



Tending to Hearts Shattered by Loss

Providing space for pain
to exist in community.

1



VISION for today

▪ Tending to your heart

Blessed be the God and Father of our
Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies
and God of all comfort, who comforts us
in all our affliction, so that we may be able
to comfort those who are in any affliction,
with the comfort with which we ourselves
are comforted by God.

2 Cor 1:4-5

▪ Tending to others

You are my servant,
I have chosen you and not cast you off";
fear not, for I am with you;
be not dismayed, for I am your God;
I will strengthen you, I will help you,
I will uphold you with my righteous right
hand.

Is 41: 9-10

2



JODIE'S BOUINGBOETTER

3

BONNOETTER & THE MINISTRY OF PRESENCE

"The physical presence of other Christians is a source of incomparable joy and strength to the believer.

Longingly, the imprisoned apostle (Paul) calls his 'dearly beloved son in the faith' to come to him in prison in the last days of his life (2 Tim 4:9). He wants to see him again and have him near." - Life Together

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MINISTRY OF PRESENCE

There is a sacredness of simply being with others.
Through authentic presence,
listening,
and bearing burdens,
Christians embody Christ's love
and create a space where
God's grace and comfort can be felt deeply.

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ministry of *Presence*

A ministry of presence is a deeply relational approach to ministry
that affirms a sufferer's experience and
meets them with Christ's compassion and gentleness.
It's about entering their world with care, listening well,
and providing a steady presence
that honors them as image bearers and acknowledges their pain.

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Sitting with others in grief

Why is it uncomfortable?

7

Sitting with others in grief

Where have you seen Christians make hurtful mistakes?

8

FEAR NOT—GOD'S PRESENCE IS WITH US

**Fear not, for I am with you;
be not dismayed,
for I am your God.**

Is 41:10

9

FROM EDEN TO ETERNITY

- God walked with Adam and Eve in the cool of the day (Genesis 3:8).
- God always intended to relate to his creation— by walking with us, talking with us, and being near in every moment.
- Sin enters in- breaking our fellowship
- He pursues us
- Even when we are put outside the garden

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FROM EDEN TO ETERNITY

- **Expanding Promises:**
 - God revealed His presence through covenants.
 - With Abraham, He promised to dwell with his people in the land of Canaan (Genesis 12:1-3).
 - "The Mosaic Covenant is God's gracious provision to shape his redeemed people into a holy nation, distinct from the world, and reflective of his glory."
 - Established at Mount Sinai, it gave Israel the law, not as a means of earning salvation, but as a guide for living in fellowship with the God who had already redeemed them from Egypt.
 - At the covenant's heart was God's promise, 'I will be your God, and you will be my people,' calling Israel to love and obey him as an expression of gratitude for his grace.

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FROM EDEN TO ETERNITY

- **Physical Representation of His Nearness**
 - God dwells with his people.
 - Through Moses, he gave the Tabernacle—a tangible sign of his nearness (Exodus 19:5-6). Israelites were wandering in the wilderness, vulnerable and fearful, yet seeing the cloud by day and fire by night reminding them, "God is with us."
 - God instructed Solomon to build the Temple, a permanent place for his presence to dwell among his people (2 Chronicles 7:16).
 - The Tabernacle and Temple were not just structures; they were symbols of God's faithfulness, stability, and comfort in the midst of chaos.

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FROM EDEN TO ETERNITY

- **Jesus, Emmanuel- The Fulfillment of God's Presence**

- "God with us" (Matt 1:23). Jesus didn't stay distant. He stepped into our brokenness, our joys, and our sorrows.
- He identified with our weaknesses and brought us near to God through his life, death, and resurrection.
- John 2:19-21 reminds us that Jesus is the true Temple. He replaces the need for a building because he is God dwelling fully with humanity.
- He not only offers us comfort but transforms our relationship with God, restoring what was lost in Eden.

Reflection Question: What does it mean to you that Jesus entered into your suffering and understands your struggles?

