of government can use (and we're familiar with this term) proof texting to prove that the form of government they have is correct. If you really analyze that, you start seeing all kinds of holes in it.

Actually, if we look at it scripturally, there's a whole lot more support for a horizontal rather than a vertical structure, if we really studied into that.

I know that all I just covered there was a digression. The point I'm trying to make here is that a lot of these systems and the way they were misused (and don't get me wrong in that word) the way they were misused caused a lot of the spiritual pain that we've suffered through. I think almost everyone has experienced some of that. Because I use the term "misused the form of Church government" doesn't mean that I don't believe that there should be no kind of structure. I was actually accused of that once. I never believed that and still don't. We need that and Paul clearly taught that we need a form of government. We can study I Timothy and II Timothy, Titus and I Corinthians 14 where Paul taught that we need some structure. If we don't, there is going to be chaos. Clearly, we need some oversight of the body.

My personal opinion (and that's all it is) is that God gave no step-by-step procedure for the structure and organization of the Church. He didn't give that and I believe He did that on purpose so we would learn some lessons by the correct application of Godly principals and learn from our mistakes. Unfortunately, with our human nature we have a tendency to mess things up, don't we? We'll mess it up if we don't continually rely on God and use His Holy Spirit to motivate us in everything we do, even the way that we operate as a group, as the body of Christ.

Just getting back to the damage that was caused, I can certainly remember the trauma and everything we went through in the '80s and '90s when the organization that we knew as the Church began its descent into the apostasy, that we later found ourselves in the middle of. Everything we had believed in actually was being systematically destroyed. That caused a lot of pain for many of us. A lot of people suffered depression and had to get professional help. I've known several cases where there were suicides. That is tragic. That's a terrible thing for the Church of God.

The point again is that most of us were running around trying to figure it out, right? We were in pain doing that. It was a pretty painful process. The organization had, quite frankly, planted itself very firmly between us and God and it caused a tremendous amount of damage.

Let's go to II Corinthians 1 and verse 9, from the New King James.

***II Corinthians 1: 9.*** *Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves*

Or we could easily put in there (if we wanted to make a parenthetical statement), we don't trust in ourselves, we don't trust in an organization and we don't trust in a man, not that we can't look to individuals for leadership and help and teaching. We all need that. That is scriptural. But to finish the verse ...

*9b) but in God who raises the dead.*

The spiritual pain, if we think about it, we'd have to admit that we trusted in the organization even to the point of idolization and that caused us a lot of pain, when we had to withdraw from that. Looking back on the things we suffered, I don't think it was a deliberate attempt to replace God; I just think it happened. Any time you set up a situation like that, and I've seen it corporately and in other places (I spent five years in the military) any time you give people that kind of power and authority, most people can't resist letting it go to their head. I don't know if any of you have experienced that.

Some of these systems, depending on what kind of structure or organization that people adopt, some of those structures will facilitate the pain and the suffering more than others. It depends on what kind of structure it is.

There are a couple more points before I leave that part. Some of us had a great deal of responsibility in the things we went through. We took a wrong approach. We believed too much in what we should not have believed in.

We don't want to put too much trust in an organization or leader that is fallible. Paul made the statement that he admired the Bereans for the way they approached what he taught them, because they didn't necessarily take at face value everything he taught them. I didn't really want to turn there, but let's go back to Numbers 23, verse 19. This is why Paul admired the Bereans because they didn't just believe what he told them. They had the Old Testament, correct? So they hopefully knew and believed this scripture.

***Numbers 23: 19.*** *God [is] not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good? (NKJV)*

The point there again is that Paul admired them because they looked to God's word and they looked to God. You have to ask yourself, can an individual or can an organization lie to me? Yes, unfortunately. We don't want that to happen. We hope it won't

happen. Prayerfully, we hope it won't happen, but it's possible. It's not possible with God and that's the point here. It's just not possible with God. It's not possible for God to lie.

The second point was if we have the issues of pain and we take it to God, He said He will comfort us and He will help us to sort it out, and I think most of us, hopefully, have gotten these things sorted out to this point. We know Who we are looking to and we understand that.

To me there is one thing we need to remember to do every day and it relates to what I'm trying to get across here. It's in II Corinthians, Chapter 10 and verse 3.

***II Corinthians 10: 3. For though we walk in the flesh (We are human. We can't help it. We are flesh and everybody else is too. Sometimes we forget that.), we do not war according to the flesh. (NKJV)***

In the flesh we cannot fight these spiritual battles ourselves, because we're going to lose. It's a position where you have flesh fighting flesh. You can't fight spiritual problems with physical means. It just won't work. There are things we can do, of course. We can take things to God. We ultimately have to look to Him for solutions. We have to trust Him and we have to use His Holy Spirit. We have to ask continually for that Spirit and more of it.

We really are in a war with our minds. We have a constant conflict between God's Spirit and our carnal or fleshly spirit. We are in a constant state of warfare. It's a battle within us. I don't know about you but my battle starts every day when I wake up. It was a little tougher when I was in pain. Even when you're feeling good, it's right there. I see it every morning when I wake up. I have to face the day as we all do, and we know we're going to be in a battle. We know that we have a constant barrage of things coming at us all the time. So how does this relate to the spiritual pain I'm talking about?

