

ABSTRACT

PREACHING THE GOSPEL TO TRAUMA SURVIVORS: SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS, METHODS, AND TECHNIQUES

by

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Trauma survivors conceptualize and experience life differently than the typical church congregant. The purpose of the ministry transformation project was to pilot a sermon series designed to help evaluate the preaching effectiveness of a trauma-informed Gospel message, delivered within a culturally sensitive setting and measured through the affective, attitudinal, social, and spiritual health changes in participants attending a church-sponsored symposium. The symposium was delivered through a six-session, trauma-informed sermon series at The Vail Church in Edwards, Colorado.

Nineteen adult attendees aged twenty-one and older responded to the invitation to participate in a trauma-informed symposium titled, “Where Are You God? Finding Meaning in the Tragedy of Life.” This led to the acquisition of four study participants who were recruited to participate in the research component of the symposium. Study participants completed an anonymous process for informed consent, screening, and pre- and post-testing before they were chosen to be included as participants in the pilot project.

The pilot study accomplished the creation and implementation of a trauma-informed sermon series held within a trauma-informed setting and applied to a group of adults with a prior experience of trauma. The study findings ultimately provide relevant

material for consideration and pillars upon which to build further research into the relationship between effective ministry and the needs of the trauma survivor.

PREACHING THE GOSPEL TO TRAUMA SURVIVORS:
SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS, METHODS, AND TECHNIQUES

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by
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A dissertation is a project that can be categorized as finite, but it also seems to comprise a seemingly infinite number of components. It is the unification of these somewhat innumerable elements that form the final product.

These components consist of people, places, time, and resources. The dissertation begins as an abstract thought that circles the globe and grasps toward the vastness of a universe filled with questions, wonders, and possibilities. The concept of a research project is then pulled to earth through a gravitational influence that is somehow organized into a methodical, empirical process, culminating into a written document that is read in retrospect. It is within this perspective of hindsight that I glance over my shoulder with deep awe, gratitude, and appreciation for those who have supported this work.

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CHAPTER 1

NATURE OF THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

Chapter 1 will encompass the personal introduction of the author, the problem statement, rationale, and purpose of the project, and the three research questions that drive this inquiry.

The definition of key terms, delimitations, data analyses, relevant literature review, the research methodology, and the generalizability of the project will prepare the reader to contextually engage in reviewing the study.

Personal Introduction

As the youngest child of four growing up in the 1960s, I experienced and embraced an innate and intrinsic inadequacy and deep shame about my existence. I longed to be loved and to give love; instead, I perceived rejection and gave a concurrent response through isolation. Childhood sexual abuse contributed to much of this experience, as did parental divorce and the absence of any positive male role model in the home. My own responses joined with these circumstances to form a protective shell around my heart. I vowed that people could not be trusted and that I would have to learn to live in cautious proximity to those around me. The world was a dangerous place, and survival was contingent upon the ability to maintain safe, emotional distances.

My childhood years evolved into a blur of anger, despair, and alienation, which competed against my yearning for transcendent connection, community, and love. At age 15, I left the church of my youth and, with it, my faith and life's purpose. Alcohol use quickly evolved into addiction in late adolescence, and my early adulthood years were

lived through a bohemian existence of cyclical role failures as a soldier, a husband, and as a father.

My efforts to seek relief through change and to find support included rotations through churches, treatment centers for addiction, and twelve-step support group meetings. I spent seven years of a 13-year drinking span trying to terminate my alcohol use. What I did not know then, but what I eventually learned, was this: The results of childhood trauma contributed to my aversion in trusting others for help, which impeded my ability to ask for and receive the help I so desperately needed. However, persistence overtook aversion and desperation replaced despair. Eventually, these efforts paid off. I entered recovery through a public-sector treatment program on April 7, 1991, and with the help of God and a community of recovering people, I have experienced the transformative life of sobriety ever since.

Over the months, years, and decades, I became a new man. The foundation for restoration was built upon belonging and acceptance. This newfound capacity for living a full life served as both a catalyst and a foundation for personal, vocational, emotional, spiritual, and relational growth. While working full time, I returned to school and earned degrees that would enhance my competencies in the fields of addiction counseling and leadership. I held within me a passion to understand the pragmatisms of restoration, especially as to how people undergo an existential change. A rehabilitative approach and philosophical framework for counseling developed that eventually proved successful in leading people to find hope, healing, and recovery in life. At first, this occurred within the vocation of substance abuse treatment programs. Eventually, my approach expanded into the broader application of behavioral health counseling. Finally, it has emerged into

a part-time vocation of a broader ministry that seeks to invite anyone who may be interested in exploring the deep and restorative love of God through the life, work, death, resurrection, and ascension of the man known as Jesus of Nazareth.

At this point in my twenty-six years as a professional leader, entrepreneur, and clinician in the behavioral health care arena, and in conjunction with ten years of bivocational ministry, I have found that the people who need to hear the good news of the Gospel the most (the recipients) are the ones out of earshot of the message and the messenger. I believe some of this is the responsibility of the messenger; that is, the ecclesial church and its leadership. Church culture is often filled with overt and covert symbolism of authority, power, dogma, and rules. The sermon and its delivery (the communication) are often enmeshed in similar language and intonations that evoke an intrinsic fear and defensive rebellion in the heart of the wounded listener. An unhealed and unrestored trauma victim cannot tolerate re-exposure to this type of cultural structure when power, rule, and authority were historically used to manipulate and perpetrate harm. Other victims have been wounded through severe and sudden loss through witness or exposure to violent, traumatic events, culminating in anger, disillusionment, and distrust.

Whether through naiveté, ignorance, incompetency, or insensitivity, the pastor and the church can inadvertently harm and alienate the trauma victim. This results in the unintentional crushing of the “bruised reed” and snuffing of the “smoldering wick” (*NIV* Isa. 42:3).

I personally experienced this “cringe factor” in my previous attempts at returning to God through the church. I once again experienced this well into my recovery when I

re-entered the Christian pilgrimage. My career has required numerous geographical relocations. As a result, I have visited and participated in more than a dozen church congregations, including United Methodist, Anglican, Southern Baptist, Vineyard, Wesleyan, and self-declared non-denominational (more like Pentecostal Holiness with a contemporary expression). I have served in leadership roles at three of these congregations and preached at most. I have heard the “groans” of the untended wounded, the exasperation of the new visitor who did not return, and the complaints by the church leadership in the stunted discipleship and declining numbers of their congregations. I have listened to the obstinate defense of the stubborn pastor, unwilling or unable to look beyond the three-point presentation and the dogmatic delivery of a sermonic message. I have been immersed within a church culture of false doctrine, one that is steeped in the triumphal power and justice domains of God, yet neglecting love and mercy in favor of shouting the declaration of the wicked human heart and the shaming call that we are downright lucky to be loved by a God who is weary from our lazy faith, our half-hearted commitment, and our selfish resistance to conform.

I am not advocating for a Gospel message that is steeped in some sort of palatable liberalism. Truth through orthodoxy is essential in this setting. However, I have seen those who long for more, who are haunted and hunted by a passionately romantic God who has left the ninety-nine in search of the one; those who seek the Good News of redemption and healing, only to be turned away, or who eventually run away and are once again alienated within their circumstances.

Certainly, the totality of this challenge cannot be solely ascribed to the church and its pastor. Some of the disparity between message and recipient can be attributed to the recipient's tendencies toward a posture of distrust and avoidance:

Their whole experience of identity and of the world is based upon expectations of harm and abuse. When betrayal and damage is done by a loved one who says that what he or she is doing is good and is for the child's good, the seeds of lifelong mistrust and fear are planted. Thus, the survivor of repetitive childhood abuse and neglect expects to be harmed in any helping relationship and may interact with us as though we have already harmed him or her. (Giller 4)

Many churches and pastors seek to help the broken-hearted and, indeed, have discovered effective methods in reaching those impacted by trauma. However, there is an element of sabotage that can be found within the affected population. Even more, there is also an element of nearly intractable isolation. No matter the effort, finesse, or cultural congruity applied to attract and reach this group, they will not come, or they will not stay. We will have to leave these wandering sojourners to the prevenient grace of God in hopes that seeds planted will someday take root.

Through my own experience of trauma, my personal recovery from alcoholism (including the multi-dimensional aspects of this bondage), and my twenty-five years of professional work with trauma victims, I am intrigued by the process of effective communication and assistance that leads to restoration for trauma victims. Specifically, I am curious about three sub-concepts:

1. What are the unique attributes and needs of people who have been adversely affected by severe trauma?
2. What impact does the sermon content (the message) and contextual setting (building, culture, worship, liturgy) have upon the trauma victim?

3. What can be done to bridge the church mission of inclusion and the proven effectiveness of evidenced-based psychology to help bring healing, wellness, and restoration to the trauma victim through a trauma-informed sermon design and setting?

“A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out” (Isa. 42:3).

The fundamental aspects of biblical restoration—its inherent definitions, manifestations, and implications for humans—are strongly correlated to effective ministry. Specifically, in the area of discipleship: Wholeness and holiness; restorative relationship to God and neighbor; belonging and community; redemption and freedom; restoration of the *Imago Dei*; and, finally, defining the role and purpose each individual and the Church (Christian community) have in the here-and-not-yet of the Kingdom of God.

The power of the pulpit is like a scalpel in the hands of surgeon. It can harm, or it can heal. If pastors, who wield the “sword of the Spirit” (Eph. 6:17), can build and convey a message through the catalyst of culture and sermon that effectively invites and reaches the estranged trauma victim, then perhaps a new frontier has been reached. The great commission continues to be filled where we will “go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 28:19).

Statement of the Problem

The ministry transformation project targeted the obstacles that arise when preaching the Gospel to adults who have been negatively impacted by significant trauma within their life experience.

The Gospel offers a message of encouragement, restoration, and hope. However, people who have been impacted by trauma experience life differently. This includes an altered perception of safety, personal boundaries, noise sensitivity, self-esteem, self-awareness, sense of adequacy/self-efficacy, and shame. These are the people within our communities who can never hear the Gospel message of hope due to fear, avoidance, and aversion. As a result, the trauma survivor may never experience these essential gifts of restorative grace. They are the alienated, the frightened living within the self-protective cocoon of isolation; they will not darken the doors of a church. They are highly suspicious of authority, and rightly so. Their stories are built upon credible experiences where rules and power have been manipulated to the gain of a perpetrator and to the loss of the victim. Others have experienced tragic losses that have decimated their world view of order, logic, certainty, and meaning.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of the ministry transformation project was to pilot a sermon series designed to help evaluate the preaching effectiveness of a trauma-informed Gospel message, delivered within a culturally sensitive setting and measured through the affective, attitudinal, social, and spiritual health changes in participants attending a church-sponsored symposium. The symposium was delivered through a six-session, trauma-informed sermon series at The Vail Church in Edwards, Colorado.

Research Questions

Research Question #1

What were the affective, attitudinal, social, and spiritual health indicators of study participants prior to the preaching series? (As measured by the Post-Traumatic Growth Inventory [PTGI] Pre-Tests.)

Research Question #2

What changes occurred in the affective, attitudinal, social, and spiritual health indicators of study participants after the preaching series? (As measured by the PTGI Post-Tests.)

Research Question #3

What elements of the sermon design, delivery, and worship setting assisted the study participants with any positive changes in their affective, attitudinal, social, and spiritual health indicators? (As determined by the Trauma-Informed Survey [TIS] response questionnaire)

Rationale for the Project

Trauma survivors experience life differently than the typical congregant. One in five Americans has been molested; one in four grew up with alcoholics; one in three couples have engaged in physical violence (van der Kolk, 1. Among trauma survivors, meaningful alterations have occurred to their normal cognitive functioning and problem-solving processes. There are biological, psychological, and spiritual components of a survivor's life that have been negatively impacted and altered.

Trauma survivors are burdened with numerous challenges, including shame, guilt, anxiety, and depression. This often creates a cycle of loneliness, despair, and isolation, reinforced by a strong perception of suspicion, distrust, and alienation.

The church is called to be a witness, a light unto the world. However, where the light of the Gospel illuminates so brilliantly upon the fortunate recipients of the Word, there are refugees of the heart who struggle for existence only in the shadows, where light and love cannot penetrate to illuminate the freedom and restoration of the Gospel. They are in hiding, living as one in a witness protection program. They are safe, but they are not free. They are lost and have lost much.

The following excerpt from the 2000 movie *The Legend of Bagger Vance* portrays the dilemma by which the trauma victim must navigate life without the fullness of their heart. Bagger is a mysterious character who has entered into the story of Junuh, a psychologically decimated World War I veteran who has returned to his hometown, shell shocked from the trauma of war and sacred loss. A former golf prodigy, he has entered a tournament to help save the fortunes of his estranged wife, yet another casualty of his inability to fit into the blurry, societal world of post-combat.

Bagger Vance: See, the trick is...to find your swing...

Rannulph Junuh: What'd you say?...

Bagger Vance: Well you lost your swing...We got to go find it...

The metaphorical use of the term “swing” helps illustrate the essential and unique purpose and authentic identity that each person carries in life. Those adversely impacted by trauma have lost their story and, with it, their purpose. Their identity is transformed into a metanarrative of the traumatic events of the past, and they are in desperate need of

redemption to find it. The church can be the community—the place—whereby the victim can find solace, support, acceptance, and guidance, if only they would come. Yet, if they *do* arrive, they will need safety, space (physical and mental), acceptance, and respect. The invitational “table” should be set in such a manner that any implications of authority, power, and control are mitigated toward an experience of caring, kindness, and welcoming. This renewed experience will lead to a connection to God and others, thereby creating a catalyst for renewal in spirit and soul.

As such, creating, cultivating, and perpetuating a culture of safety—while preaching the Gospel through a sermon and context that creates an engaging and transformative experience—is essential for reaching, teaching, and preaching to trauma survivors based upon their unique perceptions, abilities, and needs.

Definition of Key Terms

Attendee refers to those who attended the symposium but did not participate in the study. They may also be referred to collectively as *population*.

Cultural Sensitivity is the term used to discuss the importance of awareness surrounding the trauma survivor group, as well as the approach the pastor should use in designing the sermon and creating a setting conducive to effective communication.

Resnicow et al. describe this as follows:

Cultural sensitivity is defined by two dimensions: surface and deep structures. Surface structure involves matching intervention materials and messages to observable, “superficial” characteristics of a target population. This may involve using people, places, language, music, food, locations, and clothing familiar to, and preferred by, the target audience. Surface structure refers to how well interventions fit within a specific culture. Deep structure involves incorporating the cultural, social, historical, environmental and psychological forces that influence the target health behavior in the proposed target population. (10)

Participant is anyone who participated in the study by attending the symposium, completing (at a minimum) the Informed Consent.

Population refers to the group of attendees who attended the symposium.

Post-Traumatic Growth Inventory is the survey tool used as a pre- and post-test instrument for participants. This tool is designed to measure positive areas of growth and change in someone's life that results from the experience of a traumatic event.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is defined by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs as “a mental health problem that some people develop after experiencing or witnessing a life-threatening event, like combat, a natural disaster, a car accident, or sexual assault” (“PTSD Basics”). Moreover, among those who experience PTSD:

It's normal to have upsetting memories, feel on edge, or have trouble sleeping after a traumatic event. At first, it may be hard to do normal daily activities, like go to work, go to school, or spend time with people you care about. But most people start to feel better after a few weeks or months. If it's been longer than a few months and you're still having symptoms, you may have PTSD. For some people, PTSD symptoms may start later on, or they may come and go over time. (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, “PTSD Basics”)

Spiritual Health is a specific domain within the holistic scope of the human construct. Human health can be examined within the consideration of biological, psychological, social, and spiritual domains of the human, existential condition.

Trauma is a bodily or mental injury usually caused by an external agent (“trauma, n.” 846)

Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) “involves a broad understanding of traumatic stress reactions and common responses to trauma” (Center for Substance Abuse Treatment).

For the purposes of this study, trauma-informed care considers the homiletics and aesthetics of the sermon delivery and worship setting.

Trauma-Informed Gospel Message describes the awareness, consideration, and integration of the characteristics of the targeted group into a cohesive and effective sermon design, delivered within a culturally sensitive setting.

Trauma-Informed Survey (TIS) is a researcher-designed survey used to capture participants' subjective responses to the sermon series' setting, content, and intrinsic learning experiences.

Trauma Survivor is, according to the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, one who has experienced a singular or repetitive traumatic events and has responded through normal adaptive strategies in an effort to cope with the event(s). This can include adaptations that may or may not be dysfunctional to the areas of the psychological, biological, social and spiritual domains. For purposes of this study, trauma survivors were identified through the use of the PTSD Checklist scoring threshold for a qualifying designation as one who has been exposed to traumatic events and has experienced stress-related symptoms significant to qualify for a PTSD diagnosis.

Delimitations

The targeted population was selected from the Eagle County, Colorado, community; the event was facilitated at the Vail Church, located in Eagle-Vail, Colorado. There were nineteen adult attendees aged twenty-one and older who responded to the invitation to participate in a trauma-informed symposium titled, "Where Are You God? Finding Meaning in the Tragedy of Life." The resulting four participants were recruited from an invitational process that was included as a disclosure within the marketing effort

and again at the initial session. Participants went on to complete an anonymous process for informed consent, screening, and pre- and post-testing as inclusion for participation designation in the pilot project.

The selection process was limited in scope and impact, as it was contained to the focused marketing efforts held within the church setting (fliers, announcements, website, and Facebook), as well as word of mouth and posted fliers in the surrounding public gathering places of the community. This focused approach may have contributed to the small sample size of attendees (never more than 20) and an even smaller conversion rate of attendees to four participants.

The selection process did not control for any social or demographical variances beyond requiring the minimum adult age (twenty-one and older). Furthermore, there was no control group sampled for comparison data. Because only one participant completed the entire study, the pre- and post-testing results could not determine that changes in post-test scores were correlated with the intervention. Also, participants could have undergone exposure to previously suppressed unpleasant memories during the sessions. The resurgence of those memories may have caused regression for which the change in scores could not account.

Review of Relevant Literature

The literature review focused upon four main themes, as follows:

1. Biblical foundations supporting moral law, divine instruction, and commandments regarding the alien, the foreigner, and the oppressed

2. Theological foundations addressing the attributes of God and the application of theological constructs that support preaching the Gospel to trauma survivors
3. Characteristics, tendencies, and needs of trauma survivors
4. Trauma-informed processes used in preaching to trauma survivors

The four main themes were further refined into sub-themes, as follows:

1. Trauma impact and survival
2. Culture and TIC
3. Restoration and the Gospel in pastoral care
4. Communicating and preaching effective techniques in articulating the Gospel to trauma survivors

The research used both primary and secondary resources to construct a theoretical position for developing the pilot study. Published peer-reviewed research articles, academic journals, and former dissertation studies composed most of the material used to build the theoretical framework of the project. Secondary resources in the form of magazine articles, news interviews, and commentaries were used to provide unique perspectives and peripheral information about the subject matter.

Social science, medicine, and psychiatry were represented in the scientific genre. Notable authors of this material included Bessel van der Kolk, a leading scientific expert on the biological and psychological aspects of trauma and recovery. Further support from this model included Stephen Porges, whose renowned work focuses upon the polyvagal theory. Additional primary resource support was provided from public domain resources, such as the Veterans Administration and the National Institutes of Health.

Hermeneutical and theological resources were accessed to help illuminate a biblical framework for developing pastoral sensitivity and for building effective preaching applications. This included contemporary academics such as Stephen Seamands and Jeffrey Frymire (Asbury Theological Seminary). The major theological constructs were derived from the works of John Eldredge; Dr. Dan B. Allender; and former Catholic Priest, Brennan Manning.

Finally, the design and implementation for the sermon series intervention used contemporary worship music, clips extracted from contemporary movies, and what may be referred to as pop culture music. These components were used for cultural relevance and teaching illustration to support the effectiveness of the project purpose.

Research Methodology

The intervention pilot study used quantitative and qualitative approaches to select participants and to collect data. The pilot study was implemented at Vail Church in Eagle-Vail, Colorado. The attendance varied in each session, ranging from six to twenty adults. The study participant sample size was four.