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FROM EDEN TO ETERNITY

- **The Holy Spirit: God's Presence in Us Today**

- After Jesus ascended, he sent the Holy Spirit to live within believers (John 14:16-17; Acts 2).
- The God who dwelled in the Temple now makes his home in your heart.
- The Spirit guides, comforts, and strengthens us daily, reminding us that we are never alone.
- The Spirit is the essence of the Tabernacle and Temple brought directly into our lives.
- When you feel isolated or abandoned, remember this: the same Spirit who hovered over the waters of creation and filled the Temple now resides in you.

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FROM EDEN TO ETERNITY

- **God's Eternal Presence With His People**
 - Revelation 21: 3 gives us the glorious promise that one day, God's dwelling place will be with his people forever.
 - In the new heaven and new earth, there will be no more tears, no more pain, no more separation. Worship, joy, and peace will replace the brokenness of this world.
 - This is the culmination of God's persistent presence—the fulfillment of his promise to always be with us. What began in Eden will be restored through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

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JESUS'S PRESENCE WITH HIS PEOPLE

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JESUS'S COMPASSIONATE PRESENCE

- Met Mary and Martha in Their Grief (John 11:1-44)
- Sat at the Well with a Lonely Woman (John 4:1-26)
- Calms the Storm (Mark 4:35-41)
- Heals the Sick and Outcast (Mark 10:46-52)
- Invited His Disciples' Questions and Doubts (Matt 16:5)
- Instituted the Last Supper (Luke 22:14-20)

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JESUS

- Comes to Be With Us
- Identifies with Our Weakness and Suffering
- Presence is the Foundation of Our Redemption
- Chooses to Walk with Disciples
- Jesus as Prophet, Priest, and King
- Ushers in His Ongoing Presence through the Holy Spirit

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JESUS'S DESIRE FOR THE PRESENCE OF PEOPLE.

Garden of Gethsemane (Matt 26: 36-46). Inviting them to care for him, he instructs them, "Sit here, while I go over there and pray." (v.36) and tells them about his desire for their presence, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me."

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WHAT WE WANT TO EMBODY

When we simply sit with the suffering, listen to their burdens are affected by their pain we are demonstrating how Jesus:

- Entered into our suffering.
- Identifies with our pain.
- Values us.
- Invites us to speak and ask him questions.
- Is moved when he sees his people in anguish.
- Does not want to 'fix us' but desires a relationship with us (one that will lead us to change)
- Entrusts us to the Holy Spirit

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What it LOOKS like

- **Embrace Silence and Tears:** The Lord says our tears are precious to him. He keeps each one in a bottle (Ps 56:8).
- **Listen:** Resist the temptation to correct, answer, or sanitize their speech. Trust that God will, in time, help them shape their speech into a God-honoring lament.
- **Own your powerlessness** (1 Peter 5:10).
- **Resist offering explanations.**
- **Choose to suffer alongside them.** Bear one another's burdens (Gal 6:2) and to weep with the broken (Rom 12:15).
- **Endure.** Grief and suffering have no timeline.
- **Serve in small ways:** (Luke 10:33-35).

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Incarnational Ministry

**When have you felt comforted by someone's presence
during a challenging time?**

How did that reflect God's care for you?

