

## **Praying & Healing Through Past Memories**

### **Katie Weiss**

Hi, my name is Katie Weiss, in today's talk, we're going to be talking about praying through, and finding healing through past memories. So, I thought we'd start with a prayer.

#### **Opening Prayer**

*In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen. Mighty God, we give You all our past, and our present, and our future. All the ways that we feel bound by our past, or feel stuck, we bring to You. We ask for deeper relationship with You, and deeper healing in these spaces that we can live authentic love and relationship no matter what our past is. We ask for glory in these spaces of difficulty, or trauma, or struggle. We ask this through Christ, our Lord, amen. The name of the Father, and of the son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.*

#### **Questions to Ponder On**

So, for today's talk, I'm going to be talking about how to pray through, or find healing through difficult past memories or experiences. I thought I'd start with a few questions to kind of ask yourself as you go into this talk.

Do you feel stuck by your past?

Do you find that you pray for healing, but can't find a way out?

Do you feel you're constantly falling into the same sins, or you're constantly falling in the same patterns that you want to get out of?

Do you feel bound by past feelings or reactions to things?

These are all signs that you probably feel bound by something in your past, and that's okay, it doesn't mean that there's something wrong with you or that you can't find a way out in the present, a lot of it might just come down to praying through or finding healing through past memories, and this is because we are body and soul.

#### **Healing from Memories**

And so often if we experience a trauma, or an event in our past, we can often live as if it's still happening in the present. So, an example is if you were hurt by somebody with certain characteristics, if you're experiencing that with somebody now. if you have not experienced healing in that memory, or in that place, you might feel the same feelings encountering somebody completely different in the present, because they resemble somebody in the past who hurt you, and you can probably think of many examples in your own life.

I know I've experienced that where I freeze up where I'm with somebody who I've never met before, and yet they remind me of somebody in the past or an event in the past that would make me freeze up, so that's okay, it's a point to an area that the Lord desires to heal, and Jesus is the healer, So we'll invite Him in these places.

So we need healing through memories, because it can make a new memory with a relationship, and so I'll walk us through some ways we can pray through, or find healing through past memories, and the main way is to be in a safe space with the Lord, and possibly with a therapist, or a dear friend, but to know that there's a relationship there, there's a relationship to carry you through something difficult.

## An Exercise for the Body and Memory

So in the book, "The Body Keeps The Score" by Bessel van der Kolk, there's research shown that our bodies can hold trauma, and so entering into those spaces can be really important that if something is making our body respond in the present, it's probably because it reminds us of a past hurt, and so sometimes tapping into our body responses such as shortness of breath, or tightened shoulders, or slumping our shoulders can be signs of a memory or a past event that is still caught in our body.

And so what can be important is going to those spaces in our body, or even our memory, sometimes when we're going in those spaces in our body, we can have a memory, or a feeling come up, and something that's important is imagining the memory again feet flat on the ground, having deep breathing, so taking a deep breath in, holding it in for three seconds taking a deep breath out, placing yourself in the present, knowing that you are a beloved son or daughter of God that nothing has weight over that, that nothing blurs or scars that identity, but rather that you are loved, and that you have value, and you are a beautiful person made in God's image and likeness.

And so going into that space of a memory, we can take a deep breath, we can place ourselves in the presence of God, and what we can do in that space is to really invoke him there, so I know when I've healed through past memories, I've done it with somebody that I find important present but there are other times I've just done it in prayer, and I've had my feet flat on the ground taking deep breaths, imaging what the scene looked like. I'm imagining the room or the space. Was it warm or cold there? What did the voices sound like, if anybody was there, what did the person look like? And there's definitely a fine line, you know, there's some realms where the burden can be too much that you do need a therapist to walk through memories, you need to be ready for that.

## Ask Jesus How He Feels

But for other memories, such as something that you feel the strength to carry through by yourself, you can bring the Lord in prayer in those moments, and what you can do is place yourself in the scene. Acknowledge and naming the feelings. Okay, I feel scared, or I feel sad, or I feel unheard. Being honest with that, maybe even saying it out loud, I find saying it out loud just is a release of what I'm feeling, being aware of the tension in my body, and going to that space, and then going back to that memory with Jesus, and asking Him what He saw there. asking Him, "Jesus, how did you feel when I went through this?" I find that to be immensely healing.