A general information and orientation announcement was provided via the church website, as well as through flier distribution and church service announcements. These were implemented approximately two months prior to the intervention. Interested candidates were invited to participate in the study by confidentially completing the Informed Consent, the civilian version of the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Checklist (PCL-C), and the PTGI (pre-test), each of which was made available through an encrypted and secure online website. Participants identified as having met the criteria for “Trauma Survivor” were those with a survey score greater than fifty (PCL-C score ≥ 50).

They were compared with those who did not meet such criteria because they had a survey score of less than fifty ($PCL-C \leq 50$). All attendees and participants were given a specific orientation, including an overview of the project, informed consent, and resources for emergency counseling and support.

A pre-intervention evaluation was administered using the PTGI. This served to gather baseline, pre-intervention, qualitative measurements that were compared against post-intervention measurements using the same tool.

A six-part, trauma-informed sermon series was designed using validated and published research that identified the unique attributes and needs in creating a safe environment for communicating, encouraging, and supporting trauma survivors. Congruent theological foundations supporting trauma-sensitive homiletics were integrated to assist in sculpting a message that met the theological constructs of the Gospel message as it relates to ministering to the oppressed, victimized, and the marginalized. The sermon series was implemented over the course of six consecutive weeks.

The post-intervention tool (PTGI) was made accessible within one week after completion of the sermon series. A researcher-designed TIS response questionnaire was also made available within two weeks of the intervention to acquire qualitative data about the effectiveness of the sermon series, as well as the qualitative attributes of the trauma-informed worship components (music, lighting, liturgy).

Type of Research

This research project used a mixed application of qualitative and quantitative measures. It followed an intervention design employing empirically supported screening

and evaluation surveys, including a trauma screening survey, pre- and post-sermon series surveys, and a researcher-designed sermon questionnaire.

Participants

The six-part, trauma-informed sermon series was implemented at the Vail Church in Eagle-Vail, Colorado. Participants comprised adults who were recruited from the community at large and within the church congregation. The sermons were hosted in the church loft, a gathering area outside of the sanctuary typically used for youth and small discipleship classes. Sessions were held on six consecutive Monday evenings, from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.

The targeted group being studied consisted of a population of nineteen attendees who responded to the recruiting advertisements for the symposium, “Where Are You God? Finding Meaning in the Tragedy of Life.” There were four study participants. One met the screening criteria for trauma survivor, having scored greater than fifty on the PCL-C; three did not meet the criteria for trauma survivor, having scored less than fifty on the same test. The participants were recruited from an invitational process that was provided two months prior to the series presentation. Participants underwent an orientation, informed consent, screening, and designation for participation in the project.

Instrumentation

The following instruments were used within the study:

1. **PCL-C.** This empirically authenticated tool was used to screen participants targeted for the intervention. This 17-item self-report scale for PTSD is based on the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV)* criteria and takes five to seven minutes to complete. There are slightly

different versions for use with military (M) or civilian (C) populations, as well as a version focused on a “specific stressful experience” (S).

2. **PTGI.** This empirically authenticated tool was used to measure the impact of the intervention and was applied pre- and post-intervention. This 21-item scale includes factors of New Possibilities, Relating to Others, Personal Strength, Spiritual Change, and Appreciation of Life. Women tend to report more benefits than do men, and persons who have experienced traumatic events report more positive change than do persons who have not experienced extraordinary events. The PTGI is modestly related to optimism and extraversion. The scale appears to have utility in determining how successful individuals coping with the aftermath of trauma are in reconstructing or strengthening their perceptions of self, others, and the meaning of events.
3. **TIS.** This researcher-designed questionnaire captures specific aspects of the sermon design, content, delivery, and worship setting attributes, which were subjectively attributable to the participant’s positive or negative experience with the intervention.

Data Collection

Data collection occurred through a sequential process of screening and identifying targeted participants among attendees recruited from the Vail Church and surrounding community. The PCL-C was used to identify the designation of the participants as either trauma survivor or *not* trauma survivor. A pre-testing of the participants group was made using the PTGI. The independent variable was introduced (the six-part, trauma-informed sermon series given over a six-week period). A post-test also using the PTGI was

implemented for the same group. Scores and descriptive data were used by comparing the screening results with the pre- and post-test scores. These were aggregated, analyzed, and averaged to determine changes in the research question objectives. A researcher-designed sermon response questionnaire (TIS) was also provided to the participant group to identify the quantitative and qualitative influential aspects of the sermon design, content, and delivery. The TIS was also used to capture the worship setting attributes that were subjectively experienced and described from the participant's positive or negative experience with the intervention.

Data Analysis

The pilot study was based upon an intervention typology. The design of the study used a mixed approach with qualitative and quantitative data measurement tools. A purposive sample technique (Sensing 83) was applied in selecting the participants for research.

Generalizability

Preaching the Gospel to trauma survivors requires both specialized methods and cultural sensitivity. This unique demographic, or group, experiences the world differently due to the impact trauma has upon the bio-psycho-social and spiritual domains of the survivor. Failure to account and adapt to the needs of this group can result in alienation and disengagement of a group that is theologically meaningful to the Gospel mission.

The targeted population was recruited from within the Vail Church congregation and the surrounding community. The focus of this pilot study was attendees who were willing to join the study (participants). The study assessed differences in participant designation and the associated experiences of the participants who were trauma survivors

and those who were not. The study ultimately sought to determine if a trauma-informed gospel message, delivered within a culturally sensitive setting, would provide a positive response for the participant. Attitudinal, affective, social, and spiritual attributes were identified and measured for response at pre- and post-intervention intervals.

The delimitations of this project include the following:

- A. There was no control group used to compare the designed intervention against a placebo.
- B. A sample group of participants was pre-selected for intervention characteristics using defined trauma determinants found in pre-screened, post-traumatic event survivors. This did not take into account lesser experiences of loss and suffering, or the resiliency that accompanies some survivors. If these data had been captured, they may have impacted the results and interpretations of the study.
- C. The sample size was limited and was not statistically significant to determine replication reliability.
- D. The study was limited to a specific sub-group within a specific setting.
Variables for denomination, doctrine, and geographic cultural factors were not considered for a larger application of this study.
- E. The qualitative determination within the TIS for questions #5-10 was based upon a potentially subjective rating approach. As these questions required the participant to identify his or her subjective responses through an almost infinite selection of choices, the process required that a categorization of these responses be developed into one of two categories: the responses that could

objectively be considered edifying were categorized as positive, and the responses that could be objectively considered unfavorable to the participant were categorized as negative. The positive responses were given a quantitative rating of 5 (aligning with the Likert scale used in survey questions #1-4); the negative responses were not quantified and were instead categorized for further discussion in Chapter 5.

Despite the noted delimitations and the pilot application of the intervention, the author believes that further replication of this study could determine that meaningful consideration should be given by pastors, church, and para-church leaders who seek to reach and affect those who suffer from trauma and loss by increasing awareness and sensitivity in communicating to the special needs of this population.

This project is important because it helped identify a marginalized and alienated population that every church contains. The design of the intervention and data gathering tools are sufficient to capture information that can be used to determine areas of effectiveness and needs for improvements. A closed setting, such as a retreat, could help overcome delimitations and provide a larger sample size from which to extrapolate the data.

Project Overview

Chapter 2 addresses four literature components that are integrated to support the focus and direction of the project. This included: Biblical and Theological Foundations, Characteristics of Trauma Survivors, Trauma-Informed Care, and Homiletics. Chapter 3 provides a more precise and detailed methodology of the project. Chapter 4 reveals the

analyses of the results from the intervention. Chapter 5 describes the results of the study, along with recommendations for implementation and further study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW FOR THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

This chapter will address the biblical and theological foundations that support the need for the Church to provide special considerations, methods, and techniques for preaching the Gospel to trauma survivors. Further literature review will delineate the concepts of a trauma-informed care environment. An in-depth examination of homiletics, liturgy, and the contextual setting elements will also be addressed. Aligning the needs of those who struggle with trauma and loss with effective methods of communication will provide a pragmatic and justified approach to drawing, engaging, and impacting this population.

Biblical Foundations

The Word of God as revealed in the Hebrew and Greek scripture—spanning the millennia and revealing the nature and heart of God—serves as a foundational truth to how The Divine seeks relational wholeness and renewal for fallen humanity. This section will address scriptural reference and an interpretation of God’s Word as it applies to His proclamations and intentions toward the human heart.

Old Testament

The opening chapters of the Book of Genesis describe the creative acts of God in bringing order from chaos and creation from nothing (*ex nihilo*). In this explicitly descriptive narrative, the reader is quickly oriented to several attributes of God through His intentional nature: He is an initiator; He is powerful; and He is innovative.

As the description of creation evolves from the basic elements (light, water, earth, and sky) to life, the evolution of creation is revealed in human form as man created in the Image of the Creator (*Imago Dei*). This is a critical distinction, separating human from animal life. Even more so, this image contains the most essential element of God's "fingerprint" upon His beloved: the attribute of free will or the ability to choose or reject. Because God is love and creates in love, then the created human can only truly love if a choice is involved. A choice exists to either love God through a posture of dignified dependency or to reject Him and default to an autonomous and agnostic self-sufficiency.

God shares His creation with man and bestows His creative and governing authority over the earth, so that Adam and Eve will now rule over the new creation. God spends time with Adam, "walking in the garden in the cool of the day" (*NIV* Gen. 3:8). One can sense both mentorship and friendship in this description. God is initiating, teaching, and listening, perhaps as Adam talks of his day filled with new stories of adventure, accomplishment, and challenges, all containing the inherent topics of a governor stewarding the new creation of earth and its inhabitants. Adam is learning and growing in the ways of his creator and, as such, experiences an enhanced intimacy with his creator and a subsequent ability to nobly rule.

Man's authority, of course, is limited and bound by constraints, as God instructs and warns of the inherent restrictions of man's rule. God's final creative act culminates through the formation of another human being: the woman. She is not an afterthought but an intentional complement to the human construct. The constructs of Trinitarian unity are replicated through marriage, which completes the purposeful design of humans, who can now procreate, rule, and share of themselves and in the authority of noble stewardship of

the earth. At this point in the story, we learn of at least three existential truths regarding the pre-fall, human condition:

1. Authority: “The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it” (Gen. 2:15). “Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name” (Gen. 2:19).
2. Unity: “That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh” (Gen. 2:24).
3. Wholeness: “Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame” (Gen. 2:25).

Four (4) additional attributes of God are also revealed: The Creator-God is generous; God is relational; God is instructional; and God is complete.

The story of the Fall is well recounted in biblical history and teaching. Adam, Eve, the serpent, and the apple are all central characters and props for the plot in the greater story. Genesis 3 encompasses the entire trajectory of history through man’s betrayal, the role and influence of evil, and God’s plan of salvation. Many readers may assume that Genesis, and specifically this scene, all occur at the beginning of time, at least temporal or chronological time. However, it is crucial to consider the context of these events against the eternal time within which God exists. To gain clarity for the greater revelation that this scene offers, one must look backward to look forward. Where did evil come from; how was this present in the Chronos, or temporal timeline of earthly creation; and what was man’s role in engaging in, or responding to, it?

To address these questions, one must look further into the Hebrew scriptures. Evil has a beginning, as we read in Ezekiel: ““You were the anointed cherub who covers, And I placed you *there*. You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked in the midst of the stones of fire. You were blameless in your ways From the day you were created Until unrighteousness was found in you”” (*NASB* 28:14-5).

Before the dawn of temporal time, there was God eternal, with angels and archangels in the company of heaven singing praises and adorations to the God of the Universe. One that walked among them was the head of all the angelic hosts, one named Lucifer. Beautiful and powerful, he was the captain of the Lord of Hosts. For time eternal, he led the hosts in worship of God, until there came a time when he desired the adoration and worship for himself:

Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. (*NIV* Rev. 12:7-9)

The battle in heaven preceded the creation and ultimate fall of humanity. Evil was present in the Garden of Eden, and humankind failed to win the battle of deception, instead seduced into seeking self-sufficiency in opposition of unity with God. The result was the conveyance of human authority over the earth to Satan (formally Lucifer, the Archangel), which led to the entrance of evil’s greatest manifestation: alienation from God and death to creation. The fruits of this decision decimated the very essence of relational creation, that of divine authority, unity, and wholeness.

Thus, in summary, Satan seduces the humans and traps them into rejecting God, stealing the keys of authority over the earth. People are then alienated from a holy God

and each other, while death awaits the human body. The spirit is still eternal but exists in opposition to God. An unfurling stench and progression of earth's deterioration is set in motion. The *Imago Dei* is stained and tarnished, but not destroyed.

Even so, while the story continues in the midst of Genesis 3, with the dust and debris obscuring the atmosphere and the stench of evil still pungent in the garden, God's response (and His heart) becomes quickly evident. While admonishing Satan, God prophesies the plan of salvation: "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel" (Gen. 3:15).

God confronts and punishes evil, mercifully disciplines the human rebellion (Gen. 3:16-9), makes provision for the resulting, fallen condition (Gen. 3:21), and preserves redemption through the closure of access to an eternal condition in a fallen existence (Gen. 3:21-4).

The stage is now set for the redemption of God's creation. The decimation of the human condition as it exists within the dynamics of alienation from God and each other—along with the loss of free will and an intractable brokenness that effects mind, body, and spirit—is the very essence of humankind's need for redemption. Creation cannot thrive, or even exist, without unity with the Creator. Shame penetrates the human psyche, and instincts for survival (power, pride, and prestige) define the strivings of human survival. These work in conflict with the prevenient grace of God, who continues to impress upon His beloved a vision of invitation through hope, entwined with a self-awareness that something is deeply wrong and that an existential void exists that creates longing, desire, and an unquenchable thirst for the sacred.

The Old Testament scriptures provide a chronological, historical, and metaphorical account of the history of God and the evolutionary development of the salvific plan. From the call of Abraham (Gen. 12) and the establishment of His own people, God continues to work His divine and sovereign plan that will ultimately bring healing and restoration to humanity, returning them to the Creator and Father of love. It is a process both of instruction and application. God's people must learn Trinitarian unity and holiness, while exhibiting these characteristics through the trials and tribulations that are intertwined through justification and, ultimately, sanctification.

The Law

The first five books of the Old Testament are known as the Torah. These books hold prescriptions for the covenant life by which God's people (Israel) must learn to abide. These include instructions for communal, liturgical, societal-legal, and worship. The goal was for the community, as led by the assigned priests and community leaders, to abide in complete adherence to these laws. Violation meant punishment and sacrifice. The law would ultimately define and shape the morals and values of an emerging civilization under God's rule.

Treatment of the Foreigner, the Alien, and the Exile

Exclusion is a byproduct of the Fall, whereby a new law has supplanted the divine. The law of the jungle decimates the concept of Trinitarian unity, as it is twisted into a survivalist posture of self-preservation. This typically means the separation of people and cultures by differences in skin color, language, values, cultural norms, geography, social standing, psychological attributes, and health status. These differences threaten the balance and sustainability of those who possess power and the position to

make such determinations. As a result, many people are misunderstood, categorized, and falsely labeled, culminating in fear, rejection, and even persecution.

Religious power structures are notorious for such a paradoxical cruelty. God addresses the tendency of the “elect” to exclude and exploit the non-Israelite people known as Foreigners, Aliens, and Exiles. These are the disenfranchised, the marginalized, and the oppressed. They are misunderstood, misrepresented, and often maligned due to their differences and, perhaps, the experiences of their lives and circumstances that have created these differences. They lack social privilege, the welcoming and “the social network of kinship relations for support during exigencies” (“foreigner, n.”). Foreigners are often outcasts of society; they are exploited, excluded, and dismissed. However, God mercifully considers the excluded through this instruction: “Let no foreigner who is bound to the LORD say, ‘The LORD will surely exclude me from his people’” (Isa. 56:3).

The God of Mercy, Compassion, and Justice

As stated earlier within the context of the human banishment from Eden, God demonstrated the attributes of mercy, compassion, and justice in response to the rebellion through the Fall. With Satan sentenced, the human and eternal, fallen state alleviated, and Divine provision given for sustenance outside of the garden, restorative justice was applied to the second rebellion. The plan of salvation was intertwined with Satan’s sentencing, and the movements/intentions of God within the post-Edenic narrative of human history were initiated.

Throughout the next 2,000 or more years (from the time of Abram), God would call, invite, lead, and instruct His people into relational covenant and toward a pilgrimage

of wholeness and restoration. The nation of Israel would serve both as a beacon of hope and an object lesson of the trials, successes, and failures for the journey of redemption. Despite the establishment of the Law, with its specific guidelines and the provision of informed consent as to the rewards and consequences regarding fidelity and adherence, the human tendency to gravitate toward rebellion and self-sufficiency predominated the historical narrative. Many podium preachers make an easy and often-replicated interpretation of these ancient illustrations by elevating the right hand of justice much higher (and, therefore, much greater in emphasis) than the left hand of God, which also contains a balance of mercy and compassion. While the consequences of these collective actions led to God's response through justice, compassion and mercy were always present. In essence, it may be more accurate to think of God as ambidextrous, as opposed to right-or left-handed.

This is essential in conceptualizing, and therefore understanding, how the Plan of Salvation through the Gospel of Jesus Christ is both implemented and proclaimed.

But how can justice be reconciled with mercy and compassion? If God is to be God (Isa. 43:3a), "perfect" (Deut. 32:4) and Holy (unchangeable; Job 23:13), how can these seemingly mutually exclusive principles be conjoined without compromise to the other? Certainly, God is not contradictory, or He would not be God.

Yet, the victim seeks justice while the oppressor seeks mercy. Both are human, and both are subject to Divine law. Indeed, the human offense to the Creator is the ultimate violation of all ethical, moral, and juridical principles. Certainly, God could have ended it all in the garden by proclaiming sentencing and death to the human. (It was a guilty plea that Adam submitted in response to God's inquiry [Gen. 3:12].) Yet, He (God)

distributed mercy and compassion from the onset. This must be an essential and truthful aspect of God's character and intentions toward His creation.

New Testament

It is critical to engage both Old and New Testament scripture when articulating (and interpreting) key, theological concepts and their implications for the human heart. The Old Testament scriptures point toward God's final plan of salvation, including the arrival of the Messiah, the redemption of humankind, the defeat and judgment of evil, and the restoration of people to God. To fully grasp the context by which the history of God and creature have evolved, it is helpful to approach the narrative in the context of a kingdom paradigm, or, more precisely, the clash of two kingdoms: the kingdom of darkness (evil, Satan) and the kingdom of light (goodness, God/the Trinity).

All of goodness, love, laughter, and creation derive from the movement of the Trinity. In opposition to this, the Fall provides the setting in which all of creation is subjugated to the decay and reign of evil. Satan has (stolen from humans) the keys that provide the legitimate authority and dominion over earth and its inhabitants. Death and decay hold sway over every living thing. Humans are no longer aligned with God, and the heart emanates evil (Gen. 6:5, Matt. 15:19). Therefore, the collective assault against God's intentions, the hearts of people, and all creation is derived from the flesh, the world, and the evil one (Rom. 7:18; John 2:15-7, 10:10).

Though God is still all-powerful and sovereign, He appears to intentionally limit this authority for the ultimate good. It is evident that there is a divine methodology, a way things *work* through constraints and methods, all within the bounds of spiritual and physical laws.

The New Testament continues with the salvific plan of God. He will ultimately overcome the work of Satan by bringing His Kingdom to earth. Jesus uses this kingdom paradigm throughout the Book of Matthew. There is light (good) and darkness (evil) (Matt. 6:22). He instructs His follower to be intentional in establishing a priority for life in seeking the right Kingdom (Matt. 6:33). Jesus battles the Kingdom of darkness throughout His three-year ministry (Matt. 12:25-8). By doing so, he subdues Satan's power and realm and ushers in the Kingdom of God (Matt. 12:29). It is a clash of Kingdoms (Luke 10:18).

Therefore, it is evident that we live our lives in the midst of a battle between good and evil (Eph. 6:12). There is much harm and hurt that exists in our world, no matter how privileged or sheltered we may be; at the end, no one gets out alive.

The Birth of the Christ and the Invasion of the Kingdom of Darkness

The birth of the Messiah was akin to an invasion, not unlike the American invasion of Normandy in World War II. Where the Americans invaded the rule and reign of Hitler's armies, Jesus' birth was an invasion upon the rule and reign of Satan (J. Eldredge, *Epic*). Jesus was God incarnate: a prophetic, new ruler emerging in the form of a vulnerable, human infant, the obedient and suffering Messiah. Satan responds with an effort to destroy the prophesied King through human agency by Herod's rule to kill all infants under the age of two. The clash of the two kingdoms thus resumed, with an air of finality that Satan is vaguely beginning to realize.