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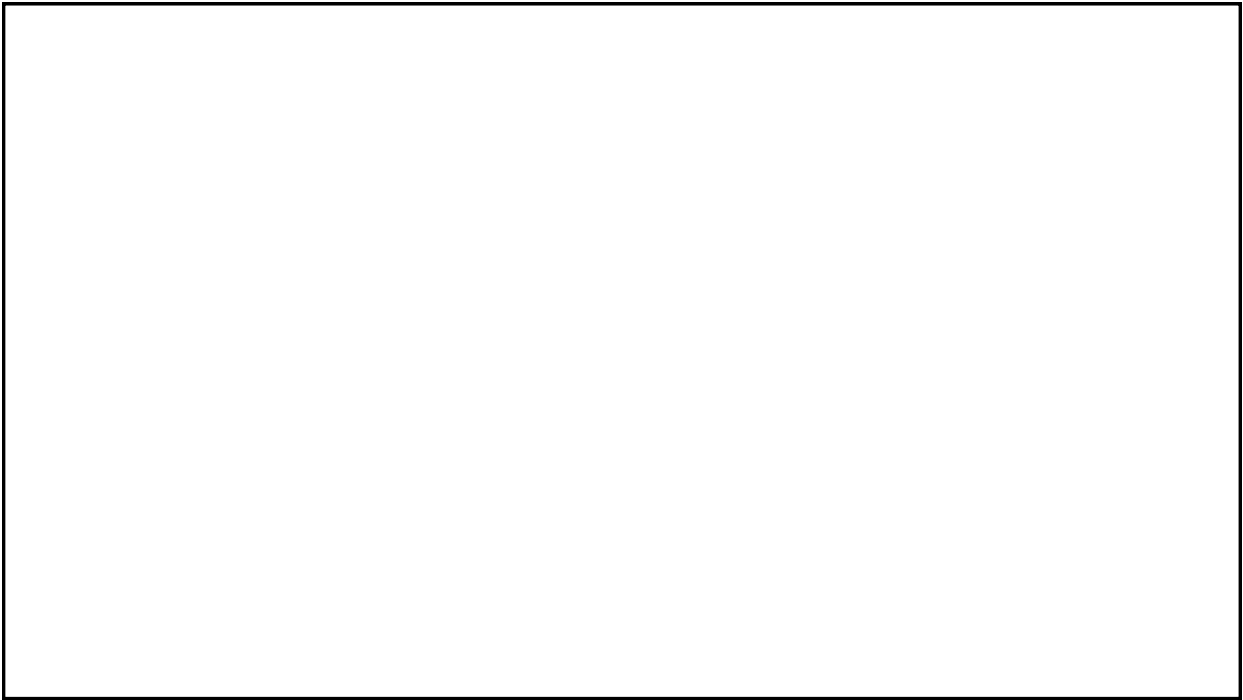
A MINISTRY OF PRESENCE IS ONE MEANS OF MINISTRY AMONG MANY

- Embodies doctrinal truths with compassion; it doesn't substitute for them.
- Aims to comfort, but it also sets the stage for growth.
- Points sufferers to God it does not substitute our presence for his.
- Honors the place of lament, recognizing that space for grief and despair builds faith.
- It does not ignore or excuse sinful responses to suffering but seeks to address them at the right time lovingly.
- Invites trust in God's timing.
- Does not negate the need for action.

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When have you
experienced God's
presence most powerfully
in your own suffering?

