

Pray More Healing Retreat - Transcript

Healing When Families Fall Apart

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Hi. My name is Amy Thomas, and today what I want to talk with you about is healing from divorce. And I'm not going to talk about my own divorce; what I really want to focus on is the divorce of my parents. But I know that divorce can affect people in many, many different ways – children of divorce, parents, people who have gone through a divorce themselves, or those that have had to see other family members or friends go through the divorce. It really affects all of us in so many ways. But before we begin, let's start with a prayer.

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen. Dear Father, there are so many broken hearts out there from the effects of divorce. And we know that this is not what You intended for marriage, and in a lot of ways many of us have made a mess of the sacrament of marriage, and many of us have been wounded deeply by the ripping apart of families. But we know that You are the Great Healer, the Great Physician, and so I pray that You are with those listening today, that if they have been hurt in some way by divorce – maybe their own, maybe their parents', maybe other family or friends – I pray that You help them on this journey to healing, and may they seek You through it all. And please be with me, and help me to give the guidance and words of wisdom on their journey. In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Okay. So, like I said, this is about my parents' divorce and how it affected me, and then my road to healing over my parents' divorce. So, growing up, I would say that my parents were good parents but they were terrible spouses, and they just did not know how to love each other. And I never really saw my parents loving each other. I do remember one time I walked in on my parents and they were hugging and gave each other a kiss, and I remember thinking "Oh, I wish they would do this more often." It was such a good feeling. But their marriage was not like that and, as the oldest child, I was always trying to, you know, solve their problems, which was impossible as a kid or even as an adult kid.

They would fight a lot – it never was physical, but it was emotionally ugly – and as the oldest I would interject myself in-between them and, you know, try to stop the fight or whatever. And I would try to keep my brother and sister away from it, and it was a heavy, heavy burden to carry as a kid. No kid should have to do that. And, you know, I grew up with a lot of anxiety. I didn't like spending the night over at people's houses because I was always worried that maybe my parents were going to get in a fight while I was gone, and I needed to be there. And usually what

Pray More Healing Retreat - Transcript

would happen is my parents would get in a fight, and then things would kind of calm down for a couple days, everybody could kind of relax, and then things would start to build up again because my parents never really dealt with their issues. And I don't say any of this to disrespect my parents – I love them both dearly and I have wonderful relationships with both of them, and this is just the reality of my childhood.

I was always waiting for that moment when they would come and tell me they would get a divorce. And even when I went into a college and I wasn't home anymore, that anxiety was still there. I was always waiting for that phone call. Well that phone call did come, but I happened to be into my thirties. And I'm not going to go into the reasons why my parents got a divorce, you know, out of respect for them, but as soon as I knew that my mom was very serious – my dad didn't want to get the divorce – but as soon as I knew my mom was, like, dead serious, I was in full force "We are going to fix this" mode. Again, oldest kid.

And I tried everything. I tried manipulation, I tried begging, I begged my mom to go to counseling. She did a couple times, but she was done. Her heart wasn't into counseling whatsoever. And my dad would call, and he would be so upset, and I would try to, like, counsel him, and I was trying to do this all on my own. It was such a burden, and I was so lost. Even though I knew my parents' marriage was not good, they were my foundation. And now my foundation was crumbling, and now it was like "What's going to happen for my kids when their grandparents don't live under the same roof? And what are their holidays going to be like? And what's it going to be like when I come home and visit? And am I going to have stepparents?" And it was just turmoil. It was turmoil.

And, you know, I was trying to put on the good face, like "I'm going to do this, I'm going to fix this and everything." And I was at work one day, and one of my coworkers – her name is Alma, and I just, oh gosh, I just love her to death; she is just one of those women that you meet in your life. But she was, like, just that good old Southern older woman that just will tell you like it is, but yet strong, Christian, just... she's just a good woman. A good, godly woman.

Anyway, she just kind of out of the blue came into my office, and I was working at my desk, and she sat down on my couch – I was a counselor at the time – and she just kind of leaned back and she said "Tell me what's going on." And I just kind of spilled my guts. I told her all about my parents' divorce, and my plans, and all my strategies for, you know, saving my parents' marriage. And she was just listening, and I was talking, and I was blaming my mom mostly and, you know, she threw in the comment that I was a daddy's girl, and I was like "Maybe, a little bit." And, you know, she just listened. And as I was talking, she would correct me on my

Pray More Healing Retreat - Transcript

thought process on a lot of things, and she was right, and it kind of stung to be corrected.