The years pass, and the infant thrives under the nurturing of His mother and earthly father, fashioned by the immersion and teachings of the Jewish culture. At age twelve, He finds himself at home in the temple, His "Father's house" (Luke 2:49).

It is twenty years later when Jesus emerges from the Jordan, baptized by His mildly eccentric cousin and mildly anointed prophet, John. The affirmation of His calling is bestowed, and Jesus is then driven into His first battle with Satan, who will now test his mettle and, perhaps, bring an early defeat to this heavenly annoyance. All of the deceptions, false promises, and lies that were successful against the “First Adam” are impervious to the humanity and divinity of the Christ. Three attempts are made with three successful defensives, ending in an authoritative rebuke from the carpenter of Nazareth. Herod had failed, and now Satan himself stood at the brink of defeat. This was no ordinary man; Jesus was not one who could be influenced, seduced, persuaded, or assaulted. He fought back with an authority and tenacity never seen in the history of the human race.

Jesus emerges from the wilderness, victorious and exhausted. Angels minister to His weary soul. He eventually arrives at the temple in Nazareth and boldly reveals His mission on earth, recalling the ancient scripture from Isaiah, in Luke 4:16-21:

He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

Clearly, God’s salvific plan includes encouragement, freedom from bondage, the restored human capacity to see truth, and the bestowed favor upon the oppressed and afflicted. The proclamation of the Gospel message thus must engage these messianic

concepts throughout every message and setting: “A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out, till he has brought justice through to victory.

In his name the nations will put their hope” (Matt. 12:20-1).

The Kingdom on Earth as It is in Heaven

“...your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.” (Matt. 6:10).

As referenced earlier, Jesus’ birth, life, and work were a demonstrative and aggressive action as an invasion into enemy territory. The Satanic realm—with its domination of the earth, its unholy influence upon the human will and affairs, the tarnished image of the *Imago Dei*, and cognitive/spiritual impairment from the Fall—were an immense fortification to overcome. God’s plan of salvation included a bold and daring offensive raid into a world contaminated in and by sin. It required a battle to get in, a battle to stay in, and a battle to achieve victory against a fortified and determined trio: the world, the flesh, and Satan.

The battle of the kingdoms and the rescue of the human heart involved three distinct paradigms: Authority to legitimize, Power to overcome, and Restoration to allow for a clarity that will ultimately set the captive free to choose once again whether to trust and follow the heart of God or to resume the bondage of self-determination.

In the first paradigm (Authority), the Word of God contains both creativity and authority. It was by God’s Word that all of creation was formed (Gen. 1-2); that the call of Abraham led to the birth of a chosen people (Gen.), which led to the exodus and formation of a nation that established the familial lineage of the coming Messiah (Matt.

1). Jesus' life contains within it an authority that resonates with the first Adam. It holds within its construct the components of legitimacy, kindness, passion, empathy, and compassion.

“When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law” (Matt. 7:28-9).

Jesus is described as the *Son* throughout the Gospel and, with this connotation, he holds authority over all “God’s house” (Heb. 3:6). What He does with this authority is critical to the Gospel message and the messianic purposes of God’s plan of salvation. It is with this authority that the Christ casts out demons, rebukes human and demonic authority, heals the sick, and proclaims the good news. It is with this authority that Jesus can offer His life in exchange for the ransom of humanity (Matt. 20:28). It is with this authority that Jesus confronts Satan directly, overcoming His own death, reclaiming the “keys of the kingdom” (Matt. 16:19), freeing the captive, and leading them back to God and, ultimately, to freedom (1 Pet. 3:18-9).

In the second paradigm (Power), it is said, “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven” (Matt. 16:19). Kingdoms operate through a power-power dynamic to sustain and govern: the power to defend and the power to overcome. The invasion and the ensuing battle for the hearts of humanity required power. Not the raw physical power that typically dominated the world but, rather, an archetype that held greater supremacy: The Word of God (Zech. 4:6). Jesus is the Word himself (John 1) and, therefore, is all-powerful.

It is by this great power and authority that Jesus “binds the strong man” (*ESV* Mark 3:27) and usher in the Kingdom of God: His rule, reign, sovereignty, and salvation. It is a critical component of this Divine plan known as salvation that the enemy is defeated, the “eyes” of the oppressed are opened, and the dignity and capacity for choice is reinstated. When the Kingdom of Heaven arrives, this is precisely what occurs (*NIV* Matt. 12:28).

In the third paradigm, Restoration is the purpose of salvation. Restoring the *Imago Dei* brings glory to God and renewal to the relational covenant between God and the created human. This renewal leads to the renewal of all creation. That which was lost (from the Fall) is restored through the salvific work of Jesus.

The New Testament continues with this narrative in the early chapters of Luke. The Jewish people are enduring yet another captivity and occupation, this time with the Roman government. There is a prophetic hope that God will come back for the nation, a belief in the restoration of its sovereignty and grandeur. They are not far off in both belief and timing, when a devotionally Jewish man named Simeon is moved by the Holy Spirit. He recognizes the signs of the times and proclaims the infant Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah (Luke 2:25-32). This would be the One by whom the prophets had long spoken of, the One who would redeem and restore Israel to its proper place. It was a nationalistic belief, but a belief nonetheless that restoration was both possible and ordained.

Jesus’ life, ministry, death, and resurrection are centered around the concept and purposes of renewal, or restoration. Restoration occurs consistently throughout the Gospel within a holistic paradigm of:

- Physical Healing (Luke 13:32, 14:4, 17:19, 22:51; John 5:1-15)

- Spiritual Healing (John 3:3, 14:27; Matt. 11:28-30; Eph. 3:16-7)
- Psychological\Emotional Healing (Matt. 9:35; Mark 5:34; John 4:1-26, 10:10)
- Teaching: Empowering, clarifying, theological insights (John 14:26, 16:13; Matt. 5:1-12, 10:1-8, 11:29, 17:25-6)
- Relational Healing: God and mankind (Luke 19:10; John 3:16, 17:20-3; Mark 15:38; 2 Cor. 5:19)
- *Imago Dei*: The restorative, Divine image and concurrent rule (under God) of humankind (Luke 10:17, John 15:15, Acts 4:30-1)

Kingdom Impact and Influence

In the new covenant, Jesus makes the bold proclamation that with His life and work, a new reign and era of divinity has arrived. Jesus' mission statement in Luke Chapter 5 makes it clear that God has come to purposely bring restoration. Indeed, the Kingdom of God is now among us (Matt. 1:23, 12:28). The rule and reign of Satan, the deteriorative effects of sin, and the alienation from God are all being resolved and reconciled within this New Testament construct (1 John 3:8). There is a new covenant (Luke 22:20). What are the new promises, paradigms, and principles of this new covenant?

This covenant begins, evolves, and culminates with the new heart. This is the core of human thought, creativity, curiosity, appetite, devotion, moral code, and will. It is the source of our deepest sorrows, longings, and wounds. It is the mold that contains within it the shape and impression of the *Imago Dei*. God restores this.

“And the Holy Spirit also testifies that this is so. For he says, ‘This is the new covenant I will make with my people on that day, says the LORD: I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds’” (*NLT* Heb. 10:15-6).

A tarnished image leads to a shattered self-concept. With this restoration comes a newly formed identity. The redeemed are once again God’s people, and that makes for many good things. We are new creations in Christ (*NIV* 2 Cor. 5:17) and children of God (1 John 5:1). We are no longer separated or alienated from others and can now exercise relational wholeness (Col. 3:11-2); we are no longer slaves to sin (Rom. 6:6), fear, security, or a self-defined destiny (Matt. 14). We are loved by God (1 John 4:10), and nothing can separate us from Him (Rom. 8:38-9). There is now freedom from egotistical bondage and freedom to live in the fullness of humility (1 Pet. 2:16).

The Beatitudes teach an entirely new paradigm about God and our circumstances (Matt. 5). To believe, integrate, and actualize these concepts requires an entire shift in attitude, perception, and action. None of this could be understood, applied, and practiced without the restoration of a new heart.

The Kingdom of Heaven also brings with it a privilege as a restored people, along with a responsibility and a competency to continue the work of Christ. The Great Commission (Matt. 28:16-20) commands that the restored take up Kingdom work until Jesus’ return, to help bring it to fulfillment. The formerly disqualified and crippled (physically, spiritually, emotionally, and psychologically) are now the unlikely stewards of the Kingdom and the ambassadors to the Gospel.

Community and Church

Jesus' three-year ministry begins with the calling and building of community. What initially became the twelve Apostles (and the inner circle of three: John, Peter, and James) evolved into hundreds, if not thousands, of "disciples" by the time of the crucifixion.

Jesus specifically designates the church as the basis for Kingdom dominion and restorative work. As the Kingdom of Heaven moves into an overtly offensive posture against Satan, Jesus reveals this strategy during His discussion with the Caesarean Jews. He will build His church with people, inspired and empowered by the Holy Spirit, beginning with Peter as the leader (Matt. 16:18).

Thus it is with this community, comprising an unlikely cast of troublesome characters and led by the Holy Spirit, who will proclaim the Good News, heal the sick, give sight to the blind, hope to the hopeless, and care to the orphan and the widow. The works of Satan will not only be undone, but the mission of God's salvific plan will overrun the rule and reign of the enemy and continue to free captives and bring justice to the oppressed. Restoration of the *Imago Dei*, from prevenient to sanctifying grace, will bring new life to the dead, purpose for the wanderer, and a home for the seeker.

The Church will serve as a catalyst for God's work. It will serve the community with power, humility, and honor. Under this authority and through proper proclamation, people, communities, and nations will thrive under a restorative reign. Healing will occur: physical, spiritual, psychological/emotional, and interpersonal. Wounds of the heart will be ministered to, and wholeness restored. The relational covenant with God will be reestablished and cultivated. The foreigner, the alien, the widow, the orphan, and

the Samaritan will be welcomed, invited, and adopted into a new home. Wisdom will be imparted, gifts of the spirit ascribed, and new purposes for living assigned.

God is glorified as man, Saint Irenaeus wrote, becomes “fully alive” (qtd. in J. Eldredge, *Waking* 10).

Theological Foundations

The purpose of this section is to provide a theological foundation that supports the project’s purpose: the necessity of a strategic approach to preaching the Gospel to trauma survivors. As such, this is not a systematic, theological discourse. Instead, this section will serve as a basis for orientation that is focused upon the attributes of God, His heart and intentions, along with the influential aspects of evil, the church, and the Gospel.

Orientation

“We believe that each of us was designed for Eden, living in perfect relationship—a state of *shalom*—with ourselves, each other, and God. But now, shalom has been shattered and we are separated from Eden, living in a world marred by brokenness, disconnection, and trauma” (Allender Center).

To effectively gain a proper orientation to the history of God and man—and, even more so, to comprehend the salvific work of Christ and the mission of the Gospel—one must take into consideration a basic stance of orientation toward person, place, time, and situation.

This approach is exactly what a medical professional does when triaging a patient, especially one who is perhaps unconscious or apparently confused. The human condition is, at best, one of confusion; often, it is a condition of contradiction. For example, take the cognitive dissonance of ambivalence. When a person desires to improve upon,

change, or eliminate a behavior, why is there so much internal resistance to the idea? It would seem we are somehow divided in thought. Perhaps even more than that, we are of a dual mind: one that seems to desire and pursue mutually exclusive goals and objectives, as part of us wants to and another does not. The Apostle Paul testified to his own struggles with the flesh. All of this should inform a reasonably insightful person that there is at least, in some recognizable fragment, a struggle going on within.

Add to that the events of the surrounding environment: the world as we learn of it and experience it. It is a very beautiful and yet hazardous place to live. There are dangers lurking in the natural world and, even more so, within society. Nations, states, communities, and kingdoms seem to be constantly pulled into an historically repetitive path of self-destruction. Who can be trusted?

What is our situation at this point in time? If we look to the past 6,000 years and trace the evolution of civilization, we are now being described as having arrived at post-modernism. Interestingly enough, there are at least five inter-generations living within this postmodern era. These inter-generational members hold unique cultural practices and beliefs. At one end, there is a preference for respect and authority. At the other end is a tendency toward self-efficacy, suspicion, and anarchy.

Technology continues to impact interpersonal relations, politics, and society in their entirety and in ways that are still not fully understood, some perhaps beneficial, some detrimental. Again, a duality exists.

The world can be a painful place to live. There are ravages upon our souls, our cultures, our minds, and our bodies. Bad things happen to good people, and vice versa. It seems in today's culture that new victims emerge from unthinkable atrocities on a scale

of perpetration that exceeds each prior occurrence. Of course, history abounds with large-scale oppression and injustice. The German Holocaust was replicated in Bosnia roughly 50 years later. How did we (the educated and enlightened) get back here? It is no wonder that we become consumed with issues of safety, meaning, purpose, justice, and how all of this will end.

The trauma victim lives within these concerns at an intensity that, for most, would be unbearable. These survivors hold the same questions that are often laced with disillusionment, for many once believed and held a sense of hope and optimism. Filling in the theological or doctrinal gaps with circular references to selectively extracted pieces of scripture will not draw, or retain, today's postmodern listener or the survivor of trauma. It is better to bring more than that to the podium if there is to be any effective Gospel proclamation.

The larger questions remain and require solid answers: Who and where is God in all of this? What are His intentions toward us? And what of this thing called evil? Is it an attribute or a force to be reckoned with? Is it an idea, a concept, or an embodiment of something much more substantial and, therefore, formidable? What and who are humans in all of this, and what is required of us?

The Church understands many of these answers, though, as a whole, it is highly questionable as to whether she is oriented. There are many different beliefs and practices within numerous denominations and applications. The Bible should serve as her resource for grasping and comprehending a proper orientation to person, place, time, and situation. The difficulty with only using the Bible, or scripture, is the accompanying human bias with interpretation. From this flows application. Lean too heavily upon justice and power,

and the application becomes a damaging, triumphalist, and self-righteous doctrinal stance. Tilt the scale toward mercy and compassion, and a lukewarm, feel-good-but-not-much-use liberalism emerges. Neither is accurate or effective. Indeed, one cannot effectively proclaim the Word of God without holding an integrated interpretation, one that accounts for a thorough and cohesive orientation on all aspects of person, place, time, and situation.

This begins with an accurate and balanced assessment of God's attributes.

Attributes of God

"Anything that would love me should be dishonored, but there is nothing dishonorable about love" ("Meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous").

This section begins with a return to the philosophical and existential questions: Who is God? What are His intentions toward us?

The God of Holy Love

There is a distinct dichotomy within the terms "holy" and "love" and, yet, only Yahweh can hold these in a perfect tension that does not emphasize one or degrade the other. This is a critical theological concept. God cannot be God if He changes to accommodate circumstances, whims, or preferences. There is immutability in God, and we struggle to grasp one aspect of this tension without tipping the scale to the other. Proclamation of the Gospel requires holding these in proper perspective and, as such, allows the preacher to effectively convey God's sacred grace and justice.

John Wesley understood this to be the awareness of the divine holiness that separates and distinguishes the human from God. At the same time, he knew of the

outreach and communicability of love, of its outreach and embrace: “holiness creates distance; love seeks communion” (Collins 21).

The God of the Eternal

Humans live and perceive in the space of time. This is a finite measurement that holds a basis in the past, present, and future. Humans are also considered, theologically at least, to be eternal in nature. Wesley distinguishes this from God in that humans are *parte post*, that is, eternity to come. God is eternal in both past (*parte ante*) and future (Collins 22-3). This is also critical to know and convey, in that God is whole and complete, relying on nothing else to create or sustain Him. This wholeness is also an important concept in healing and restoration of the *Imago Dei*, a point that will be further developed within this thesis.

God is Omni-Present, Omni-Scient, Omni-Potent, and Omni-Benevolent

God is always present, within everything, everywhere, and within the span of all time. His eternal character gives context to this. God is omniscient, knowing everything and everything perfectly. There is no error to His thought and knowledge. God is omnipotent, or all-powerful. There is nothing that He cannot do, will, or act upon. Finally, God is omnibenevolent; His nature is pure, and it is good (Stackhouse 22-3). There is no corruptibility within His character.

These characteristics provide the preacher and the listener with a holistic perspective of God and His intentions. It is within His nature to be powerful, to know, and to be present. The distortion of these noble and good attributes to the wounded soul, often perpetuated by those who preach this inaccurately, leads to the erroneous conclusion that God is culpable in the brokenness of our lives and the world. A proper

orientation to the larger story—the complete narrative that incorporates the influences of evil and God’s nature, intentions, and sacrifice—is required to allow full appreciation and realization of the true nature and purpose of the Gospel.

Creator, Sovereign, Governor

The Bible and its related stories, narratives, prose, and metaphors is not designed to be solely historical. There is much debate regarding the story of creation between the sciences supporting evolution (which actually emanated from the Christian religion) and the book of Genesis; that is, the Big Bang Theory versus the seven-day creation story. What is not generally contested is that something started it all. The orthodox Christian does not have to choose sides in this debate. What is dramatically evident is that God created, and that God initiated. This was an intentional act. Furthermore, He created something from nothing, and He set in motion the times, places, and events that would shape the course of human history. The sovereignty of God ensures that there is complete, divine autonomy in how time, circumstance, and history progress and unfold.

The sovereignty of God and His corresponding intentionality serve as the foundation to purpose and meaning. People and their lives are not meaningless. There is purpose, and there is a divine plan. Circumstances do not have to dictate or define the course and meaning of one’s life. Sovereignty brought forth the arrangement of creation with the appointed time, spatial placement of matter (earth, moon, stars), and the conveyance of understanding free will and liberty to mankind. Person, place, time, and situation are all embedded into a proper orientation within God’s character (Collins 37-8).

God as Governor ensures us that justice and order will prevail. Even amid uncertainty and when the seasons of human history might indicate otherwise, the divine law of justice will always hold true along the overall course of time. The God of Holy love cannot and will not change the rule of law as it applies to holiness and justice. This leads toward a more accurate orientation to the concepts of evil, moral culpability, and the sacrificial life of Jesus Christ (Collins 39).

Providential Provider

John Wesley emphasizes the term “Providence” (Divine protection) to distinguish God’s overall governance of the world between inanimate and animate objects. While all of creation is integrated into the larger scheme of the universe, people are important to God. He knows their full being, how they are made (personality, heart, soul, and mind) and how the world (situation) impacts their destiny (Collins 40). More so, God applies not only a general providence but also a particular providence. He knows the details of our lives and directs our steps (Ps. 37.23). This is a personal God, one who is invested in the lives of His creation. This interpretive approach resonates with the wounded heart and leads to a more accurate and balanced Gospel proclamation, ultimately bringing further clarity into the relational invitation with God and to the hermeneutics of the sacrificial Christ.

Father

The patriarchal society inherent within the ancient days proclaimed God’s revelation of Himself in masculine form (Stackhouse 24). Obviously, this does not denote the gender of the deity but, instead, invokes the protective and directive functions and characteristics of the masculine role in that day and age. It can be reasonably stated and

without disrespect and prejudice to feminine efficacy that the masculine role as father still possesses these noble characteristics in modern society. This is an important and delicate distinction, as proclamation of God the Father holds numerous connotations for the listener. These can be quite imposing and intimidating to a trauma survivor.

Jesus refers to God as both His Father and as the Father of humanity. More so, He refers to this role through the characteristics of caring, seeking, pursuing, provision, protection, and leadership. Jesus addresses the role of God as the providential Father while challenging the doubts and misperceptions of the hurting listener. Christian counselor and teacher John Eldredge illuminates the internal dialogue of one who struggles with the duplicity of meaning in the word “father”:

Look at the birds of the air. Consider the lilies in the field. Are you not much more valuable to your true Father than they?” (Matt. 6:26, 28). Hmmm. I’m not sure how to answer. I mean, of course, there’s the “right” answer. And then there is the wound in our hearts toward fatherhood, and there is also the way our lives have gone. “What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off?” (Matt. 18:12 NIV). Yet another question, pressing into the submerged fears in our hearts, another question wanting another answer. Well? Wouldn’t he? “And if he finds it, I tell you the truth, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off. In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should be lost” (vv. 13–14 NIV). Wherever you are in your ability to believe it at this moment in your life, at least you can see what Jesus is driving at. You have a good Father. He is better than you thought. He cares. He really does. He’s kind and generous. He’s out for your best. (“He’s Out For Your Best” 3rd-4th paragraph)

Evil and the Collateral Damage of the Fall

A cohesive orientation to place and situation must account for the role and influence of evil. Indeed, without this accountability, there can be very little context or understanding for the larger narrative of the world and the particularization of our lives in which we live out our days.