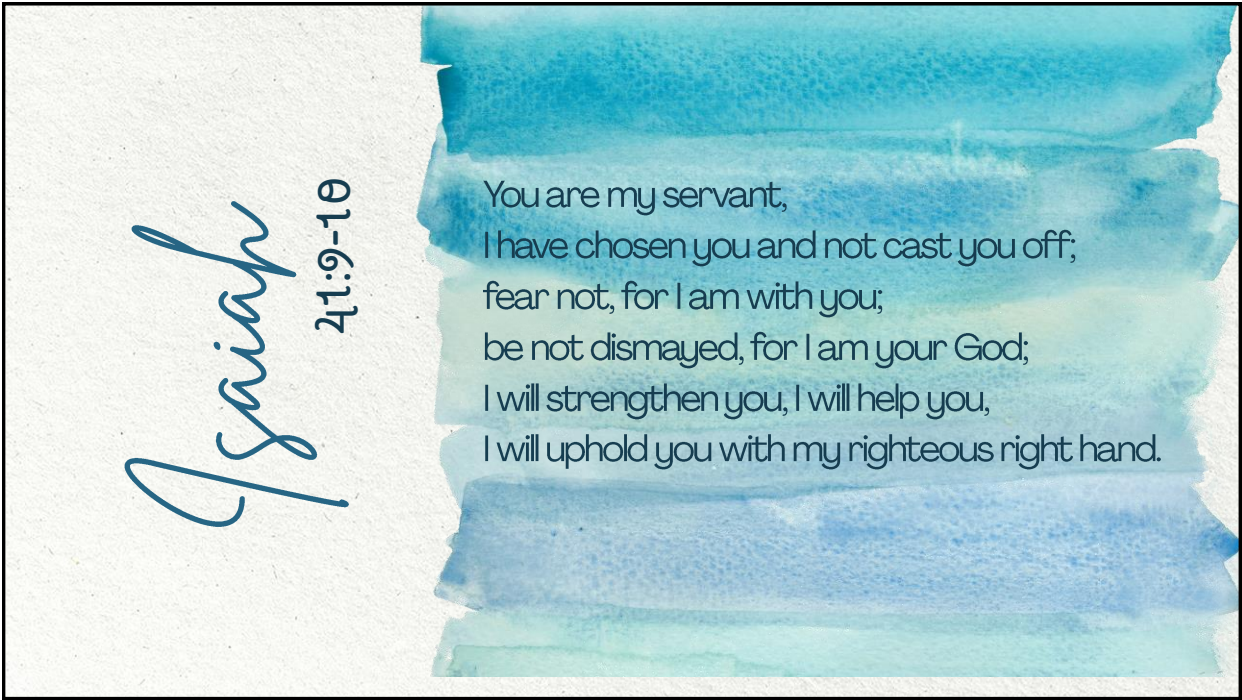
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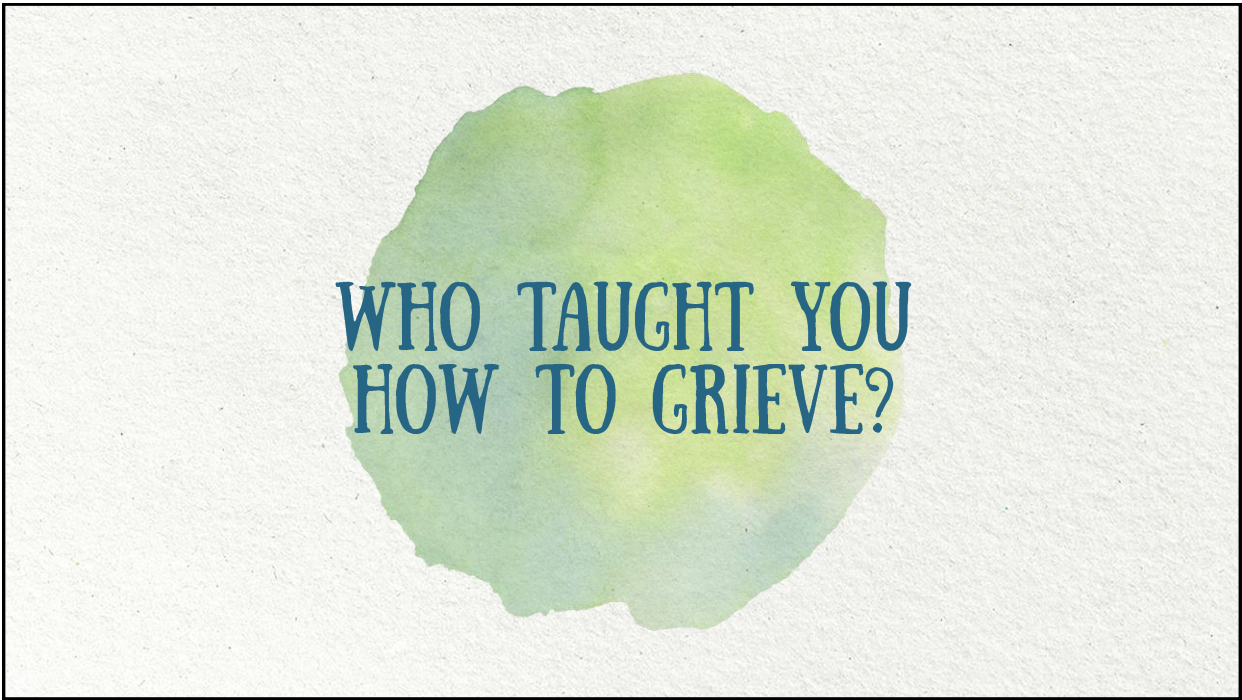
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Bonhoeffer contends that our longing for others' presence is not a sign of weakness but of a profound spiritual reality.