***4) For the weapons of our warfare [are] not carnal (no fleshy composition, not carnal) but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,***

We have to ask ourselves what the strongholds are. They are the things in our minds, in our thinking and our emotions. I heard the expression once, they are the things that are "dug in". What is a stronghold? It can be like a fortress or a bunker. It's something that you're going to defend. If we don't take the things to God, if we constantly hold things in and try to solve them ourselves, we're actually bunkered down in those things. Those are the strongholds we have to fight against all the time. If we keep fighting and fighting, they never go away, if we don't take them to God and get the help we need to get rid of those things.

How does this work? Has anyone had any bitterness or resentment? We're human beings. We've had those things. We've had the hostility and we've had the anger. We've had those reactive things, the kind of "Woe is me" attitude and feeling sorry for ourselves.

Going on in verse 5, we can see a little more of what Paul is trying to teach us here.



5) *casting down arguments ...*

You talk about being bunkered in and having those things you hang onto and we use all kinds of reasoning and arguments to hang onto those things.

*5b) and every high thing (talking about our thoughts) that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought (all those wrong thoughts) into captivity to the obedience of Christ. (NKJV)*

*6) and being ready to punish all disobedience ...*

That's something we have to do, correct? We have to recognize it. We recognize that, "Well, this is against God. This isn't how God wants me to use His Holy Spirit. It's my carnal spirit that wants me to do this." We have to fight against that because there's a constant conflict there again between our human spirit, our carnal spirit, our fleshly spirit and God's Holy Spirit.

*6b) when your obedience is fulfilled. (NKJV)*

Again, the point that Paul is teaching us here is if we don't bring those thoughts and attitudes into captivity, with God's help, and put them in proper perspective, it's going to lead to spiritual problems.

Often people get so angry over something that they won't let it go and it just festers and grows and grows. I think we've all seen that and a lot of times it grows out of proportion regarding the offence or whatever we have suffered. "I'm hurt; I've been wronged; everybody is against me." Some of us have been there, or at least we know someone who has.

Sometimes we get into a situation where we're right on an issue, but we can be spiritually wrong. We have to think about that a bit. I heard someone mention once in a sermon that one of the things Satan likes to do is make us feel that we are right, because if we start doing that, we will just hang onto it. However, in some cases being right, we can still be wrong spiritually. I hope I can show that in a little bit. The point there is that it's going to affect everything in our lives. It will affect our relationships, our family, the way we relate in the body, everything.

From those scriptures, here are a few points I have.

1. You have to identify it and cast it down by putting it in its proper perspective. Paul gave the example that he used and there are many other scriptural examples.
2. We have to bring it into captivity. We do that first of all by going to God and repenting and changing our attitude, changing the approach we have of harboring those wrong thoughts and hanging onto those things, letting them dig into our minds and we just won't let go of them.
3. Sometimes we just need to ask God's forgiveness for forgetting to ask for forgiveness, for forgetting to repent. We need to confess and get rid of the things that are causing that pain. We can see that in Proverbs 16 and verse 2.

**Proverbs 16: 2.** *All the ways of a man [are] pure in his own eyes,*

It's pure in our eyes when we just see it from our perspective, right? We're right. We've been hurt; we've been damaged and we've been injured and we're right. We may be dead right, but what does it matter in the end if it causes spiritual problems for us and we don't overcome it and it destroys us? That's what bitterness, resentment, anger and all those things do to us. But it goes on to say,

*2b) But the Lord weighs the spirits (heart). (NKJV)*

What does that mean, "the Lord weighs the heart"? How does that work? Here's an example: Suppose you're in some kind of spiritual pain, you've been offended; you've been hurt or maybe been accused of something that's not right and you are right and you feel like you're totally justified in feeling as you do. That's happened to all of us to some degree or another.

Here's the way God weighs the heart. What if that individual that offended you, what if he has gone to God? What if he/she has repented and God has forgiven them and they are at peace and you still have a problem? Again it doesn't matter if you are right. That's the point. Spiritually it doesn't matter. If you don't get rid of it, if it's damaging you spiritually, then you have a problem. God is weighing their heart and your heart at the same time. Once again, you can be dead right and spiritually wrong. It tells us how to get past these things.

**Proverbs 16: 3.** *Commit your works (everything you do) to the Lord, and your thoughts will be established.*

God will help you with those things that are dug into your mind that you just won't let go of, some of those hurts and pain that you're suffering. The promise here is that the thoughts *will be* established. It doesn't say maybe. It doesn't say if. It doesn't say, if that other person apologizes to you or whatever the case may be, if it's an offense. There are a lot of other ways we can be hurt. If we commit our ways to God, if we change from those reactive ways that we too easily fall into, we will be able to get past these painful episodes. In fact, if we did that first (and we so easily forget) we might not get into some of the situations we find ourselves in the first place. That's part of our warfare, right? It's the daily spiritual battle that we go through, the carnal reaction to the things that happen to us.