Genesis Chapter 3 provides narrative for the descriptive events that occurred from the Fall of Mankind. It is a well-rehearsed story that will not be repeated in this context. The focus, instead, will be to briefly address the ramifications as they relate to the narrative orientation of who God is, who we are, where we are, and the circumstances in which we live.

Satan: The Embodiment of Evil

Evil must have a name for it to be taken under any meaningful consideration. The name provided within orthodox Christianity is Satan. Anything less defining creates an ethereal and, ultimately, ambivalent perception and response. It also requires a balance within this interpretation. If there is too much emphasis upon the image and power of the evil one, it creates paranoia, distraction, and a stifling fascination of over-importance. When Satan is minimized, or dangerously ignored, his influence goes unchecked. The result is often victimization, helplessness, and a reciprocal alienation launched against God for not caring, not helping, or for not existing.

Jesus Himself came in part, and within a defined strategy, to undo the influence and works of the evil one. This required a healthy respect for the influence of Satan's tactical and legitimized rule as "prince of this world." However, this commanding opponent could be managed, or even subdued, given the proper authority, training, and orientation. Jesus empowered His followers to do the same. The Apostles Paul and Peter were very direct in their teachings by addressing and maintaining a healthy respect, balanced perspective, and response to Satan and his minions.

Evil and the Fallout

The image of God that was impressed upon the heart of the created human at creation was disfigured through the fallout of rebellion and sin. Satan deceived the woman, and the man failed to intervene. It was mutual culpability. The results affected all of creation and the three aspects of human capacities and his/her presiding dominion:

- A. Natural: The ability to accurately perceive and know truth—the truth about God, the world, other people, and the situation in which we live. People became blind to the reality of person, place, time, and situation.
- B. Moral: The loss of innocence and the inherent nature, knowledge, and righteousness of all that is good and just. The will, liberty, and volition to align and apply God's moral system of law, justice, mercy, and compassion were distorted into self-determination, self-centeredness, pride, disbelief, and suspicion.
- C. Political: The created human as vice-regent of creation and as intermediary between God and the lower life forms. The animate and inanimate are now subject to chaos and strife. The animal kingdom turns against man and itself. People lose the natural authority, reverence, and interest in caring for the lower beings. The gravitational center of the natural creation is disbanded, the natural order of divine government subject to the devastation of satanic rule.

Collateral Damage: The Role of Satan and the Wounded Heart

The Evil One had a hand in all that has happened to you. If he didn't arrange for the assault directly—and certainly human sin has a large enough role to play—then he made sure he drove the message of the wounds home into your heart. He is the one who has dogged your heels with shame and self-doubt and accusation. He is the one who offers the false comforters to you in order to deepen your bondage. He is the one who has done these things in order to prevent your

restoration. For that is what he fears. He fears who you are; what you are; what you might become. He fears your beauty and your life-giving heart. (S. Eldredge, “There is Hope” 1st paragraph)

Satan’s defeat and banishment from heaven resulted in a re-directed assault. If he could not defeat God, then he would turn his assault toward God’s image, impressed upon the human heart. The deception in the Garden set the stage for the diminishment of human rule. The result was subjugation to sin and its detrimental effects, leading to alienation from God. The decay death was both physical and spiritual in nature. Beyond this, Satan’s strategy of decimation and degradation continues within the life cycle of human history. This seems particularly so, given the invasion of God’s Kingdom upon earth and the domain of evil through the soteriological work of Jesus Christ. If Satan loses a soul to the glorious graces of God’s salvation, he will continue his assaults in an effort to keep a man or woman in some form of captivity. This bondage could manifest in shame, fear, sickness...anything that holds a person back from his or her true purpose. This intentional and strategic assault is described by John Eldredge in *Waking the Dead*: “The story of your life is the story of the long and brutal assault on your heart by the one who knows what you could be and fears it” (34).

The Flesh

The Bible describes the reprobate heart as one full of wickedness and deceit. No one is exempt. We arrive in this world with the stain of sin upon God’s image, tattered and tarnished. We have no natural, moral, or political capacities for governance. We are disoriented in varying degrees depending upon socio-cultural, geographical, socio-economical, and religious circumstances.

Despite our best attempts, we cannot make ourselves whole. There is futility in every aspect. Relationships, beauty, and meaning that are sacredly embraced eventually succumb to loss. This is due to the nature of the fallen world we live in, but, more so, what we believe and bring into the world in which we find ourselves surrounded and immersed.

Our brokenness, disbelief, and self-determination can be traced beyond our intrinsic and sinful incapacities. They are also derived by our life story, our lived experiences. These events and our interpretation of them hold a tremendous influence over our perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, and actions. The trauma victim has developed interpretations of these experiences that lead toward a greater determination of self-protection. This builds upon what we already know to be the human condition, with its innate vulnerabilities and adaptations that are reinforced by the need to avoid the re-exposure to the traumatic event or perpetrator. This sets in motion an unconscious pattern of engaging the world in self-defeating yet self-protective ways. Stasi Eldredge describes this as a subtle process that is reinforced over the life span:

Over the years we've come to see that the only thing *more* tragic than the things that have happened to us is what we have done with them. Words were said, painful words. Things were done, awful things. And they shaped us. Something inside of us *shifted*. We embraced the messages of our wounds. We accepted a twisted view of ourselves. And from that we chose a way of relating to our world. We made a vow never to be in that place again. We adopted strategies to protect ourselves from being hurt again. A woman who is living out of a broken, wounded heart is a woman who is living a self-protective life. She may not be aware of it, but it is true. It's our way of trying to "save ourselves." ("An Unholy Alliance" 1st-2nd paragraph)

Given the Divinely committed task of salvation—of seeking, finding, and redeeming the lost—God is often disruptive as He attempts to break this self-defeating cycle of suspicion, fear, and isolation. Firm agreements in the form of mandates and

injunctions keep the captive shielded from the graces of God's nurturing and persistent invitations. These agreements form an alliance, albeit unknowingly, with Satan's whispering influences. This leads to a permission that allows the lies of the evil one to hold sway and authority over the truth of God's Love and Word. At this point, God seemingly becomes the enemy:

God works that way sometimes. The odds seem stacked against us. Life ebbs away and we spiral into cavernous depths we could only describe as hell on earth. We see ourselves as maimed, scarred, repulsive. We spit back like wild animals, insisting on our own self-will and self-sufficiency-like apathetic, cornered rats against the onslaught of an overwhelming predator. We fight against the graces of God and blame Him for our condition. At least we accuse Him of indifference, all the while looking beyond and away to another lover to provide the comfort we so desperately need. (Brooks 66)

According to John Eldredge, the "war on the soul" ("Session 3") comes to us by four succinct methods. Evil enters the heart by:

- A. Personal Agreements: Giving place to the enemy's accusations. These serve as a filter for how we see the world.
- B. Curses, Judgements, and Envy: The capacity to give and receive blessing is distorted and used to create relational distance with others.
- C. Soul Ties: Unhealthy bonds between people. The human psyche is designed for social and intimate bonding. Distortion of this occurs through emotional/physical/sexual abuse or other exploitations of the bonding characteristic.
- D. Foul Spirits: Envoys of Satan, demons/fallen angels. These spirits carry the messages and invoke wrongful interpretations of personal experiences, God, the world, and others.

The World

“Indeed, the many forces driving modern life have not only assaulted the life of our heart, they have also dismantled the heart's habitat—that geography of mystery and transcendence we knew so well as children” (J. Eldredge, “In the End” 3rd paragraph).

Scripture describes the world within a dual existence. There is God’s revelation through the natural world: beautiful, organized, and transcendent. There is also the world as semantically described through systems: kingdoms, cultures, and authority.

The world in its natural and systemic sense has been corrupted in the fall. Everything seems to be working toward deterioration or destruction. There are vast, oppressive institutional power systems of government, cultures of lawlessness, poverty, and immorality. Power, prestige, and wealth are often acceptable goals for survival and domination. Individuals are minimized and exploited for gain. Nationalism supplants religion.

Then there is loss. No one can exist in this world without knowing loss. There is sacred loss, or the loss of something loved or cared for, such as the death of a parent or a favorite pet. There is desecrating loss, or the loss of innocence, a violation of something sacred and essential to personal identity or meaning. The world contains the elements that contribute to these substantial losses in our lives.

These forces are derived from the political fallout from mankind’s work against God’s plan of salvation and the coming Kingdom. They serve to align with Satan’s efforts of decimating the human heart, alienating and binding the human spirit from the life-giving Word of God. Justice is often blurred or deferred, opportunity is diminished

for the alien and foreigner. Oppression and exploitation are inherent within this system. Post-modernism has virtually eliminated the value of truth and the beauty of myth.

This is not written to perpetuate a theology of nihilism. Instead, it is intended to validate that we live our lives in the context of very difficult, often insurmountable obstacles that are intrinsic to our environment. The Gospel rails against the world and its values, not as a means to condemn, but to save. The Good News brings hope for the present and the future. The proper orientation of place and situation can be found through the re-alignment of heart and perspective, discovered within the arrival of the Kingdom of God. It is not triumphal, though it is victorious. It is not arrogant, though it is confident and certain. It is not sudden, though it will be finalized in a flash. Instead, it is tender, inviting, nurturing, and now.

Salvation

The Wesleyan Order of Salvation describes a sequential process that begins with God's prevenient grace. This grace is essential due to the ignorance, or impairment, of human capacity to know God, along with his/her lack of awareness concerning their predicament. This disorientation to person and situation contributes to the self-determination that is innate in humans and complicit with the trauma survivor. John Eldredge describes the situation as this:

The dilemma of the Story is this: we don't know if we want to be rescued. We are so enamored with our small stories and our false gods, we are so bound up in our addictions and our self-centeredness and take-it-for-granted unbelief that we don't even know how to cry out for help. And the Evil One has no intention of letting his captives walk away scot-free. He seduces us, deceives us, assaults us—whatever it takes to keep us in darkness....The challenge God faces is rescuing a people who have no idea how captive they are; no real idea how desperate they are. We know we long for Eden, but we hesitate to give ourselves back to God in abandoned trust. We are captivated by the lies of our Enemy. But God has something up his sleeve. ("Something up His Sleeve" 2nd & 6th-7th paragraph)

The order of salvation follows a developmental path, derived from hierarchical prerequisites. This includes:

- A. Justification: Removes the guilt of sin.
- B. Regeneration: Removes the power of sin.
- C. Sanctification: Removes the being of sin.
- D. Glorification: In death (of the body) and resurrection, there is full restoration of the *Imago Dei*. (Collins, 132)

The same prerequisites follow a process of re-orientation and restoration. The ignorant mind becomes enlightened to the awareness of God, the incalculable distance of his soul from God, and his total inadequacy to resolve this. The heart is made new and holds the capacity for relational intimacy with God and others. Empowerment for developmental change occurs through the restored ability to choose (free will) that which is good. The human volition, will, and appetite are shifted toward an orientation to God and away from the flesh, the world, and the evil one.

This is the promise of the Gospel: life to the fullest (John 10:10). It is available here and now. It is the call and assurance to the orphan, the alien, and the trauma survivor that hope, change, safety, and restoration are available. For the wounded heart, this is the water that provides everlasting, life-quenching relief to the thirst of the soul: “We laughed, we sang, we couldn’t believe our good fortune” (*The Message*, Ps. 126:2). It is a sign and a proclamation to the joys of salvation (E. Peterson 95-6).

Restoration

This is the enemy’s one central purpose—to separate us from the Father. He uses neglect to whisper, *You see—no one cares. You’re not worth caring about.* He uses a sudden loss of innocence to whisper, *This is a dangerous world, and you are alone. You’ve been abandoned.* He uses assaults and abuses to scream at a

boy, *This is all you are good for*. And in this way he makes it nearly impossible for us to know what Jesus knew, makes it so very, very hard to come home to the Father's heart toward us. The details of each story are unique to the boy, but the effect is always a wound in the soul, and with it separation from and suspicion of the Father. It's been very effective. But God is not willing to simply let that be the end of the story. Not in any man's life. Remember what Jesus taught us about the Father's heart in the parable of the lost son: "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him" (Luke 15:20 NIV). Filled with compassion, our Father God will come like a loving Father, and take us close to his heart. He will also take us back to heal the wounds, finish things that didn't get finished. He will come for the boy, no matter how old he might now be, and make him his Beloved Son. (J. Eldredge, "With Open Arms" 2nd-4th paragraph)

All Things New

"Jesus taught us how to live, not how to go to heaven" ("The Cosmic Christ").

The life that Jesus offers, as so eloquently described in John 10:10, is readily available for those who seek it. Restoration is God's business, and it does not wait for our glorification at death. Instead, we can see restoration express itself through creation, healing (physical and psychological), and the resurrection of the Christ. It is engrained throughout scripture, and the neglect of this concept is irreverent and, even, foolish. The Christian should expect restoration as part of the journey and benefit of reuniting with his or her God. It begins with restoration of relationship but also evolves into much more than many Christians expect, or even dare to seek.

Perhaps this is a method of avoidance, to keep disappointment at bay; perhaps it is a shield of safety, to establish a theological distance and to avoid the sanctimonious exploitation of televangelists, the voracious wolves in sheep's clothing. Specific to this project, it is also imaginable that our churches are not proclaiming the full message beyond a Gospel of sin management. The trauma survivor already struggles with guilt, shame, and doubt. They are not receptive to the "piling on" of a Gospel proclamation that

uses guilt to bring about a conviction of their circumstances. This leads to more disorientation and is contradictory to the Gospel theme of invitation.

Of course, there is always the risk of over-emphasizing the healing and restorative power of God. Enthusiasts abound who discount the natural world of science and blast into an ethereal dimension of exuberant proclamation (often accompanied by much noise, body language, and histrionic outbursts).

John Wimber, founder of the Vineyard Church Movement, refers to supernatural healing as perfectly normal and, as such, should occur within a posture of focused prayer, a calm demeanor, and a reasonable faith that God will heal. He went to great lengths to practice and teach a ministry of healing that provided a context of normalcy, dignity, and credibility (“The 5 Step Healing Model”). John Eldredge of Ransomed Heart Ministries seems to concur. He is very familiar with the healing aspects of ministry and, even more so, with the restorative themes of scripture. His decades of effective work in healing the fragmented and broken hearts of men, women, and families is renowned. He begins with the assumption that we are all broken-hearted and in need of restoration (*All Things New* 92). Everything else flows from there. The trauma survivor knows of this in its specificity—the self-condemnation, fear of others, internal divisiveness, confusion, and shame—and is crying out for recognition, compassion, and tenderness. The trauma survivor shares the woeful songs of the alien with the isolated, self-embrace of exclusion.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ as the establishment of the New Covenant with God also brings with it a dissolution of the systems that has been constructed through human efforts toward holiness and righteousness.

The foundational aspects of differentiation, whereby a people, culture, and ethnicity are recognized and respected for their differences, is a practical and acceptable approach toward inclusivity. It is the “illegitimate” practice of exclusion—the exercising of condemnation through self-righteous (and dis-compassionate) judgment—that God abhors (Volf 68). Jesus creates havoc within the religious exclusionary system in Matthew 9. In this short chapter, He heals a paralyzed man (sick people were evidence of God’s disfavor), dines with sinners (Jewish culture’s designated exiles), invades Satan’s domain of death (another exclusion) by resuscitating a dead child, and invites the blind foreigners (blind is equivalent to marginalized) to healing through their hope, belief, and faith. These invasive and deliberate actions redefined the notion of sin and sinfulness and the resulting evil practice of exclusion. Instead, it turned the attention toward the very practice of exclusion—wrought as an attempt to protect the virtuous from the sinner and held no regard for the person—as the boundary and act that violated God’s plan of redemption (R. Beck 77-8). As resident aliens, we as Christians are both compelled and commanded to attend to the foreigner and the alien (“foreigner, n.”). The church and the Christian community would do well to pay attention to this message.

Too often, the exile, foreigner, and alien are conceptualized and treated with exclusion. The pulpit and its people condemn the sinfulness of its own community, its homophobic, ethnocentric, dogmatic, and nationalistic proclamation creating an “us against them” mentality. It might sound something like this: We are right, and they are wrong; God is with us and against them; Therefore, let us shout these condemnations as a duty to warn. When repentance does not come (as evidenced by their non-attendance at our church), let us circle the wagons, create a closed and safe community, start our own

schools and social network. We will have our own buildings, campus, terminology, and defining theological statements (God is good all the time!). Let us build ourselves a community and church that is not afraid to offend, yes, even attack, those so different and defiled. We will exclude them in the name of a Holy God and condemn them to the fiery lake, keeping ourselves pure and undefiled, satisfied that we've done all we could and can now contentedly shake the dust of this city from our feet, while repeatedly affirming the certainty of our Master's voice (or is this delusion?)—"Well done, good and faithful servant."

Human Agency in The Kingdom

To bring a complete and integrated paradigm to this orientation and, therefore, to the restoration of the *Imago Dei* (which is the purpose of the Gospel), there are four components, or streams, that must be considered.

In *Waking the Dead*, Eldredge identifies these four streams (resources and practices) that represent an accurate and effective Gospel proclamation. The first stream is walking with God (Discipleship), which is an invitation and expectation that God wants and pursues an intimate relationship with His children. It is available and accessible to anyone seeking Him. It is an essential part of orientation, allowing God to hear from and "speak" into a believer's life.

In the Psalms, David is clearly unedited, unrestrained. Good grief—he's all over the map. One moment it's "I love you, Lord!" and the next it's "Why have you forsaken me?" The man seems reckless, unstable; your average board of trustees would have him sent to a therapist. But remember—David is called a man after God's own heart. It was *God* who made him king and canonized his prayers in the Bible. These psalms are given to the church as our prayer book, our primer, and they are beautiful. Assuring us that not only can God handle the full span of our emotional life, he *invites us* to bring it to him. (Eldredge, "The Cry of the Heart" 2nd-3rd paragraph)

The second stream is healing, which Jesus brought throughout His ministry. This is an illustration of the power and accessibility of the Kingdom of God. It goes beyond physical healing, as it penetrates and restores the heart and soul of the afflicted.

The third stream is counseling, which involves receiving the guidance, wisdom, and revelation of the Holy Spirit. Counseling is a practical expectation for a believer in Christ. This includes being part of a growing and discerning community of Christians who can share life's journey toward wholeness and restoration.

Whole and holy. The two go hand in hand. Oh, how important this is. You can't find the holiness you want without deep wholeness. And you can't find the wholeness you want without deep holiness. You can't simply tell the meth addict to quit. She does *need* to quit, but she requires profound healing *to be able to* quit. You can't just tell a raging man to stop losing his temper. He would love to stop. He'd give anything to stop. He doesn't know how. He doesn't know all the forces within him that swell up and overwhelm him with anger. Telling him to stop raging is like telling him to hold back the sea. For too long there have been two camps in Christendom. One is the holiness, or "righteousness," crowd. They are the folks holding up the standard, preaching a message of moral purity. The results have been . . . mixed. Some morality, and a great deal of guilt and shame. Very little lasting change comes from this approach. Hey, I'm all for purity. It's just that you can't get there without the healing of your soul. (J. Eldredge, "Deep and Lasting Change" 6th-7th paragraph)

The fourth stream is spiritual warfare, which requires an understanding that life will be opposed by evil and that the Christian must learn and apply spiritual warfare to fight for their own heart and the hearts of others.

The four streams provide the "watering of the soul" essential to Christian growth. With the justification of salvation comes the regeneration of the spirit. The gradual yet methodical process of restoration begins to unfold in the life of the believer, who comes to know, trust, and grow within the intimacy of a beautifully restored relationship with God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Restoration has indeed come and will continue to divinely shape the new heart.