"The first service that one owes to others in the fellowship consists in listening to them. Just as love of God begins with listening to His Word, so the beginning of love for the brethren is learning to listen to them."

THE SIMPLE ACT OF LISTENING REFLECTS GOD'S LOVE AND PRESENCE.

Offering our full attention to others is a profound way to be present in their lives and show them Jesus, "the ministry of listening has been committed to them by him who is himself the great listener and whose work they should share.

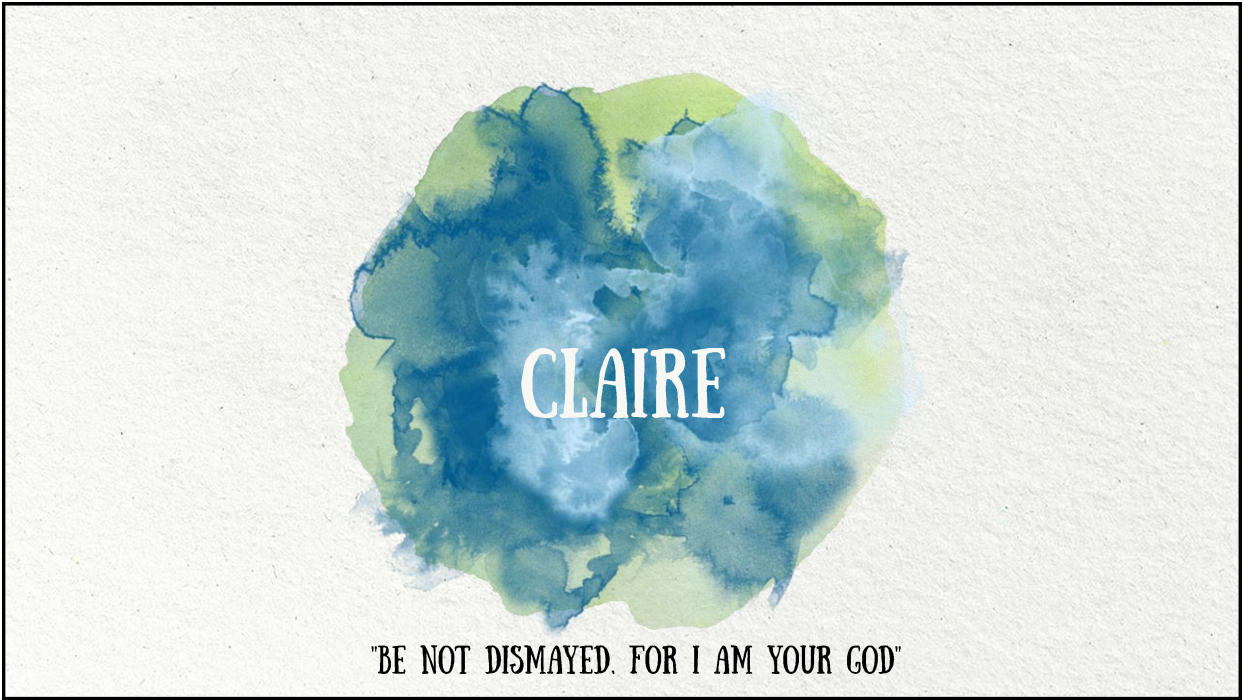
We should listen with the ears of God that we may speak the Word of God."