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I knew for one of my deepest traumas or memories that I spent years working through that one session I was in therapy and working through with somebody this memory or this trauma, the thing that was really important was asking Jesus what He saw and how He felt. And it really helped me to feel seen, and feel heard, and feel loved, and to find relationship there when I felt so isolated and alone in the actual event. And I know for me in that event I heard the Lord say, "I was hurting too. It hurt my heart to see you go through that." And that in of itself was really healing to know that somebody loved me enough to want to be with me, and my sorrow, and my pain.

And so, I just wanted to encourage you to take that step and that approach, if that is helpful, to feel free to invoke the Lord in that space. and to ask for His feedback on that. Also, I just wanted to encourage you that if you need help with a therapist, there's nothing wrong with that, that you can find a relationship or support to be able to not feel bound by your past.

### Prayer to the Holy Spirit

So, I thought we'd pray with the scripture passage and image to help this to go deeper. So, to start, we're going to pray a prayer to the Holy Spirit.

*In the name of the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit, Amen. Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful, and enkindle in them, the fire of Your love. Send forth Your Spirit, and they shall be created, and You shall renew the face of the earth. Let us pray. Oh God, Who by the light of the Holy Spirit did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant us through the same Spirit a love and relish for what is bright and just, and a constant enjoyment of His consolations, through Christ, our Lord, Amen. Name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Amen.*

### Visio Divina

So to start, we're going to sit with just the image. So, this is an image of Jesus and Peter on the shore of this sea, after Jesus rises from the dead, before He goes to ascend to the Father, and context-wise, this is after Peter betrayed Jesus. So, Peter has that in his past, and yet this is an encounter with Jesus in the present for him. So, sit with this image for the next few minutes, be aware of what is striking you, be aware of maybe it's the colors, or the relationships, or the expressions on the characters, to take that to prayer and place yourself in the scene.

At this point, I'm going to read the scripture passage, so you can either sit with just the scripture, or you can sit with the image if that's helpful for you, and we're going to project it on the screen, but you can also have this as a PDF if helpful.

### John's Gospel

This is a reading from John's Gospel. ***"When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord, You***

*know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Feed my lambs.' A second time, He said to him, 'Simon, son of John, do you love Me?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord, You know that, I love You.' He said to him, 'Tend my sheep.' He said to him a third time, 'Simon, son of John, do you love Me?'" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time do you love me, and he said to Him, 'Lord, You know everything, You know that I love You.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my sheep.*

*Truly, truly. I say to you, when you were young, you fastened your own belt, and walked where you would, but when you were old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will Fasten your belt for you and carry you where you do not want to go.' This He said to show by what death he was to glorify God. And after this, He said to him, 'Follow me.'"*

Take to prayer whatever words or phrases had been striking you and ask the Lord about them. For the next few minutes, take to prayer one or two of the questions on the screen, feel free to journal them.

## Personal Reflections

Before we close up, I just wanted to share some thoughts and reflections on this passage. I found this to be a beautiful passage to pick to pray through past memories, because Peter hurt Jesus by his denial three times, and yet Jesus enters into relationship. He enters into a meal with Peter, and not only does He have a meal with him, but He goes back to that past event and reaffirms it with Peter saying, do you love me, okay? It's not like He's pointing out that flaw in Peter but rather giving Peter the opportunity to find deeper relationship, to reaffirm his faith and his love in Christ in this difficult space of denial in the past, and I thought it would be encouraging to all of us that whatever past struggles you have, whatever trauma, whatever difficulty that you feel bound by, that the Lord desires to enter into that space with you, and that He longs for relationship with you as you talk about that with Him, and I hope and pray that you find deeper healing in those places.

Thank you so much for praying with me. I hope that this prayer and scripture was really encouraging for you, and will continue to be so, God bless.