When all things are made new, then things change. The Christian is healed and is healing and becomes empowered to share in the glorious graces of the Gospel. This includes a new role, a new authority, and a new purpose that is embedded within a healthy community. As disciples, they will grow into the same role that Christ gave the seventy disciples who were sent out in Luke 10 (1-17). This is an important factor in the Gospel message and one that holds the authentic hope of better things to come. Again, there is a new life, a new purpose, and an everlasting hope for the future. There is now a shared role in the kingdom work. No longer being perceived as inadequate or broken, or cast in the role of helpless victims, the wholly restored are transformed into victorious, anointed warriors who will proclaim the good news of the Kingdom to the hurting world into which they have emerged.

Many of you have begun to discover the joy and freedom loving God brings to the rest of your life. Keeping God as our first love, we are not destroyed when others fail to love us well; we are able to weather criticism, loneliness, and rejection. Our other loves are able to find their whole and wholesome expression, and we are able to flourish as human beings. Anchored in True Love, our hearts can go on to love. Because we have first things first, as the saying goes. (J. Eldredge, "Our First Love" 2nd paragraph)

Characteristics of Trauma Survivors

Traumatic events distinguish themselves from what might be considered a stressful event in that the person experiencing the event perceives oneself or another as enduring the realistic threat of facing annihilation. The intensity and impact of this experience, or repetitive experiences, is such that a feeling of utter hopelessness emerges, and a sense of powerlessness pervades the surviving soul (Serene Jones 28-9).

Thus, a traumatic event or situation creates psychological trauma when it overwhelms the individual's ability to cope, and leaves that person fearing death, annihilation, mutilation, or psychosis. The individual may feel emotionally, cognitively, and physically overwhelmed. The circumstances of the event

commonly include abuse of power, betrayal of trust, entrapment, helplessness, pain, confusion, and/or loss. (Giller 1)

A trauma survivor is one who has experienced a traumatic, or series of traumatic events, such that the experience(s) has overwhelmed a person's ability to cope, including the ability to comprehend and explain the events. The loss of language, context, and reason create an emotional numbing, a cognitive distortion, and a concurrent repetition of the events that far exceed the duration of exposure to the event. This "autoplay loop" is an invasive repetition of the traumatic event, whereby the mind seems to be trying to repeat the event in an effort to contextualize the occurrence and ascribe meaning to it.

As a result, trauma victims become survivors in the sense that they live in the constant presence and influence of the past and the corresponding event(s). They are fragmented by the haunting of the past, while attempting to live with its impact in the present.

A representative sample of subjective symptoms can help describe the experience of the trauma survivor, as follows:

- "Repeated, disturbing dreams of a stressful experience from the past";
- "Suddenly acting or feeling as if a stressful experience was happening again (as if reliving it)";
- "Feeling very upset when reminded of a stressful experience from the past";
- "Having physical reactions (e.g., heart pounding, trouble breathing, or sweating) when reminded of a stressful experience from the past";
- "Avoiding activities or situations because they remind the victim of a stressful experience from the past";
- "Loss of interest in things that used to be enjoyed";

- “Feeling distant or cut off from other people”;
- “Feeling emotionally numb or being unable to have loving feelings for those close to the victim”;
- “Feeling as if the future will somehow be cut short”; and/or
- Being “super alert” or watchful, on guard (Weathers et al.).

The purpose of using the PCL-C, particularly in the current study, is not to diagnose trauma survivors with PTSD. Instead, the PCL-C illustrates the accompanying symptomology and is used to distinguish people who experienced sacred or desecrating losses in their lives. As such, the scores distinguish those participants who had a traumatic experience. The trauma survivor—the one who had a traumatic experience—is one who has been significantly impacted to a degree that they still mirror active symptoms of PTSD.

Attributes of Trauma Survivors

In his New York Time’s best seller *The Body Keeps the Score*, Bessel van der Kolk describes the basis of trauma survivor’s attributes as sourced within the function of memory, specifically that of traumatic memory. There are two major components that he addresses within this paradigm:

- The problem of traumatic memory
- The unbearable heaviness of remembering

The problem of traumatic memory stems from the overwhelming force of the event(s) and the brain’s inability to properly interpret, store, and recall the event with sufficient context and meaning: “The imprints of traumatic images are organized not as coherent logical narratives but in fragmented sensory and emotional traces: images,

sounds and physical sensations” (van der Kolk 178). There is often a constant barrage of images and sensations related to the event, but such images and sensations intrusively arrive without context or meaning. There is a seemingly randomness to these occurrences, though predictability can be acquired through recognition of triggering stimuli or events. One can imagine the anticipatory discomfort of attending community events when being susceptible to unpredictable and, often, inconvenient and disruptive sensory experiences that hijack a commonplace social interaction, such as riding a bus or sharing coffee in a church greeting area.

Routine and even mundane events that go unnoticed by others can serve as triggering events for the trauma survivor. Sensitivity to loud noises, claustrophobia in tight places or with large groups of people, the innocent gesture of a handshake or welcoming touch of the shoulder, can all create a reactivity that seems disconnected, or disproportionate, to the event. However, in the mind of the trauma survivor, it unconsciously re-creates a pervasive sense of certain annihilation. The brain reacts within its reptilian survivor mechanism and creates the flight, fight, or freeze survival response.

World War I gave rise to the documented trauma of witnessing and experiencing the atrocities of battle. Known as “shell shock,” the affected soldiers demonstrated the after-effects of trauma as their bodies involuntarily shuttered, displayed bizarre physical postures, facial terrors, non-sensical verbal utterances, memory loss, and a variety of unexplainable medical conditions. The British, Germans, and Americans initially rejected this diagnosis, instead attempting to eliminate it by allocating blame to unwilling and undisciplined soldiers (van der Kolk 186-7). A systemic organizational and societal stigma toward survivors of trauma began to emerge.

Trauma is an awkward thing for one to acknowledge and discuss. It requires acknowledging and reliving the horrific events of the past. It means agreeing that everything is “not okay” and that a belief in the divine principles of justice and existential meaning may often be elusive. Trauma is disruptive in that it de-stabilizes the preferable, amnesiac response to a reality that bad things do indeed happen to good people and that, while God may be sovereign and in charge, there is no guarantee that it will go well for any of us before it is all over. Whether it is the victim doing the talking or the witness empathetically holding a posture of supportive listening, a strong resolve is essential to remain engaged in the deplorable events located within this historical narrative. It requires re-living the experience through the cognitive engagement of remembering.

Traumatic events are often repressed; that is, they are unconsciously submerged beyond recall. Repressed memory has its own peculiarities. Memories that are pulled into awareness for the first time are often the most accurate. However, once retrieved, there is a semantic application of interpretation and meaning attached to them before they are stored again. The memory becomes altered in this process. This lends itself to distortion and confusion. Did it really happen? If so, did it really happen that way? The survivor is left trying to determine his or her own integrity and sanity in a repetitive search for the answer. There exists a split within the “self,” within the identity of the survivor. The bizarre, horrendous, surreal trials of the traumatic event(s) sometime result in an existential detachment, from which the survivor never reintegrates into one. A holocaust survivor (Lawrence Langer) describes it this way: ““Who can find a proper grave for such damaged mosaics of the mind, where they may rest in pieces? Life goes on, but in two temporal directions at once, the future unable to escape the grip of a memory laden with

grief” (qtd. in van der Kolk, 197). It is the heavy burden of fragmented memory that the survivor must incessantly carry.

Needs of Trauma Survivors

It can be challenging for a seasoned pastor—one given to years of study, sacrifice, and practice—to re-frame a paradigm for ministering to the trauma survivor. This vocational group appears to hold similar characteristics, behaviors, and attitudinal traits that can be simplistically categorized into orthodox, theological wineskins: the oppositional and defiant nature of fallen mankind, the human tendency toward self-determination/self-sufficiency, and so on. However, one of the demands of the pastoral vocation is the commitment to self-reflection, along with a willingness to respond to the times and places that God chooses to place His beloved shepherds: “Wise pastoral ministry, after all, involves a constant reevaluation of one’s cultural context. It is healthy to anticipate gradual change over a career” (Copeland 13). Thus, today’s effective and compassionate pastor is challenged to re-think the existential paradigm within her congregation. In consideration of the trauma survivor, the category of faith for the survivor is often tainted with distortion. A theodicy develops through the inexplicable life experience containing assaults upon her beliefs, hopes, and capacity for optimism. Put another way, her faith has been disrupted and exists within a state of disorientation.

A recent news story gave the account of a physician who was convicted of molesting numerous young girls on the USA Olympic Team. A survivor was interviewed as to her interpretations of this event in light of her doctrine and faith:

[Interviewer:] You were first abused by Larry Nassar in 2000. It took 18 years for him to be convicted of sexually abusing girls. What have the past two decades been like for your faith? [Victim Response:] In the beginning, I wrestled with God’s perspective on abuse, where he was, why he didn’t do anything, and

whether or not I was guilty or stained by it. I worked to get to a place where I could trust in his justice and call evil what it was, because God is good and holy. One of the areas where Christians don't do well is in acknowledging the devastation of the wound. We can tend to gloss over the devastation of any kind of suffering but especially sexual assault, with Christian platitudes like *God works all things together for good* or *God is sovereign*. Those are very good and glorious biblical truths, but when they are misapplied in a way to dampen the horror of evil, they ultimately dampen the goodness of God. Goodness and darkness exist as opposites. If we pretend that the darkness isn't dark, it dampens the beauty of the light. (Lee 9th-11th paragraph)

One of the most essential needs of a trauma survivor comes in the form of social and psychological acceptance. This acceptance validates that what happened mattered. It is an authentication of dignity and respect, that a trauma survivor is not the sum of their experience. It does not define them. Instead, it is a part of their story and an impactful component of their life journey. They are entitled to their adaptations and interpretation of these events and need to be met exactly where they are in time, process, and space.

The function of self-protection must be seen in light of both dignity and depravity. The victim, at age nine, who learned to tune out the abuse by staring at a spot on the wall, must not be told with an insensitive snarl that her choice was self-protective and wrong. I affirm her choice to survive. I am proud that she found a way to minimize the damage and survive to the next day. (Allender, *Wounded* 191)

Empathy and sensitivity, not sympathy, are the best responses that can be allocated to the trauma survivor.

Recognizing and respecting these post-traumatic adaptations is critical to the church in effectively engaging the survivor in any type of beneficial relationship. Following are four attributes of adaptation and their corresponding needs. First is social adaptation, which refers to the survivor's avoidance of large crowds, close and proximal physical spaces, and locations without multiple exit options. Survivors may also avoid intimate conversations or scrutinizing engagements. Survivors are plagued by a sense of

shame and inadequacy and do not identify or relate with others very well. The survivors feel like they are living “on the outside” of social circles. They are hypervigilant to semantics and dual meanings of words and social interactions. As such, “To the degree that our identity serves to distinguish the self from others, thereby facilitating meaningful interactions with others, traumatization isolates the persons from his or her significant others” (Ganzevoort 21).

Second is psychological adaptation, which may result in suspicion, a decreased sense of curiosity or adventure, or an overtness in risk-taking behavior. The survivor may be anxious and/or depressed and hypervigilant to surroundings and stimuli. Survivors avoid reminders of traumatic events (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, “PTSD”). Third is physical/biological adaptation, which results in the avoidance of loud noises, bright lights, and over-stimulation of audio-visual stimuli. Survivors may also experience temperature sensitivity.

Fourth is spiritual adaptation, in which the survivor may feel distrust and anger toward religion and its representatives and may be rebellious or over-compliant. The survivor may be atheistic, agnostic, bewildered, or cynical. The survivors may be somewhat “postmodern” in their religious paradigm, experiencing relativity with the concept of truth, loss of mystery and awe, and an empirical worldview, yet they may be defiant toward concepts of absolutes and authority.

Pargament identifies three types of spiritual struggles: those with others (interpersonal), those within the person (intrapsychic), and those with the divine. Interpersonal struggles are religious strains and conflicts with family members, friends, and communities. Intrapsychic struggles refer to doubts and questions about fundamental spiritual and religious beliefs and assumptions. People can also struggle spiritually with the divine; the aspect of spiritual struggles included in this study. For those struggling to recover from a traumatic event, these questions

may relate to the afterlife, ultimate purposes of life, and reconciling their religious beliefs with the event. (Gear Haugen 19-20)

Long before the church and her pastoral shepherds can address the healing and concurrent restorative path of the trauma survivor, there must first be cultural awareness that runs concurrently with a compassionate posture of acceptance. The Gospel compels her disciples to remember and embrace the posture of the Good Samaritan in ministering to the trauma victim.

“Christianity is not primarily a system of beliefs and actions as it is a restoration of the soul to God” (Allender, “Session 1”). The re-integration of the “self,” fragmented and isolated from both the trauma itself and the resulting survivor adaptations, is a complex and tedious process. There are several actions required to propagate and cultivate these processes. First, there must be a re-orientation to person, place, time, and situation from the Divine/Mythic perspective. We must consider who and whose we really are, who God is, where we are in the clash of kingdoms, when we exist in time and history, and our circumstances (Allender, *To Be Told*).

Second, there must be a restoration of an authentic relationship with God, as “[s]uch encounters [with God] build confidence, whether they are received as words in the person’s spirit, or as a gentle awareness of God’s nearness. Confidence feeds trust. Trust opens the soul to authentic relationship” (Durst Location 227). Third, a restoration of an authentic relationship with others must be achieved, as “The response to God’s invitation to the relational covenant with Him is also the call to, and provision for, community” (Durst Location 233). This involves knowing and being known and finding one’s purpose and identity within the safe, grounding, and unifying effect of an adopted family.

Other actions include finding safety and respect; receiving a compelling story of the Gospel that provides narrative, context, and hope; being able to cultivate resiliency through permissive leniency with the self and the community; having patience and hope for restoration in the time and process; and cultivating forgiveness within the immediacy of the traumatic event of the self and of the perpetrator:

We must forgive those who hurt us. The reason is simple: Bitterness and unforgiveness set their hooks deep in our hearts; they are chains that hold us captive to the wounds and the messages of those wounds. Until you forgive, you remain their prisoner. Paul warns us that unforgiveness and bitterness can wreck our lives and the lives of others (Eph. 4:31; Heb. 12:15). We have to let it all go. (S. Eldredge, "Forgive" 1st paragraph)

There must also be a reintegration of identity:

At the moment of impact, traumatization is usually experienced as an intrusion of alien, enemy forces. Later on, however, and looking back on whom we have become, we cannot but incorporate the traumatic experiences. Because they have actually taken place, we cannot think of ourselves outside of these experiences. By consequence, the logic for our suffering is a retrospective one. That is, traumatizing events should never happen to us, but when they have happened, they are a necessary part of our identity. Finding some kind of religious meaning in suffering can be an important element in making the transitions from position one to position two, from resistance to acceptance, from scars to stigmata. (Ganzevoort 24)

Finally, there must be a re-discovery of the self in passion and purpose:

Psychology texts describe a "false self," the persona we put on, based on externals: what we have, what we do, who we know, where we go. But this self can be lost when those objects are lost because our identity is bound up with them. The "true self" is at the core of who we are-though we often resist or deny it. Sometimes it is buried beneath illness, layers of abuse, trauma or the voice of others. (Kehoe 124)

The needs of trauma survivors should be recognized, identified, and respected by the shepherds of the Gospel message. The next section will address an area well known within the professional, therapeutic community that bridges the needs of survivors with

the pastoral attributes of relational and communication effectiveness: the culture of trauma-informed care.

Trauma-Informed Care

There is an enhanced opportunity to reach the survivor of trauma, as “[r]esearch has already demonstrated that a significant percentage of disaster survivors turn to faith, faith leaders, and faith communities in times of disasters” (Walker and Aten 351). The biblical and theological justifications for preaching the Gospel to trauma survivors have been established. The characteristics and needs of this group have been identified, validated, and considered. The next section will address special considerations that are grounded within a culturally sensitive and competently enhanced trauma-informed environment.

Trauma-Informed Care Considerations

The trauma survivor lives life within a construct of intense ambivalence, as in the dichotomy of “damned if they do and damned if they don’t.” They are driven by the existential and even biological need of linking to other people while connecting to “moral meaning and the possibility of the transcendent” (Commission on Children at Risk 33). This is pitted against a physiological and psychological defense system, mostly autonomic, that impedes the ability to create a social engagement skill set that lends itself to safety and sustainable connectivity with others. There are many complexities at work that must be considered when working with this population: “When individuals with a trauma history are carefully observed and interviewed, we immediately learn that they don’t like to be in public places because noise, or sound, bothers them and they

frequently have great difficulty extracting human voice from background activity” (auditory hypersensitivity) (Porges 75).

Setting

The physical setting of a worship service should be considered in light of the biological construct of the trauma survivor’s sensory and response system. Porges makes several important observations relative to this construct. First, “When we enter new environments, which are potentially dangerous, we shift into a surveillance vigilance system from a social engagement system....; we have shifted physiological state. We have reduced the neural tone to the middle ear structures so that we are better able to hear low-frequency predator sounds” (77). Porges later notes that “[a] relatively efficient method to enhance feelings of safety in clients is to change the physical features of the clinical environment. Clinicians can remove sounds that reflexively, through neuroception, would have triggered defensive states and provide sounds that calm and signal safety” (83). He also discusses social engagement:

This...is the process in which we use vocalization, we use listening to intonation in the voice, we use facial expressions, and we use gestures. We also use ingestive behaviors such as a baby nursing. When we are adults...we go out to lunch or we go out for a drink as a way of socializing. Ingestive behaviors use the same neural mechanisms that we use for social behavior. In a sense, we use ingestive behaviors to calm people down and to socially engage others. When social engagement is effective, psychological distance between people is minimized, which leads to a reduction in physical distance. (73)

Liturgy

Sensitivity to the theme of biblical violence should be considered by balancing the message of the Seder meal/Eucharist and the trauma of the crucifixion with the act of consuming the elements in light of both re-creating trauma through the recollection of the

traumatic event of the cross and creating identification between the trauma survivor and the Christ within the *stigmata* (see Ganzevoort) of the Passion.

In her enlightening and emotionally moving book, *Wrestling with our Inner Angels*, Nancy Kehoe describes her pioneering work with mentally ill patients in Boston, Massachusetts. As a Catholic nun with the order of Religious of the Sacred Heart, Kehoe combines her religious credentials and calling with her professional work as a Harvard-trained psychologist. During one of her numerous innovative interventions, Kehoe established what would become a seven-year tradition for her Spiritual Values group, comprising adult mental health survivors, many with trauma and abuse backgrounds.

Dr. Kehoe implemented an annual, liturgical tradition using the Jewish Seder meal in conjunction with the Christian Eucharist. The goal was to help bring identification and context to the individual's suffering in light of the religious connotations from the Jewish nation and the passion of the Christ. In this manner, the effectiveness of using an important, religious ritual allowed the participants to recognize the transformational power of suffering's interpretation. Specifically, this practice created a sacred space "to shed some light on the client's sufferings, to give some meaning to their pain, so they would learn that they were not alone on the journey to freedom" (Kehoe 75).

Adhering to the liturgical frequency and application of the Eucharist has a cathartic value. Ritual and symbolism are combined with the transformative experience through the life-giving promises made possible and accessible through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This Holy Ordinance contains within it tremendous healing power: "Individuals who have experienced traumatic events may find in the Lord's

Supper a trustworthy and nourishing relational home, a therapeutic space for truth telling and a life-sustaining absolutism” (Arjona 177). John Calvin’s practice and recommendation that Communion be provided weekly was based upon the awareness of the essential need for the congregant, especially the wounded soul, to participate for the benefit found within healing and restorative qualities provided within this ritualistic act (Arjona 177).

Worship

As John Eldredge writes, “Worship is what we give our hearts over to in exchange for the promise of life” (qtd. in Snyder). The very paradigm of worship encompasses much more than music, with its presentation and participatory opportunities. It moves beyond style, preference, and tradition. Instead, worship is an integrated posture of the heart and a corresponding experience. It contains the desperate needs and pleas of the human heart; the leveling trough of humility; and the awareness that something extraordinarily beautiful and powerful exists that pursues and woos us. It draws one toward greater hope and encouragement while providing a penetrating balm for the wounds of our souls. Worship also weaves its participants together within a common bond of humanity and connectivity. Dan Allender describes it within the context of an interdependent paradigm: “Awe and gratitude are the fundamental building blocks of worship. I am to look at you and scratch my head in wonder: ‘Why do you love me so well? Why have you not abandoned me? Why do you still like me, knowing me as you do?’ I am to be in awe about your love and your faithfulness to me” (*The Healing Path* 254).