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GOD BENDS HIS EAR

- "I love the Lord, because he has heard my voice and my pleas for mercy. Because he inclined his ear to me, therefore I will call on him as long as I live." Psalm 116:1-2
 - God's nearness and readiness to listen, portraying God as bending down, like a father stooping to hear the voice of his child.
- "The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous, and his ears toward their cry." Psalm 34:15
 - This verse reinforces the idea of God's attentive care, highlighting his willingness to respond to his people.

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A watercolor splash in shades of blue and purple on the left side of the slide. The text "HOW TO LISTEN" is written in a large, blue, serif font. Below it, a bulleted list contains three items: "Be Fully Present", "Eliminate Distractions", and "Practice Active Engagement". Each item has a sub-bullet with further details.

HOW TO LISTEN

- Be Fully Present
 - **Eliminate Distractions:** Turn off your phone, minimize external interruptions, and give your undivided attention.
 - **Practice Active Engagement:** Use body language that communicates attentiveness, such as leaning in slightly, maintaining eye contact, and nodding occasionally to show understanding.
 - **Silence Internal Noise:** Let go of the urge to think about what you'll say next or to mentally solve the person's problem.

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- **Avoid Judgment:** Accept their emotions and experiences
- **Be Comfortable with Silence:** Silence can be a powerful form of communication. Allow the person to process their thoughts and feelings without feeling rushed.
- **Maintain Confidentiality:** Honor their trust by safeguarding what they share with you.
- **Acknowledge Emotions:** Validate their feelings by saying things like, "That sounds incredibly hard," or "I can see why you'd feel that way."
- **Affirm Their Worth:** Remind them that their feelings and experiences matter. Say, "What you're going through is important, and it's okay to feel this way."
- **Value Them:** Let them know they are not alone and that their pain is seen and cared for.
- **Understand Silence:**

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ELIZABETH

"I WILL STRENGTHEN YOU. I WILL HELP YOU"


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RESIST THE URGE TO FIX

- **Avoid Offering Solutions:** Focus on being with someone, not solving their problems.
- **Affirm Their Struggle:** Instead of giving advice, acknowledge the difficulty of their situation.
- **Be a Witness to Their Pain:** Sometimes, the greatest gift you can offer is to simply witness their experience without trying to change it.

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CARLY

I WILL UPHOLD YOU WITH MY RIGHTEOUS RIGHT HAND.