But, you know, I was listening to her, and we had a good talk. And, you know, when we got up she came over to me and she said... You know, there's that scene in *Good Will Hunting* when Matt Damon's character, Will, and Robin Williams' character, they're like in a hallway, and Robin Williams' character is trying to get Will to understand that the bad things that happened in his past were not his fault. And he says to him "It's not your fault." And Will goes "Yeah, yeah," you know, just kind of brushes him off. And Robin Williams' character, I can't think of his name, he said "It's not your fault." And Will was just like "Yeah, yeah. I know, I know." And he looks him in the eye and he says "It's not your fault." And Will just breaks down, and it finally penetrates his heart. Well, the next thing that happened in my office was kind of like that scene.

So Alma came over, and I was sitting in my chair, and she came over to me and she said "You can't fix this." And I was like "Yeah. I mean, yeah, I can. I mean, yeah, I can and, you know, I'm going to." And she's like "No. You can't fix this." And I just kind of looked at her and I was like "I have to." And she said "This isn't yours to fix. You are going to have to give this to Jesus." And then she – and every time I tell this story it, you know, it makes me cry because of how powerful it was – but she said "I'm going to pray over you," and she took one of her hands, she put it on my heart, and she took her other hand and put it on my head, and she just started praying over me. And, I mean, the tears were just flowing from my eyes. And then all of a sudden this warmth just spread from the top of my head and just flowed. I mean, I could literally feel it. It was like a warm water flowing through my body. And I knew in that moment that Christ was with me, and that everything was going to be okay.

And when she was done praying, I had the greatest sense of peace I have ever known in my life. She gave me a hug and she walked out, and I kind of sat there and I was trying to collect myself. And, you know, I got up to go eat lunch, and I walked over to our lunchroom and another coworker of mine was in there. And I was telling him, I was like "You know, Sean, Alma was just in my office, and she prayed over me, and she, you know, she was touching my heart and my head. And when she was praying, I felt this warmth flow through me like I've never experienced in my life. It was incredible. And I was like "What was that?" He was like "Girl, that was the Holy Spirit." And I was like "It was amazing." And I will never forget that moment.

And the reason that I tell you this story is sometimes in our healing journey, well pretty much always, we need others. And Alma was an intercessor for me in that

Pray More Healing Retreat - Transcript

moment. She saw my pain, and she saw that I was just burdened by this divorce and by trying to fix it, and she knew that I needed to give it to Christ. And, you know, she never... she didn't have to come and pray over me, but she did it, and I am so eternally grateful because I started healing that day from my parents' divorce. I will always wish that my parents were married, and I will always wish that they could have worked it out, but that's just not the case. And I know that, you know, Christ will handle it in His way, in His way. And I don't know what that way is, and I may never know this side of heaven, but I was able to heal from it. I mean, in a way I will always be a little broken just because my foundation is gone and I don't have my whole family together. But I'm okay, I'm joyful, I'm happy, I have a good relationship with my parents and, you know, I forgave both of them, which I needed to do and, you know, started that healing journey.

But what I want to suggest is get your friends onboard, get the saints onboard on your healing journey. We all need people in our lives to pray for us, to intercede for us. There is a real healing power in the power of prayer and I felt it that day. And so if you're on a healing journey, there's something that you need healing from, you know, ask a friend, ask a priest, ask somebody that you trust, a family member, to pray for you, to pray over you. It's a very powerful experience. And get the saints on your side. They want to pray for you, they are praying for you, but calling on them is such a great help in our time of need.

And I pray for all of you. If you have been affected by divorce in any way, whether your own or your parents', that healing can be found. The church obvious wants reconciliation for those who have been, you know, broken apart, but there is great healing that can be found, and we've just got to find those right, I don't know, tools to use. Prayer is one of them, and it was such a game changer in my life. And so I highly, highly, highly encourage you to find an intercessor for yourself – the saints or somebody here on earth – and I'm sure that they would be glad to do it. Let's end in a prayer.

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen. Dear Father, I thank You for the gift of prayer. I thank You for the gift of intercessors, and for the saints that can help us on our journey. I thank You that You give us the power to pray for each other, and how healing it can be, and that it can bring great comfort to our souls and to our minds. Please be with those who are listening today. If they have a particular wound from divorce, Lord, I pray that You help heal that hurt. It's a hard hurt, and one sometimes that only You can fix. And please be with those who are listening on their healing journey. I pray that I have given them something that they can use, and I pray that they have friends in their lives, family and friends in their lives that will pray for them. Most of all, I thank You for the saints, that

Pray More Healing Retreat - Transcript

they are willing and able to pray for us. In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.