The trauma survivor is an astute observer of human behavior and the surroundings that encompass the social aspects of gathering. Honoring the unique biological (neuroception), psychological (hypervigilance, avoidance, suspicion), and spiritual (foreigner) attributes of the survivor is critical to effectively inviting, teaching, and engaging the survivor into a healthy posture and participatory opportunity to join with her God and the community of sojourners around her.

Music and Media

“[V]isual and auditory cues play an important role in determining how neuroception influences our physiological state. One of the most potent triggers of neuroception, or at least the neuroception of safety, is through acoustic stimulation” (Porges 71).

Communicating Effectively to Adult Trauma Survivors

The goals of this preaching effort must include considerations for communicating in a manner that is effective. This section will address the considerations and methods that most effectively influence trauma survivors.

Pastoral and Sermonic Attributes

The role of psychological attachment and trauma can be viewed through a paradoxical lens. The trauma survivor of sexual or physical abuse is both drawn to and repulsed by the perpetrator and their actions. This may be directly associated with the perpetrator themselves or re-created with similar people and/or situations. The core of this paradox and ambivalence is a deeper need for attachment and a longing for love, validation, and, ultimately, healing. It is an ambivalence embedded within the faith perspective of the congregant; that is, the differences heard and experienced between the

explicit overtures (pastoral proclamations, actions, and practices) and survivalist's implicit thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and beliefs interpreting these messages. Simply stated, what is said is not always what is heard.

The goal of the sermon in this case is to expose this dichotomy and to cultivate greater tension between the explicit behaviors and the implicit belief system. Alister E. McGrath proposes that the examination of the presuppositions of a belief system raise the opportunity for a creative and positive tension:

It is quite possible that a person's life is actually based on a whole set of unrecognized presuppositions, which your gentle and patient inquiry can bring to light. Experience suggests that such gentle explorations can sometimes be devastating in that they expose the inner contradictions and confusions within someone's outlook on life. A crisis may result in which faith can be born. (Location 1371)

This approach can be further exemplified from a case study involving therapeutic approaches to working with challenges within the psycho-social-spiritual domains of trauma, attachment, and spirituality. Maggie was the subject of this case study; she was a twenty-six-year-old single female with an extensive familial history of trauma and abuse. After her early adulthood conversion experience to Christianity, she again experienced a significant, traumatic event in her life. This created a gaping disparity evoked by this divisive experience, in which her childhood of origin paradigm regarding parental care clashed with the theological realities of a God who would not, or could not, protect her: "Being able to identify the great divide between her implicit and explicit experience of/attachment to God and access her implicit experience was the first step in addressing Maggie's insecure spiritual attachment and beginning to create a coherent spiritual story of Maggie's life" (Maltby and Hall 307).

Auditory Attributes

Most church worship structures follow some sort of pattern involving stimulation through continuous musical sounds. Whether contemporary or traditional, or some combination thereof, there is usually some theme and order of musical sets, audio-video presentation, and, of course, the speakers assigned to various roles within the worship ritual. Some denominations honor a contemplative style of worship, whereby reverent periods of silence accompany solemn moments. Recognizing the importance of lament, reflection, and listening is critical to both honoring the trauma survivor's needs and allowing for the temporal space to internalize the message and the communal worship service (see Abbott).

For the preacher and the proclamation function, special consideration should be given to the biological and psychological attributes of the trauma survivor:

Removing low-frequency sounds that our nervous system detects as predatory is helpful...Clinicians need to engage their clients with a prosodic voice characterized by variations in intonation. They need to use modulations in intonation and not modulations in loudness to calm and reassure their clients and to move their clients into a state of safety. (Porges 83)

Homiletics

The sermon can be a very effective catalyst for creating dissonance that leads to ambivalence, which supports the developmental process of making commitments (cognitive and behavioral) toward acceptance and change. The cognitive intersection of dissonance and ambivalence creates an internal experience that can be referred to as optimal conflict.

The conditions of the optimal conflict include the persistent experience of some frustration, dilemma, life puzzle or quandary, or personal problem. These experiences are perfectly designed to cause us to feel the limits of our current way of knowing or

understanding the sphere of living that we care about. As such, there must be “*Sufficient supports* so that we are neither overwhelmed by the conflict, nor able to escape or diffuse it” (Lahey and Kegan Location 965).

This condition becomes fertile ground by which a person can engage effectively with ambivalence (as introduced through sermonic content) and embrace the contradictions of the intrinsic, existential beliefs that are essential to the healthy development of psychological and spiritual formation.

Style

In his 2000 dissertation, Michael Thomas Schlittler challenges the discipline within the homiletic of preaching and frames a paradigm and intentionality of the sermon as “soul care” (2). Responding to the needs of the broken-hearted in his weekly audience, he addresses the deeper longings and questions of his congregation. Those battling the painful grip of cancer, self-forgiveness, personal failure, and inadequacy are all considered in the weekly sermon construction as “personal counseling on a group scale” (Schlittler 7). Recognizing the real-life circumstances of his congregation while honoring their story brings an authenticity and congruency to the pastoral role and to the corresponding sermonic message. Relevancy is enhanced through empathy and knowledge, while communication is enhanced by revelation through the Holy Spirit who knows what we cannot even begin to articulate, enlightening and empowering the pastor through God’s timeless and penetrating Word.

Sermonic style is the catalyst for projecting God’s Word. Its effectiveness requires attunement to the audience’s existential questions. “What do you want me to do for you?” is Jesus’ recurrent question. Yet, He already knows the answer because He

knows His beloved's story. Certainly, one must operate within the parameters of personality, training, and orthodoxy. However, adaptation to culture and circumstance can be accomplished without sacrificing pastoral integrity. God is the Seeker and has always met His people where they were: in the midst of doubt, pain, self-pity, even within the indictment of the Divine.

Composition and Content Attributes

Jeffrey Frymire proposes that the roles of the preacher and God work in tandem to provide the conveyance of God's Word to His people through creativity, exegesis, memory, and novelty (1). A theological approach combined with a neurological understanding of how the brain normally develops and works, held contextually with the impact of trauma upon the human brain, brings an essential consideration to be given when preaching the Gospel to Trauma Survivors.

When the concept of relevance is so critical as it is in both postmodern and trauma survivor culture, the "So what" question must be factored into the end goal of the sermon. More so, the themes of encouragement and hope are necessary to include within the sermonic proclamation. As Teresa Angle-Young proclaims within her dissertation on preaching to the postmodern generation: "Why would people leave church on Sunday feeling guilty and bad about themselves when they could come away from another experience feeling empowered and affirmed?" (5).

Gospel proclamation must also adhere to the captivating methods and themes from the ancient art of storytelling, where pre-literate cultures taught traditional wisdom through the use of metaphor, illustration, and novelty: "Novelty allows for the creative retelling of scripture by condensing time and space thereby bringing ancient narratives

into the present day” (Frymire 72). It has to matter in order to captivate, or trauma survivors will not attend; if they somehow do, they will not come back.

Another consideration in message compilation relates to the interpersonal qualities of identity and narrative. Specifically, the interpretations that are weaved over a series of meaningful life events (joy, loss, purpose, and meaning) are derived from our creative, personal narratives. These narratives hold more interpretive sway over our beliefs and attitudes than the actual events that compose them. When trauma disrupts memory and the continuities of a life narrative, the re-integration of these traumatic memories becomes a critical pathway to restoration (van der Kolk 221-2).

In these circumstances, context for trauma and restoration can be provided through the telling of the biblical story. The metanarratives of shame, guilt, abandonment, and evil can seamlessly overlay the trauma survivor’s life experience(s), yet the overarching theme of God’s restorative justice, mercy, and compassion can serve as a catalyst for reinterpretation and reorientation in context of the Gospel. Upon further analysis of sermon development, the use of deconstruction as an exegetical technique can help illuminate the underpinnings of assumption:

Thinking creatively in biblical exegesis allows the preacher to preach the text in new ways that may even address the needs of the skeptical and be theologically meaningful to the open-minded postmodern listener. Deconstruction, in concert with sensitivity to the listener’s social location—especially when preachers understand their demographic well, can produce powerful preaching that touches the postmodern listener deeply. (Angle-Young 31)

The use of an adaptive, homiletic technique can also be a critical consideration. Much has been said already about the unique biological attributes of trauma survivors, including an autonomic sensitivity to sound. The use of prosodic articulation is helpful,

as is the avoidance of loud and sudden noises, low predatory tones, and overstimulated gestures.

Setting Attributes

Additional considerations that enhance effectiveness in communicating to trauma survivors include the worship service setting. As with any conducive social or learning environment, the physical surroundings can add or diminish to preaching effectiveness. Lighting should be moderate, not overly bright or excessively dark. Personal space is important to respect. Seating should allow for ample room for personal boundaries to be honored.

Liturgy Attributes

Rhythmic practices can add predictability and a sense of intrinsic, meaningful engagement. The practice of using laity readers for scripture, including the use of the Common Lectionary and/or topical scripture that will be seen/heard again in the sermon, allows for the repetitive mechanisms that enhance a sense of connectivity and safety. Communion provides the solemnity that resonates with a soul that is so oriented to suffering. It also provides the noble hope of restoration, as a phoenix rising from the ashes of desolation.

Music and Media Attributes

Trauma survivors' characteristics can be compared to the personality traits of introverts, whereby lower levels of stimulation are more conducive to learning and performing (Cain 122-6). Therefore, the style of worship defined as contemporary versus traditional may not be a critical point of distinction if other considerations are given to the decibel level, theme, and participatory implications for worship

As with any effective learning theory, using a variety of methods can assist the adult learner in entering into a more impactful and, therefore, integrative experience.

Another point of consideration should be given to the synthesis of the worship service: the setting, liturgy, music, and homiletics. The end goal of each event should be to create a meaningful, or at least impactful, experience. Survival is a serious business, and trauma survivors are intuitively attuned to purpose and meaning. The overall goal should be to create an experience of transcendent connection, as opposed to simply learning a new fact or shifting a mental ascent. Divine revelation will effectively work toward a holistic restoration and greater purpose.

To enhance such an effectiveness and to create this integrated experience requires that a cultural template be identified, implemented, established, and maintained. Artifacts, meanings, signs, symbols, slogans, and social practice all compose a church culture, or a community in motion. This is the fertile ground for safety, growth, and change.

Two examples of churches that are incorporating such an approach are provided here. The first is Discovery Church in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Discovery Church adheres to a distinctiveness identity approach that has been called “Me too.” The essence of this paradigm is that everyone has a brokenness about their lives, and everyone has a story. As such, everyone is on a journey, and the church is a safe place to arrive, belong, and work through this brokenness. Leadership mirrors this through testimony and empathy. Each service reinforces this condition and the need for redemptive community; it is an egalitarian construct that lends itself to identification, bonding, and safety.

The second is St. Andrews Anglican Church in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina. St. Andrews Church embraces acceptance as a core value for community and ministry. There is no sacrifice of Gospel integrity, and there is a strong expectation of growth through sanctification. What makes this inviting to “outsiders” is a developmental, process-oriented paradigm that leads to restoration: Belong, Believe, Behave. The expectation is that belonging (acceptance) is the first issue of importance for anyone seeking God. This lowers the defensive barriers against suspicion and rejection, allowing people to be authentic with their current beliefs and what might be considered “sinful” behaviors. This might be stated as, “Simply come and belong, with who you are and where you are. Many of us arrived here with our doubts, distortions and questions. It’s safe to have these. and we welcome your honesty.” With the safety of this environment, people will likely stay and learn more (become oriented) to who they are, where they are, and who/what God is and is up to. With belonging and believing serving as the fertile ground for growth, knowledge and experience become the edification needed to address behaviors that will be developed in congruence with the Holy Spirit’s plan of restoration. Sanctification becomes the growth track that one will follow to a life of love, community, and purpose as a life-long disciple of Christ.

These two examples are illustrative of the church that recognizes the need for safety, respect, and acceptance, all of which are core practices from the Master Himself. There can be no given assumption that the intentions of the church organization match the experience of the attendees, particularly the people who come through the doors in search of hope. Every worship service is a renewed opportunity to perform the healing work of the Gospel message.

To this end, we return to the fundamental purpose of the role and function of preaching as a means to a theological orientation: Who God is, who we are, where we are, and the circumstances in which we find ourselves. Often, this means injecting a theme of apologetics within each sermon. More so, the apologetic must make and sustain a case for Christianity as the path that God has designed for human hope, restoration (to God, self and others), wholeness, and life to the fullest. It acknowledges suffering as a part of life. It denotes injustice in a fallen world and the separation of ourselves from God and others as our natural default. It prescribes the solution to emptiness, loneliness, and despair with the response to a pursuing God who relentlessly seeks his lost children, longing to restore their hearts to life, love, and relationships.

“Christianity is not a promise to enjoy a life without pain nor to be given a shortcut through it. It is a promise that pain, sorrow, sin—ours and others—will not swallow us, destroy us, define us, or have the final word. Jesus has won the victory. And in him so have we” (S. Eldredge, “Master of Understatement” 4th paragraph).

Special Considerations for Victim and Perpetrator

A final consideration is ethically and thoughtfully given to safety. This is a strategic and primary goal for any pastor and congregation. From the nursery to the children/youth ministry, today’s competent church organization is deeply aware of the vulnerabilities of our young congregations. When it comes to our Sunday service and the attendees, we are also wise as to the composition of our members. All are sinners and have acted in accordance with this condition. Many still are, though we are hopeful that they are working on mitigating the pattern, frequency, and typology of this sinful behavior. We are grateful to the process of sanctification in this.

Within the category of victims of sexual and physical abuse, there is an additional contagion of sin that should be considered as it relates to psychological, physical, and even theological safety. Some survivors become perpetrators of the victimization that they have experienced themselves, creating a perpetual cycle of victim/perpetrator. In these circumstances, where can one draw the line between victim and perpetrator? Moreover, the pastor is challenged to address the divine balance of the Gospel message as it intertwines with Law (Justice) and Gospel (Mercy/Forgiveness). In his article titled, “What Would Walther Do? Applying Law and Gospel to Victims and Perpetrators of Child Sexual Abuse,” Victor Vieth quotes Martin Luther’s distinction between Law and Gospel:

“(T)he gospel is the message about the incarnate Son of God, who was given us without our merits for salvation and peace. It is the word of salvation, the Word of grace, the Word of comfort, the Word of joy ... But the Law is the Word of perdition, the Word of wrath, the Word of sadness, the Word of pain, the voice of the Judge and the accused, the Word of unrest, the Word of malediction.” (265)

Continuing with a section of his work titled, “Applying Law and Gospel to Victims of Child Sexual Abuse,” Vieth discusses the application of what could effectively be embedded within the homiletic structure:

- “Avoid the Temptation to Focus on the Victim’s Sins” (267)
- “Assure the Victim of Christ’s Empathy” (268)
- “Apply the Gospel Compassionately” (268)
- “Don’t Make Forgiveness into a Law, But a Change of Heart Rooted in the Gospel” (269)
- “Seek the Lost” (270)

Preaching the Gospel to abused children involves more than waiting for one to appear in our office or in our church—it means an active search for the lost. In working from a pastoral role with a childhood sexual abuse victim, Vieth recommends:

- “Assist the Victim in Accessing Appropriate Medical and Mental Health Care” (268)
- “Refrain from Platitudes” (268)
- “Cautiously Respond When a Victim Asks to Confront the Perpetrator” (269)

In working with a perpetrator, Vieth continues:

- “Avoid Cheap Grace” (270)
- “Ask Tough Questions” (270)
- “Apply the Law as an Act of Genuine Love” (271)
- “Seek True Confession” (271)
- “Recognize the Value of Earthly Consequences” (271)

The homiletic and the corresponding pastoral counseling role requires an informed and conscientious effort to balance the tension of Law and Gospel. When applying these theological principles, it is critical to avoid applying the law to the victim and the Gospel to the perpetrator.

There is a solid biblical and theological foundation, perhaps even a mandate, for providing special attention and consideration to the needs of the trauma survivor. The alien, exile, and foreigner are an excellent descriptor for this population, who have often, albeit inadvertently, been overlooked in the typical Sunday service and approach to the proclamation of the Gospel.

Trauma survivors are unique in how they view and experience the world. This becomes a challenge for the church who seeks to bring the Good News of restoration, hope, and healing. The Gospel offers a message of encouragement, restoration, and hope. People who have been impacted by trauma experience life differently. This includes an altered perception of safety, personal boundaries, noise sensitivity, self-esteem, self-awareness, sense of adequacy/self-efficacy, and shame. These are the people within our communities who can never hear the Gospel message of hope due to fear, avoidance, and aversion. As a result, they may never experience these essential gifts of restorative grace. They are the alienated, the frightened; they exist within the self-protective cocoon of isolation; and they will not darken the doors of a church. They are highly suspicious of authority, and rightly so. Their stories are built upon credible experiences where rules and power have been manipulated to the gain of a perpetrator and to the loss of the victim. Others have experienced tragic losses that have decimated their world view of order, logic, certainty, and meaning.

The special attributes and needs of the trauma survivor must be considered if the church is to be obedient and effective in carrying out the great commandment. This includes attention to the content and delivery of the sermon. It also requires special consideration of the church culture and the setting in which the sermon is delivered. The goal should be to create a palpable experience that leads the survivor toward a safe invitation to explore his or her own questions and to find intimacy with God. Creating a temporal and sacred space within a trauma-informed environment will enhance the survivor's ability to absorb these messages. This process will effectively lend itself toward developing integration of survivors' experiences within a renewed context,

shaping a redefined meaning to the experiences that had heretofore wounded and crippled their heart. This will eventually alter the shape and the content of their current narrative, transforming it into positive, existential meaning and purpose.

Research Design Literature

This project is designed to target and overcome the obstacles that arise in preaching the Gospel to those who have experienced loss and trauma. The complexity of those who possess these attributes requires a sophisticated and purposeful approach to overcome these obstacles through both the setting and the homiletic structure. Applied technique should be provided to the systems of communication, or what may be better described as “delivery mechanisms.”

To effectively acquire the data needed to demonstrate the impact upon the participant from these special considerations, techniques, and methods, the project used an intervention design with a mixed methodology. This is described as the “use of quantitative and qualitative methods in a single study or series of studies” (Tariq and Woodman 1). As Shema Tariq and Jenny Woodman note, “The most widely accepted definition of mixed methods research is research that ‘focuses on collecting, analysing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or a series of studies’” (2). In the current study, the mixed methodology instrumentation used a methodological triangulation approach. Tim Sensing describes this approach to analyses as “the use of multiple methods to study a single problem or program, such as interviews, observations, questionnaires, and documents” (74). Given this study’s use of both qualitative and quantitative techniques, Sensing considers this to be the best rationale for design (74).

The intervention used the findings from the research to address these challenges, beginning with a purposeful sample of participants as identified from a standardized and quantifiable screening tool. The participants then underwent pre- and post-test evaluations using a standardized tool that quantifies spiritual growth indicators and movement as a result of changing the meaning and life narrative associated with trauma. A post-intervention survey (TIS) was used to identify the quantitative and qualitative attributes of the setting that the participant experienced, for the purposes of identifying and perhaps validating the effectual components of the intervention.

Summary of Literature

The research of literature provided within this section covers four thematic components that support the ramifications of trauma and the justifications to pursue a culturally relevant and technically constructed approach to preaching the Gospel to trauma survivors. The thematic structure includes:

- I. Biblical Foundations: Old and New Testaments
- II. Theological Foundations
- III. Characteristics of Trauma Survivors
- IV. Trauma-Informed Processes in Preaching to Trauma Survivors

Old Testament foundations reveal God's plan of salvation, His intentionality to redeem fallen humanity. The adjudication of God's moral law within Israel's society provides the Divine attributes of compassion, mercy, and consideration of the foreigner, the alien, and the exile. New Testament actualizes the salvific mission of the Christ as God in the flesh (Immanuel), who ushers in the Kingdom of God with power, authority, and its redemptive qualities. The new covenant brings with it a restored capacity for

humans to know God and to thrive within this reunified relationship. Moral bearing and perspective shift from willful efforts toward compliance to an alignment of value congruence. The Body of Christ (church) is formed, led, and grown through the conveyance of the Holy Spirit to the disciple and to the collective.