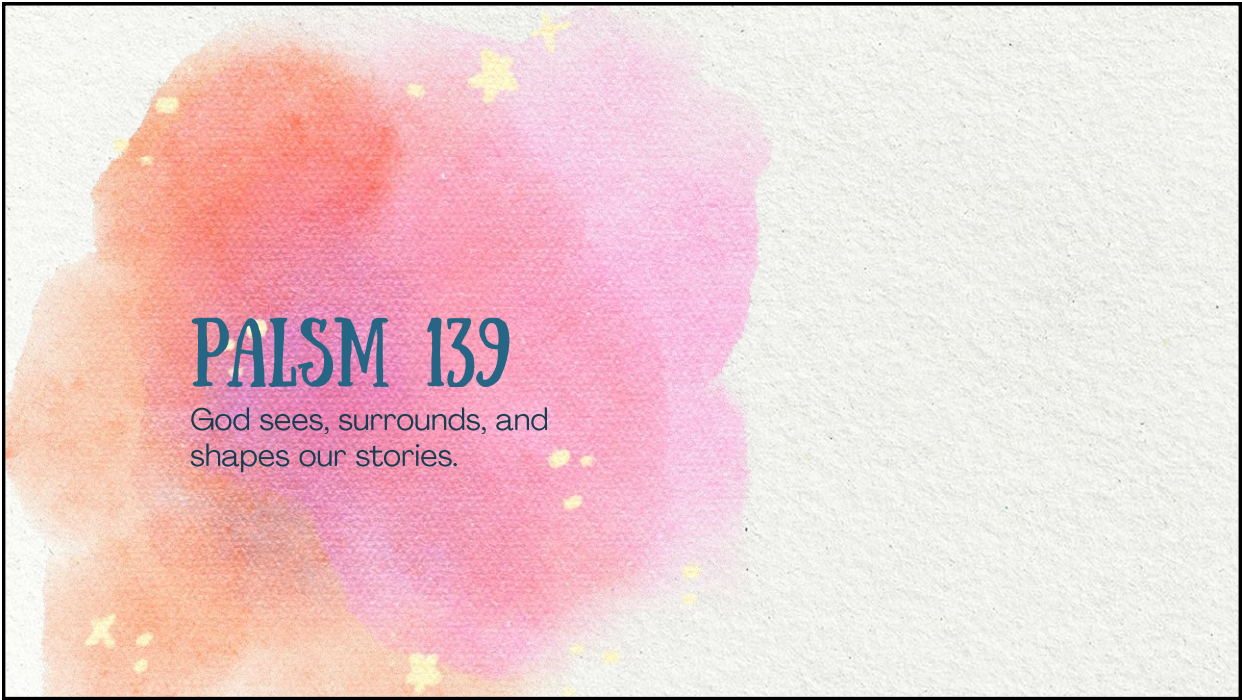
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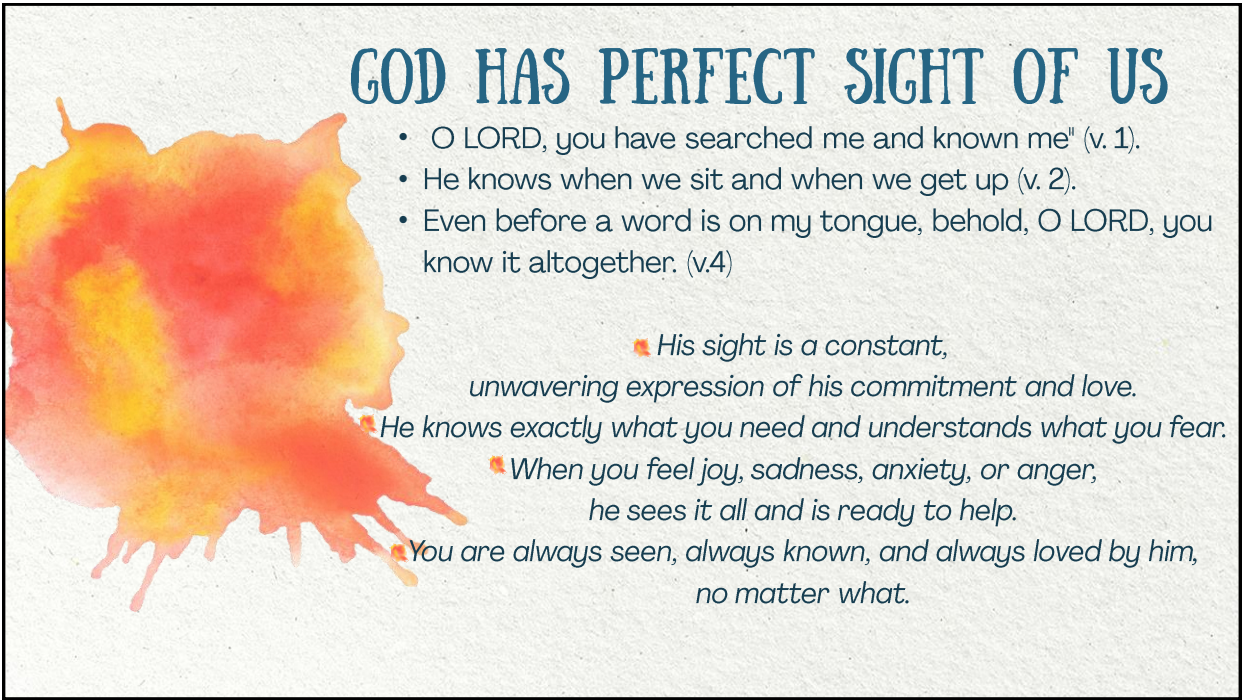
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GOD SURROUNDS US WITH HIS PRESENCE