I look at myself, and I'm quickly approaching 70, so I joke that I'm quickly running out of time. There are only so many golf games left, etc. (laughter). As I get older, there are advantages to being a senior. You get some senior discounts. I have noticed that you don't get any discounts at a couple of places ... like nursing homes, funeral parlors. You can pay in advance for some of those things and you get some discounts that way.

*7) When a man's ways please the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him. (NKJV)*

There's only one way we can be at peace and to please God, that is to have a deep, loving relationship with Him. We must try to live by all of His words. If we do, He promises that our enemies, these things in our minds that are causing the pain from time to time (these things can be our enemies) and He will make those enemies to be at peace with us. In other words, we resolve the problem by doing it the correct way. We haven't relied on ourselves and we haven't tried to do it by our own physical means. We have taken it to God and received the help we need.

Even though this message isn't directly about forgiveness, it's so fundamental to our spiritual health, and I need to touch on a few things here. A lack of forgiveness causes more pain in the body of Christ than any other thing I can think of. It happens all the time. I think we've all been involved in it, I know I certainly have. I've been in the unforgiving mode and we need to get beyond that. Only God can actually help us do that.

Let's turn to Luke 23. Whenever we have a problem, if we would go back to the gospels and look into the examples of Christ, it will change our outlook on a bunch of things. Look at this example in Luke 23, verses 27 through 34. Think about the situation that Christ is going through. How can anyone handle the humiliation and everything that was happening to Him then? He was beaten and spat on and all kinds of things. In verse 27, we have this kind of example.

***Luke 23: 27.*** *And a great multitude of the people followed Him, and women who also mourned and lamented Him.*

*28) But Jesus, turning to them, said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children."*

There is a clue there. He saw what was coming. Sometimes we forget what is coming. That can help us put things in perspective, whenever we remember what is coming.

*32) There were also two others, criminals, led with Him to be put to death.*

*33) And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left.*

*34) Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." And they divided His garments and cast lots. (NKJV)*

When we look at that kind of example, how can we not want to aspire to that whenever we have had hurt and problems, especially when it comes to forgiveness? How can we not do that? Frankly, sometimes we need to ask for forgiveness for not asking for forgiveness, for hanging onto some of the things we want to hang onto and for being in that kind of unforgiving attitude.

In Colossians 3, there are a few things we can do that will help dissipate these attitudes, the spiritual pain and all the things we fall into.

***Colossians 3: 12.*** *Therefore, as [the] elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; (NKJV)*

When you reflect back on Luke 23, it sounds to me like he just described some of the characteristics of Christ right there.

*13) bearing with one another,*

Isn't that the first step in a relationship, bearing with one another?

*13b) and forgiving one another,*

The second step in a relationship. They have to go together. We can't get along in a body, we can't get along in a marriage and we can't get along in any other kind of relationship. We need those things.

*13c) if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also [must do]. (NKJV)*

*14) But above all these things put on love,*

God's love, not something that we're going to get somewhere else.

*14b) which is the bond (the glue) of perfection.*

The result will be verse 15.

*15) And let the peace of God ...*

And it only comes through God. It's the kind of peace that comes through the healing of the spiritual pain and suffering that we're going through. That's the result of doing it God's way. It's the only way to do it.

*15b) Let the peace of God rule in your hearts ...*

Rather than those things that are dug in, those things we won't let go of, those enemies that we talked about previously.

*15c) to which also you were called in one body;*

And it doesn't matter where that body is at, as long as you're looking to that source to resolve these things.

*15d) and be thankful. (NKJV)*

*16) Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly (abundantly) in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*

Admonishing one another, that's a support group, right?

*17) And whatever you do in word or deed, [do] all in the name of the Lord Jesus,*

That kind of spells out a whole code of conduct, right? Everything by God's word and do it all in Christ's name.

*17b) giving thanks to God the Father through Him. (NKJV)*

One final scripture in Philippians 4. This is what we really want. We want the peace of God and we want to be rid of the spiritual pain and the problems we have.

***Philippians 4: 6. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;***

And, of course, the result will be ...

*7) and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

So in summary, the only way to get rid of the spiritual pain and the things we may find ourselves in from time to time is to take it to God and put it in His hands and handle it His way. Sometimes that takes a lot of prayer. Sometimes that takes fasting.

You don't need to turn there, but James 4 in verse 10, the context is "weeping and mourning". That's on a deeply spiritual level. Verse 10 says "humble yourself" and that's when you're in a lot of pain and that implies fasting. If you're really hurting and having a problem with something, to get close to God. Someone asked me once if fasting is the only way to be humble. The answer to that is no, but the context here is when you're in the depths of real spiritual problems, it says, "humble yourself in the sight of the Lord and *He* will lift you up."

So the whole point again is, the way to deal with spiritual pain is to take things to God and do it His way and most of the time that means that we just need to get ourselves out of the way and let God take care of us and relieve the spiritual pain.