Theological foundations provide the context for the larger story where the Gospel is embedded. Indeed, the Gospel is inherently perplexing and, ultimately, ineffective without a contextual alignment to the larger narrative. The theological constructs from the literature convey the enormity of God through the joyous laughter and unity of the Trinity. The entrance of evil against the backdrop of creation, culminating in the human formation reveals the Divine image and glory implanted within every human being. The Fall exposes Lucifer's detestation of God, His decimation upon creation and the human heart, and the impact upon the *Imago Dei* upon God's children. Yaweh's intentions are revealed through the mission of rescue and redemption. Jesus comes as God in the flesh to invade the kingdom of darkness and to set the captives free, revealing the heart of God and His intentions toward humankind.

The integration of biblical and theological constructs support the mission of God and, therefore, His church, in seeking the lost, attending compassionately to the wounded, and cooperating in His mission of healing and restoration through reconciliation and healing of the human heart.

Understanding and considering the characteristics of trauma survivors must be factored into any attempt to serve and redeem the alienated and brokenhearted. As trauma survivors experience the world differently than those unaffected by desecrating loss, their tendencies toward self-protection must be seen and interpreted with both compassion and

understanding. The biological, psychological, and spiritual implications of trauma upon the human heart can serve as a catalyst for designing an effective strategy to minister to this population.

As the characteristics of trauma survivors are considered within the context of the church's mission, the strategy toward preaching the Gospel most effectively can be facilitated with sensitivity, without compromising an orthodox doctrine. Creating a foundational and supportive platform through a community that approaches sanctification through first learning to belong (tolerance, encouragement, honesty), followed by enhancing the potential for believing (teaching, challenging, modeling), and, ultimately, shaping behavior that emanates from a restored heart is essential to building and sustaining the mission. Secondly, using trauma-informed techniques to communicate effectively to this population will enhance the efficacy in reaching this population through impactful preaching of the Good News of the Gospel.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY FOR THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

The methodology chapter will provide a detailed description of the project design; instrumentation; and participant selection process, including criteria for inclusion in the project. The research questions will be restated to assist with providing the reader with context and purpose.

This design required a full review and approval by the Institutional Review Board. Ethical considerations for this study were also addressed, as working with trauma survivors required additional oversight for this vulnerable population.

The project's instrumentation (using empirically validated surveys), along with the researcher-designed participant questionnaire (TIS), will be explained in detail. Data collection, synthesis, scoring, and triangulation methods, followed by a thorough analyses, will conclude this chapter.

Nature and Purpose of the Project

The purpose of the ministry transformation project was to pilot a sermon series designed to help evaluate the preaching effectiveness of a trauma-informed Gospel message, delivered within a culturally sensitive setting and measured through the affective, attitudinal, social, and spiritual health changes in participants attending a church-sponsored symposium. The symposium was delivered through a six-session, trauma-informed sermon series at The Vail Church in Edwards, Colorado.

Trauma Survivors were identified using the PCL-C, a validated screening tool used by the Veterans Administration. The civilian version of the tool was applied in this setting to provide greater validity through generalizability.

The PCL-C survey was administered to study participants recruited from the local community and within The Vail Church membership. This quantitative measurement survey was scored to determine if a participant was a trauma survivor, distinguishing them from someone who may have experienced a sacred, or desecrating, loss without the negative and recurring impact that PTSD symptomology can have upon a trauma survivor. As mentioned in Chapter 1, those scoring greater than 50 on this survey were considered trauma survivors for the purposes of this study. (The distinction between these study participants meeting and not meeting these criteria is also addressed within the study results.)

An analysis of the percentage of people participating in the project was compared to the percentage of those who met the screening criteria for PTSD, or trauma survivor. This will be stated as “__#, or __% of participants met the criteria for trauma survivor.” An additional analysis was performed upon those who met the target study group (Trauma Survivor) by comparing the percentage who participated against those who completed the study. This will be stated as “___#, or __% of the identified trauma survivors completed the study.”

Finally, a triangulation was made across the Post-Traumatic Growth Inventory (PTGI) pre-/post-test results and the researcher-designed questionnaire (Trauma-Informed Survey [TIS]) to determine any correlation in score changes that may have been

affected by the qualities of the sermon delivery and setting. Figure 3.1 provides an illustration of this approach:

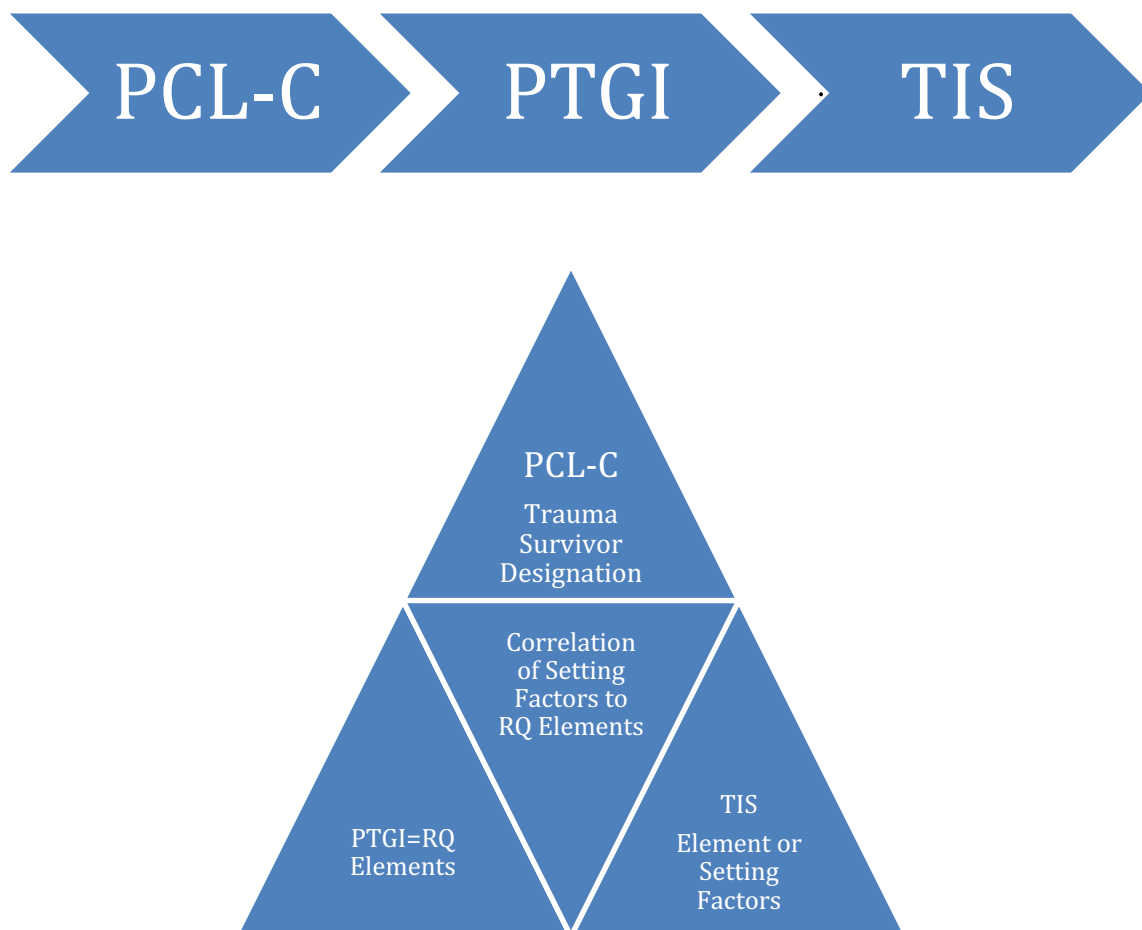


Figure 3.1. Study triangulation.

Research Questions

Research Question #1. What were the affective, attitudinal, social, and spiritual health indicators of the study participants prior to the preaching series?

The PTGI was used to measure the participant's affective, attitudinal, social, and spiritual health indicators (as identified within the research question) at pre-intervention and again at post-intervention. For purposes of analyses, these are referred to as RQ

Elements. The RQ Elements were cross-referenced with the Element Factor from the instrumentation tool of the PTGI, as illustrated in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1. RQ Elements Cross-Referenced with PTGI Element Factor

RQ Element	PTGI Question #	Element Factor from PTGI	Factor #
Affective	1, 2, 13	Appreciation of Life	V
Attitudinal	3, 7, 11, 14, 17	New Possibilities	II
	4, 10, 12, 19	Personal Strength	III
Social	9, 15, 16, 20, 21	Relating to Others	I
Spiritual Health	5, 18	Spiritual Change	IV

Research Question #2. What changes occurred in the affective, attitudinal, social, and spiritual health indicators of the study participants after the preaching series?

The PTGI was also administered as the post-intervention measurement. Refer to Table 3.1 for a description of the association of RQ Elements and specific PTGI questions.

The pre- and post-tests were compared both individually and aggregately to detect individual and aggregate changes in the PTGI scoring. These data determine the correlation and level of effectiveness of the intervention, as indicated by an anticipated increase in the scores, which points toward an improvement within the RQ Elements, or research question indicators of measurement (affective, attitudinal, spiritual, social).

Research Question #3. What elements of the sermon design, delivery, and worship setting assisted the study participants with any positive changes in their affective, attitudinal, social, and spiritual health indicators?

A researcher-designed tool (TIS Response Questionnaire) was used to capture data from the participants' perceived experience and the setting (Appendix A, "TIS Response Questionnaire") and was put through an expert review process. Input from the expert review team provided the direction for editing the final product.

The purpose of this tool was to identify elements of the perceived participant experiences, as well as what participants believed contributed or detracted from the quality of the experience. The TIS correlated the following questions with seven contextual elements of the sermon series, as follows in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2. TIS/Setting Element Correlation

TIS Question #	Setting Element
4	Worship
5, 6	Sermon
9, 10	Gathering
7, 8	Integration of Experience
1	Safety
2	Educational
3	Application/Utilitarian/Pragmatic

Finally, the results of the TIS response questionnaire were compared with the PTGI post-test results. The purpose of this was to correlate the contextual elements of the sermon series setting elements with any changes in the RQ Element scores, as determined

by the data from the PTGI post-test. This helped identify the influential factors of the setting and the sermon components that drove the anticipated, positive changes in the PTGI post-test scores. It is within these measurements and concurrent analysis that the effectiveness of the trauma-informed preaching series can best be determined. The triangulation process is further illustrated in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3. TIS Comparison with PTGI Post-Test Results

TIS Question #	Setting Element	RQ Element	Element Factor from Post-PTGI
4	Worship	Affective	Appreciation of Life
5, 6	Sermon	Attitudinal	New Possibilities Personal Strength
9, 10	Gathering	Social	Relating to Others
7, 8	Integration of Experience	Spiritual Health	Spiritual Change
1	Safety		
2	Educational		
3	Application/Utilitarian/Pragmatic		

Ministry Context

The Vail Church is located in Eagle-Vail, Colorado. This is a small, unincorporated section of the Eagle Valley, where a long series of uninterrupted, ski resort facilities, retail outlets, and dense housing units compose a 20-mile sector of U.S. Interstate 70. Eagle County has approximately 55,000 year-round residents, with a transient population that swells to 650,000 during seasonal peaks, such as ski season, which annually runs late November through Easter (U.S. Census Bureau).

There is a typical socio-economic disparity that can be associated with resort communities, where a large number of people work in service industries at wages that are

below sustainability for the cost-of-living drivers found in these settings. Housing is very expensive, and many people hold more than one job to make ends meet. At the other end of the spectrum, second and third homeowners represent an influential part of the population. These are affluent people, such as highly successful entrepreneurs, retired corporate executives, professional athletes (highly acclaimed professional competitive skier Lindsay Vonn resides there), and others who often split their occupancy between large, metropolitan centers (Dallas, Texas, seems to predominate) and what is referred to as “Happy Valley” or “Vail Valley.”

Vail Church serves many of these affluent people who can be found in the seasonal membership roles of the church. The church is independent, charismatic, and what can be described as conservative evangelical. Vail Bible Church was founded in 1982 by Rich Teeters. Craig Smith has been the Lead Pastor since May 2006. The church currently sees between 500 to 600 adults on Sundays and an average of 100 children. A description from the church website provides an additional and brief overview of its characteristics:

We are a non-denominational, Bible-centered, elder-governed, staff-led and people-empowered church that has the privilege of serving people from all over the world who come to experience this beautiful place called the Vail Valley. As such, you will find a very diverse group of people in age, stage-of-life, spiritual background, and maturity. We love the fact that on any given Sunday there are people who range from the skeptical to the exploring to the committed. Though our preaching is unapologetically Bible-centered, we strive to do so in a way that is both fully accurate and yet personally relevant and practical. You might find us working through a book of the Bible verse-by-verse or a topical series in Scripture that addresses the many practical issues we face in our spiritual lives. (The Vail Church, “Who We Are” 2nd paragraph)

The church provides a welcoming atmosphere for attendees at almost any phase of their spiritual exploration. There is a strong sense of conservative fidelity to the Gospel that is blended with an essence of grace and compassion. While it does not appear to be

driven by “seeker-friendly” dynamics, there is a solid structure that shapes the direction and messaging of each service while allowing for room to explore all aspects of both the service and the overall message of the Gospel. It appears to hold fidelity and the existential space to accommodate an individual’s ambivalence in the same grasp.

Christian discipleship is also strongly emphasized through preaching, education, and small group participation. The website section under the title “Beliefs” provides insights into the beliefs and culture of the church:

We will accept into our body those who have differing views on the non-essential doctrines but will not allow those of a different opinion to fracture the church. While we celebrate diversity along all lines (racial and theological), we will ultimately pursue the unity of the church. The heart of our church embraces the call of the early reforms when they scribed: “In Essentials Unity, In Non-Essentials Liberty, In All Things Charity.” (The Vail Church, “Beliefs” 10th paragraph)

The researcher was on a temporary, vocational, contractual assignment to this area and attended this church as part of his own desire to connect with a community of Christians who held similar values and worship practices. As such, this provided the opportunity to build relationships and created a context in which the senior pastor could be approached and the researcher’s quest for the research project presented.

Vail Church holds classes in the Fall, Summer, and Spring for topical issues that promote Christian discipleship, spiritual growth, and personal edification. These classes are titled “Thrive” and are held on Monday evenings, generally from 6:00 to 7:30. This is a standing segment on the church’s annual calendar. The promotion and variety of topics draw people from both inside and outside of the church’s membership. Childcare is provided, and the use of various gathering areas allows for segregation of the classrooms, while access to the full kitchen and bathroom facilities allows for comfort and

accommodation. Technical resources are also available. In short, the church setting was suitable to the needs of this project. The pilot sermon series was held in what is called the loft, an approximately 800 square-foot, multi-use room with ample seating, adjustable lighting, sound system, and video projection capability. This made for an ideal location and setting for the project, which was scheduled for implementation from September 9, 2019, to October 14, 2019.

Participants

Criteria for Selection

A symposium titled, “Where are You God? Finding God in the Tragedy of Life” was marketed internally and externally of the church. The Vail Church membership was invited to participate via church membership medium communications (service announcements, email, bulletin, and lead pastor sermons). The local community at-large was invited through the distribution of printed fliers, website postings, Twitter, and Facebook.

The pilot study was focused upon adults who have experienced trauma in their lives to the degree that the trauma has altered their perceptions of themselves and their worldview. This also encompassed examining the differences between those designated as trauma survivor and those who were not. The distinction and designation of the Trauma Survivors were identified using the PCL-C, a screening tool used by the Veterans Administration. The derived civilian version was applied in this setting to provide greater validity through generalizability.

Description of Participants

Demographic information was collected through the Informed Consent process and gathered across nine (9) data points. This included Age, Gender, Relationship Status, Ethnicity, Religious Identity, Level of Education, Student Status, Employment Status, and exposure to any prior counseling (per Institutional Review Board recommendations).

The project was marketed as a “Trauma Symposium” (See Appendix C, “Study Flier”), and a registration was set up on the church website, as directed from the marketing material.

The registration provided information on the symposium topic, location, and time and was provided at no charge. This registration location also served for notification of the event as a research project and provided directions for participants to engage if they desired. Those interested were provided a link to the research webpage (www.tragedyandhealing.com). This research webpage provided an overview of the project and a link to informed consent. Once informed consent was completed, a unique identifier was generated, and the participant could engage in the screening, testing, and survey forms.

Nineteen people registered; four people consented for the study, and attendance occurred as follows:

- Session #1=17
- Session #2=20
- Session #3=6
- Session #4=16
- Session #5=12

- Session #6=6

Ethical Considerations

As described above, an Informed Consent form was provided for the participant at the onset of his or her involvement in the study (See Appendix C, “Informed Consent”).

Confidentiality was ensured through four mechanisms. First, the participant agreement was embedded within the Informed Consent agreement:

Confidentiality is important, and we will honor your privacy as a participant in this study. You may recognize other participants in the study. We ask that you not reveal anyone else’s name, or anything else about their participation in the sessions. If anyone else is given information about you, they will not know your name. Instead, for research purposes, a number or initials will be used instead of your name. There will be no recording devices or any other research assistants involved in the study. However, you may occasionally see a staff member or volunteer who assists with set up, technology or other logistical needs. Anyone involved in this effort have also signed a confidentiality statement, agreeing to not identify any of the participants that they may see while performing assistance to the sessions.

By signing this consent, you also agree to not share any information about others participation in the sessions. The only limitation to confidentiality is in the unlikely event that there is a clear threat of harm to self or others. The researcher will work to ensure a safe and sacred space for everyone participating in the study.

Second, the research assistant signed a confidentiality agreement (see Appendix C, “Confidentiality Agreement Form”). Third, the setting and timing for the intervention ensured privacy and confidentiality. The intervention was held on early Monday evenings, a time that falls outside of the higher intensity traffic of Sunday worship services. The discreet setting of the church known as the loft was used to allow for enhanced privacy. It is an intimate and quiet location on the second floor of the main building and is positioned at the end of a corridor. Finally, the research team made every effort to maintain anonymity. Participants were given a link to the online participation system via promotional materials that led to the Participant Invitation (see Appendix C,

“Participant Invitation”). Participation in the study was voluntary, in that all were welcome to attend the six sessions, regardless if they chose to enroll in the study. The volunteer participant used his or her email address, which created a distinct user profile for the system. The online system created an internal unique identifier code (UI) for the participant. The online participation mechanisms blinded the researcher to participant identifying information, including the email and IP address of the user. Interactive user forms for Informed Consent, Demographics PTSD Screening Checklist, Pre- and Post-Traumatic Growth Survey, and the Trauma-Informed Response Questionnaire were provided through the secure and confidential link to an encrypted website (www.tragedyandhealing.com), where participant identification was again limited to a UI. The UI was coded to keep the participant information confidential, blinding the researcher and technical associates to any identifying characteristics of the participant.

Finally, the PCL-C and PTGI forms were edited to include an opt-out feature when answering questions. This removed the forced choice aspect of the questionnaire to create greater autonomy for the participant.

Instrumentation

Three instruments were used to collect data for this research. These include the civilian version of the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Checklist (PCL-C), the Post-Traumatic Growth Inventory (PTGI), and a researcher-designed Trauma-Informed Survey (TIS). The first instrument, the PCL-C, is a 17-item self-report checklist of PTSD symptoms based closely on the DSM-IV criteria. (See Appendix A.) Respondents rate each item from 1 (“not at all”) to 5 (“extremely”) to indicate the degree to which they have been bothered by a particular symptom over the past month. Total possible scores

range from 17 to 85. Weathers et al. recommend a cut-off score of 50 as optimal for indicating a probable diagnosis of combat-related PTSD. An alternative strategy is to use individual items according to the DSM criteria (at least one symptom from items 1 - 5, at least three from items 6 - 12, and at least two from items 13 - 17). A cut-off score of 3 or more for each item is most appropriate for this approach (International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies). The researcher used the cut-off score of ≥ 50 to determine participant selection. The PCL was developed by the United States Veterans Administration and, as such, is approved for public use without express written consent. The researcher exercised these rights for the purpose of this study.

The second instrument, the PTGI (see Appendix A), was used to measure participant baseline (pre-intervention) and response (post-intervention) indicators identified within the research questions. The PTGI is scored by adding all the responses. Individual factors are scored by adding responses to items on each factor. PTGI factors are indicated by Roman numerals after each item below; items to which factors belong are not listed on the form administered to clients: Factor I: Relating to Others; Factor II: New Possibilities; Factor III: Personal Strength; Factor IV: Spiritual Change; and Factor V: Appreciation of Life.