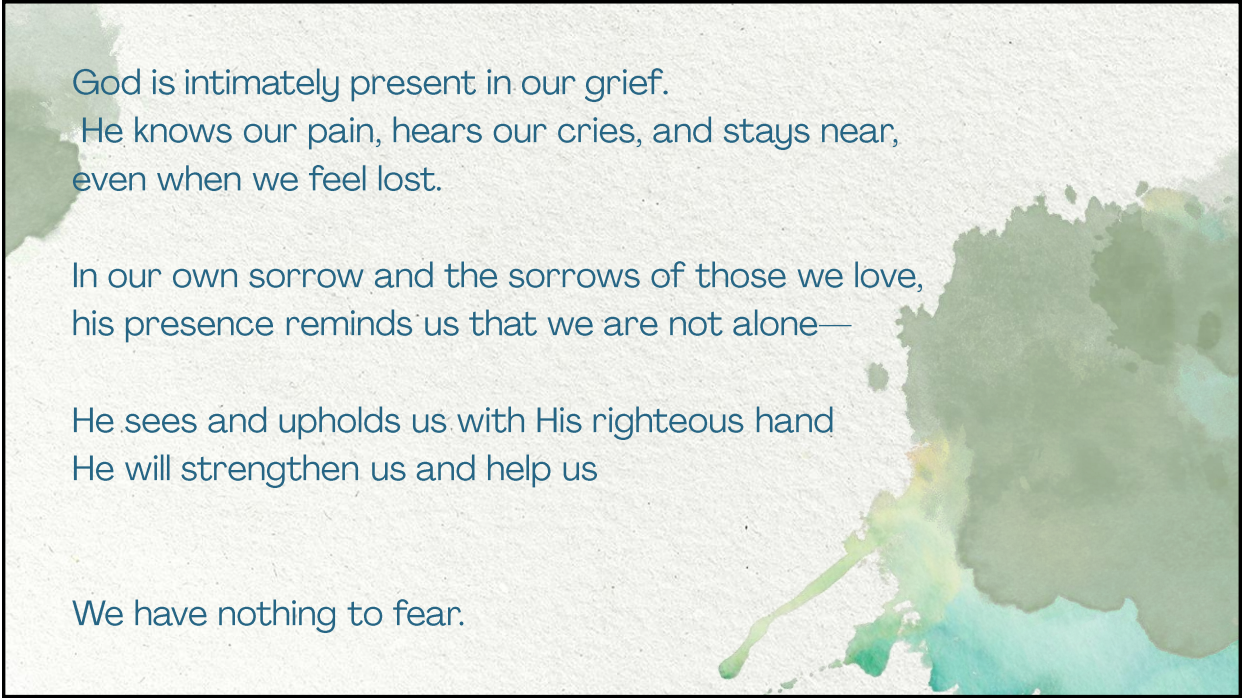
- You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. (v.5)
 - God envelops his people in tender protection.
 - God understands our frailty and shields us from harm.
 - God's nearness knows no boundaries.
- "Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?" (v. 7).
 - There is nowhere beyond God's reach. Whether we are soaring in joy or sinking in despair.
 - His hand is always there to guide and support us (v. 8–10).
 - "Even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day" (v. 12). His love pierces through our fears, offering both light and direction.

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GOD SHAPES OUR STORIES

- Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them (v. 16).
 - Before we took our first breath, God had already penned the narrative of our lives. Each chapter, filled with both joy and struggle, is written by a God who is infinitely wise and unfailingly good.
- God's shaping of our stories does not mean we won't face difficulty or sorrow, but it does mean that every moment is woven into a tapestry that reflects his glory and fulfills his eternal purposes.
- "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it" (v. 6), reminds us that while we may not understand our story as it unfolds, we can trust that the author of our days knows the ending, and it is good.

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