The development of the PTGI assesses positive outcomes reported by persons who have experienced traumatic events. This 21-item scale includes factors of New Possibilities, Relating to Others, Personal Strength, Spiritual Change, and Appreciation of Life. Women tend to report more benefits than do men, and persons who have experienced traumatic events report more positive change than do persons who have not experienced extraordinary events. The PTGI is modestly related to optimism and extraversion. The scale appears to have utility in determining how successful those individuals coping with the aftermath of trauma are in reconstructing or strengthening their perceptions of self, others, and the meaning of events. (Tedeschi and Calhoun 455)

The third instrument used was the TIS response questionnaire. The TIS is a researcher-designed questionnaire with edits made based on input acquired from subject experts. The tool comprises 10 questions. The first four questions (#1-4) use a Likert scale to measure participant response to close-ended questions. The next six questions are open-ended, seeking input on the elements of the setting (#9-10), the participant's unique experiences (thoughts, feelings; #5-6), and any pragmatic applications from the sermon series experience (#7-8).

A demographic questionnaire was embedded within the informed consent form (see Appendix C, "Informed Consent"). Demographic information was triangulated for qualitative purposes and is located within the results section of this publication.

Pilot Test

A pilot test was undertaken by volunteers outside of the project to help provide insight into and refinement of the participant web portal and the associated survey tools, including the researcher-designed instrument (TIS response questionnaire). Eleven (11) people were invited to test the system, including the dissertation coach from Asbury Theological Seminary (Professor of Counseling) and a Professor of Sociology from the College of Charleston (South Carolina). Feedback was obtained, and the entries were reviewed for accuracy. Small adjustments to the forms were made as indicated (for example, one form had a duplicate question). No data from this pilot test were included within the results.

The TIS response questionnaire was further refined with input through an expert review process. The questionnaire was provided to two PhD professors and one DMIN professor, all were faculty of Asbury Theological Seminary. Two of these experts work

in the Doctor of Ministry program, while the other works in the Department of Counseling. All of the experts are tenured in their respective disciplines and possess extensive experience in designing and consulting with dissertation projects.

The expert review process included the following actions. First, a formal letter was constructed by the researcher and provided to the select expert panel requesting assistance with the project. Second, the correspondence included an overview of the problem, purpose, and questions associated with the research project. Third, the TIS response questionnaire was provided, along with a grid to allow for expert input into each survey question; a sample of this process and feedback is provided in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4. Question #1 Expert Evaluation (Sample)

I felt safe in this setting		
Evaluation of Question #1		
1. ___ Needed 2. ___ Not needed	a. ___ Clear b. ___ Unclear	Suggestions to clarify: the question I have, Jeff, is are you talking about 1 worship service or several? You mention a sermon series, so that means this tool will be distributed after every week OR you revise the questions to it accounts for the accumulative nature of “the experience.”

The actions taken as a direct result of the expert review process are as follows: First, the researcher changed the language in questions #2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 to help bring clarity and precision to the queries. This changed the contextual reference of experience to sermon series so as to include the entire experience as a frame of reference for purposes of a more accurate response. Second, the researcher added a “Feelings Wheel” (see Appendix A, “TIS Response Questionnaire”) as a resource for answering Question #6, “What emotions, or feelings would you use to describe your experience? ”

This was done in consideration of the participant who may need assistance in expanding their emotional vocabulary, which is a common circumstance for many trauma survivors.

Reliability and Validity of Project Design

The focus of the project was to identify the impact of a trauma-informed Gospel message upon the trauma survivor and to explore any differences from this experience between those designated as trauma survivor and those who were not. The first step in determining the appropriate participant required the accurate designation of the participant as a trauma survivor. This was critical to support the validity of the study.

The PCL-C is an empirically valid tool used to identify adults who have experienced traumatic events in their lives to the extent that it has manifested a probable diagnosis of PTSD. The tool possesses a statistically significant validity and correlative reliability rating:

The PCL has demonstrated strong psychometric properties. Estimates of internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) range between .94 (Blanchard et al, 1996) to .97 (Weathers et al. 1993). Test-retest reliability has been reported as .96 at 2-3 days and .88 at 1 week (Blanchard et al.,1996; Ruggiero et al.,2003). The PCL correlates positively with the Mississippi PTSD Scale with convergent validity of between $r = .85$ and $.93$ (Weathers et al, 1993). Strong correlations have also been reported with MMPI-2 Keane PTSD Scale (.77), IES (.77-.90) and CAPS .92 (Blanchard et. al., 1996). A cutoff score of 50 for a PTSD diagnosis has demonstrated good sensitivity (.78 to .82) and specificity (.83 to .86). Lowering the cutoff score to 44 revealed better sensitivity (.94), specificity (.86) and overall diagnostic efficiency (.90) with MVA victims (Blanchard et. al., 1996). (International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies)

The next step in the design process was to identify a valid and reliable tool to measure the impact of the independent variable (the trauma-informed sermon series) upon the participant's attitudinal, affective, social, and spiritual health indicators (the dependent variables). This was essential to validating that the research tools aligned with the study's purpose and the accompanying research questions.

The PTGI was selected for this purpose. It is “an instrument [used] for assessing positive outcomes reported by persons who have experienced traumatic events” (Tedeschi and Calhoun 455). The tool was used as a pre-test to establish a baseline and a post-test to measure change.

The Tedeschi and Calhoun study revealed that the PTGI held a .94 internal consistency rating when compared with persons who had not experienced traumatic events. The study concluded that “[t]he scale appears to have utility in determining how successful individuals, coping with the aftermath of trauma, are in restricting or strengthening their perceptions of self, others and the meaning of events” (455). Given these results, the researcher was confident that this would be a reliable tool for measuring the participant’s response to the intervention.

A researcher-designed questionnaire (TIS) was used in the study to capture qualitative and quantitative data. A mix of closed- and open-ended questions were included. The purpose of this was to identify the comprehensive components of the sermon series that positively impacted the participant’s experience.

The TIS has 10 questions. The first four questions (#1-4) use a Likert scale to measure the response to closed-ended questions (sense of safety, sermon information, effects of multimedia, and impact of worship). The next six questions are open-ended, seeking input on the elements of the setting (#9-10), the participant’s unique experiences (thoughts, feelings; #5-6), and any pragmatic applications from the sermon series experience (#7-8) (see Appendix A, “TIS Response Questionnaire”).

An encrypted and secure online portal was designed and implemented to facilitate the interaction between the research project and the participant. The portal included the

Invitation to Participate, Informed Consent, PCL-C, PTGI pre- and post-tests, and the TIS response questionnaire. Additional resources embedded in this portal included a feelings wheel (part of the TIS) and additional counseling resources within the community (see Appendix C, “Informed Consent”).

Data Collection

The project used an intervention design with a mixed methodology, which is the “use of quantitative and qualitative methods in a single study or series of studies” (Tariq and Woodman 1). As Shema Tariq and Jenny Woodman note, “The most widely accepted definition of mixed methods research is research that ‘focuses on collecting, analysing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or a series of studies’” (2). In the current study, the mixed methodology instrumentation used a methodological triangulation approach. Tim Sensing describes this approach to analyses as “the use of multiple methods to study a single problem or program, such as interviews, observations, questionnaires, and documents” (74). Given this study’s use of both qualitative and quantitative techniques, Sensing considers this to be the best rationale for design (74).

The quantitative data were captured through the PTGI; qualitative data were captured using the researcher-designed TIS questionnaire. Irving Seidman suggests that, when using qualitative research techniques, questionnaires should include open-ended questions: “An open-ended question, unlike a leading question, establishes the territory to be explored while allowing the participant to take any direction he or she wants. It does not presume an answer” (84). Close-ended questions were used in the TIS to improve the reliability of the instrument with a Likert scale rating (questions #1-4). Open-ended

questions were designed and included in this questionnaire (questions #6-10) to reduce researcher bias and to more accurately assess the subjective response of the participant.

The project followed a multi-step, post-design process to completion. The study began with the selection of an appropriate site. The researcher identified four potential locations within which to hold the trauma-informed worship experience. The sites had to meet the following criteria: leadership interest and support of the project; adequate volume of potential participants for recruitment (≥ 75); and adequate meeting space for technology, size, privacy, and accessibility. Site representatives were contacted by the researcher. The project requirements were discussed in detail, and site responsibilities were enumerated. Two sites declined to participate. Of the remaining two sites, The Vail Church (Eagle-Vail, Colorado) was selected by the researcher to be the location for the trauma-informed worship services.

An invitation to participate in the study was then provided through several mechanisms. This included a video message created by the researcher and edited for time. The message was played within the video announcements segment of the worship service. The online registration section for the symposium also displayed the Invitation to Participate form. During the opening phase of the seminar, the researcher announced that this was also a research project and supplied a hard copy with other printed resource materials at each session (see Appendix C, "Participant Invitation"). Additionally, printed fliers were developed and posted (approximately 25) at various locations around the community where people outside of the church would have the opportunity to respond. This included bus stops and coffee shops around town (see Appendix C, "Study Flier").

Next, an online portal was designed and established for participant accessibility to the relevant forms, tests, surveys, and questionnaire. The researcher contracted with a web design team to build out a system that the volunteer study candidates would access through a link provided to them after the invitation was provided and accepted. Candidates for the study then accessed the web portal and were assigned a UI that blinded the researcher to the IP address and email recovery information. The participant reviewed the Informed Consent and provided electronic acknowledgement of the information before moving on to the demographic section.

After completing the Informed Consent and demographic section, the candidate moved to the PCL-C page of the online portal. This screening was the determinant for identifying the target population designation of “Trauma Survivor,” which could thereby be used to evaluate the final scores and results of the intervention. A score of 50 or greater would identify who became participants for purposes of the research analysis and effectiveness determination. Next, the PTGI pre-test was provided for participant completion.

Following this, participant orientation and the sermon series intervention were held. A brief orientation was provided during the first session to discuss the purpose, process, and expectations of the intervention. The sermon setting was prepared in accordance with the research derived from the literature review, which informed the researcher about preferential learning environments for trauma survivors. This included ample spacing of chairs; adequate, but not overtly bright, lighting; a gathering area with light refreshments; and background (subdued) music, all themed toward positive and encouraging messaging (see Appendix B, “Music and Video Clip List”).

The six sermons, or messages, were delivered over a period of six weeks. Each sermon was held Monday evening from 6:00 -7:30 (see Appendix B). A welcoming invitation was provided at the start of each message, along with a brief review of the prior sermon topic and a re-orientation of what to expect in each approaching session. The researcher used a subtle, scanning motion to make direct eye contact with the entire room of participants. Voice projection was gentle, but clear. There was no use of amplification technology. Tone was modulated to provide variation in pitch (avoiding deep monotone, odd inflections, or loud proclamations), while maintaining a casual and approachable posture. The researcher moved from behind a thin podium (which served to hold sermon/messaging notes) several times throughout each message and spoke in both conversational and lecturing approaches. Notes were read directly from scripture or other lengthy references. However, constant eye contact and room-scanning techniques were applied throughout the messaging to enhance accessibility to the researcher, vulnerability of the researcher, and authenticity of the messenger.

Each session ended with a handout and subsequent overhead PowerPoint listing relevant reflection questions designed to gather insight into the evening's sermon, with the exception of the final session (#6) (see Appendix B). Epic movie music (non-lyrical) accompanied the quiet time. Participants were instructed to take their time, reflect on the questions, were encouraged to write their answers on the sheet provided, and left quietly at their leisure. Attendees did not participate directly in song or worship. However, music was provided through YouTube videos prior to the start (10 minutes) of the session and during question/reflection time. The Eucharist was offered at the last two sessions (#5 and #6). The Holy Eucharist was facilitated with fresh bread and grape juice; after being

blessed by the researcher, the Eucharist was offered through the process of intinction. Eucharist and question/reflection songs were selected from a menu of contemporary Christian worship music on YouTube. Songs with accompanying video/pictures were also used to allow for contemplation and enhance messaging without direct participant engagement. A five-minute covenant of silence followed the end of the Eucharist, with soft, intimate worship music playing overhead. The session was dismissed with an encouraging/personal blessing over the participants.

Following the intervention, participants were given access to the online PTGI post-test. After completing the PTGI post-test, participants were finally directed to the TIS response questionnaire.

Data Analysis

The participant testing data were captured within the web portal database and classified for retrieval, as illustrated in Figure 3.2. Accessing the specific form and embedded data required opening the desired form, where participant data could be retrieved and exported to an Excel spreadsheet. The initial pilot testing data performed by volunteers in advance of the intervention were removed by eliminating the entries by date. Only data from new UIs entered after the start of the study announcement (September 1, 2019) were used, as this eliminated entries that were used for the pilot test. The actual study participants were then identified, and the data were aligned by participant ID with their unique responses from the questionnaires. This process was completed for all of the testing forms (Demographic, PCL-C, PTGI pre/-post-tests, and the TIS questionnaire).

The screenshot shows a WordPress admin page for 'Forms'. A sidebar on the left contains navigation links: Media, Forms (selected), New Form, Entries, User Registration, Settings, Import/Export, Add-Ons, System Status, Help, Pending Registrations, Pages, Comments, Testimonials, Services, Portfolio, Appearance, Plugins (1), Users, and Tools. The main content area displays a table of forms with the following data:

Title	ID	Entries	Views	Conversion
Check Email	11	14	1010	1.4%
Complete this Checklist	2	13	66	19.7%
Demographic	4	5	120	4.2%
Final Questionnaire	7	1	107	0.9%
Informed Consent	1	5	1098	0.5%
POST PTGI	10	1	13	7.7%
PRE PTGI	5	4	74	5.4%

Figure 3.2. Classification of participant testing data in web portal database.

A master Excel spreadsheet was then created with individual tabs that held the specific test questions, responses, and scores (PCL-C). A Participation Tab was also included, which held quantitative information, such as the number of registrations, attendance, and completion rates. Qualitative data from researcher observation of participation acquired during the study were also included.

A quantitative measurement was used to determine the eligibility of the targeted participant (trauma survivor designation). The PCL-C produced an aggregate score; a candidate meeting or exceeding a score of 50 became a qualified participant for purposes of the study and data inclusion. A comparative analysis made using the PTGI Pre-/Post-tests determined if there was any impact upon the eligible participant from the sermon series intervention. This was evidenced by any change in score from the pre-test question to the post-test question. These changes were then compared and triangulated against the setting and RQ Elements that were embedded in the questions and responses from the

TIS questionnaire. Table 3.5 is a screenshot of the crosswalk used for the triangulation method.

Table 3.5. Crosswalk of TIS Questionnaire and PTGI Post-Test Methodology

TIS Question #	Setting Element	RQ Element	Element Factor from Post-PTGI	Change +/-	Factor #	Researcher Descriptor
4	Worship	Affective	Appreciation of Life		V	Gratitude
5, 6	Sermon	Attitudinal	New Possibilities		II	Hope
			Personal Strength		III	Confidence
9, 10	Gathering	Social	Relating to Others		I	Belonging
7, 8	Integration of Experience	Spiritual Health	Spiritual Change		IV	Intimacy
1	Safety					
2	Educational					
3	Application/Utilitarian/Pragmatic					

Questions #1-4 of the TIS had to meet a score of 4 or better (agree, strongly agree) to be considered impactful to the participant's experience and, therefore, meaningful enough to be considered in the final analysis for recommendations.

Table 3.6 is a singular participant example of data compilation for the triangulation methodology. The study results endeavored to answer the foundational research question, "Did the trauma-informed sermon series positively impact the affective, attitudinal, social, and spiritual health indicators of the participants?" To arrive at this answer, the data needed to demonstrate that average (mean) positive, post-PTGI score changes in the RQ Elements (affective, attitudinal, social, and spiritual) correlated with the average (mean) positive score changes in the Setting elements.

Table 3.6. TIS Participant Response and Triangulation of Setting/RQ Elements

ID	
146	
Q1	I felt safe in this setting
Setting Element	Safety
RQ Element	N/A
Response	5
Q2	I found the sermon series content to be informative
Setting Element	Educational
RQ Element	N/A
Response	4
Q3	I found the video clips to be helpful in connecting the point of the sermon series
Setting Element	Application/Utilitarian/Pragmatic
RQ Element	N/A
Response	4
Q4	The worship music helped me connect with God
Setting Element	Worship
RQ Element	Affective
Response	3

The Setting elements (acquired from the TIS response questionnaire) that were identified as effective (≥ 4) were segregated for discussion in Chapter 5. Comparative analyses were performed against the change in the PTGI score and the RQ Element. Triangulation was then performed across the Setting elements of the TIS that were identified as effective (≥ 4) in questions #1-4, the post-PTGI change scores, and the Setting/RQ Elements to determine correlation levels of the trauma-informed sermon series effectiveness elements.

A qualitative approach was used in the TIS questionnaire for questions #5-10. As these questions required the participant to identify his or her subjective responses through an almost infinite selection of choices, the process required that a categorization of these responses be developed. The responses that could be objectively considered edifying

were categorized as positive; the responses that could be objectively considered unfavorable to the participant were categorized as negative. The responses that were categorized as “Positive” were assigned a quantitative value of 5 and were then included in the triangulation method, just as the qualitative questions were in questions #1-4. This method was applied to support a mathematical correlation application, which requires the use of quantitative data. Negative responses were segregated for discussion in Chapter 5. An example of this process is provided in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7. Example Correlation of RQ Elements and Setting Elements

PTGI Q#	Element Factor from Post-PTGI	Average (Mean) Post-PTGI Change +/-	TIS Q#	Setting Element	TIS Score (>4 or Positive Impact)	RQ Element	Correlation Yes/No
1, 2, 13	Appreciation of Life	2	4	Worship	5	Affective	Yes
			1	Safety	5	Affective	Yes
3, 7, 11, 14, 17	New Possibilities	1	5	Sermon	Pos=5	Attitudinal	Yes
4, 10, 12, 19	Personal Strength	1	6	Sermon	Pos=5	Attitudinal	Yes
			2	Educational*	N/A-did not meet threshold	Attitudinal	No
9, 15, 16, 20, 21	Relating to Others	3	9	Gathering	Pos=5	Social	Yes
			10	Gathering	Pos=5	Social	Yes
5, 18	Spiritual Change	4	7	Integration of Experience	Pos=5	Spiritual Health	Yes
			8	Integration of Experience	N/A-did not meet threshold	Spiritual Health	No
			3	Application/Utilitarian/Pragmatic	4	Spiritual Health	Yes

CHAPTER 4

EVIDENCE FOR THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

This chapter will address the findings from the current study. The problem that the project addressed is rooted within our contemporary, postmodern setting, which challenges the church to overcome the obstacles that arise in preaching the Gospel to adults who have been negatively impacted by significant trauma within their life experience. In an effort to pursue this objective, the ministry transformation project was designed to pilot a sermon series that would help evaluate the preaching effectiveness of a trauma-informed Gospel message. This message was delivered within a culturally sensitive setting and measured through the affective, attitudinal, social, and spiritual health changes in the identified participants attending a church-sponsored symposium, as delivered through a six-session, trauma-informed sermon series at The Vail Church in Edwards, Colorado.

Participants

The invitation to participate in the study was provided to the general public as part of the announcement for a symposium titled, “Where Are You God? Finding Meaning in the Tragedy of Life.” The announcements were conveyed through printed fliers (internal and external to the church); verbal, PowerPoint, and video announcements made within the worship service; and online (on the church website under “Events”). Persons interested in the symposium registered by accessing the Vail Church website and navigating the links to a registration page. Individuals indicated their willingness to volunteer for the study by accessing the study portal via links provided within the

registration process; study information was also provided at the symposium sessions via printed handouts.

This event was hosted by the Vail Church in Eagle-Vail, Colorado. A total of nineteen adults registered for the symposium. These registrants came from the local community and within the Vail Church membership. Of those 19 registrants, four individuals volunteered for the pilot study. Volunteers for the study accessed the research study's web portal and were automatically assigned a UI that blinded the researcher to the IP address and email recovery information. Assignment of this UI occurred internally within the web-based program upon enrollment in the study. The program internally tracked the registrant's unique ID number as the registrant signed in each time with his or her email address. This connected the participant to his or her own surveys across the study.

The four study volunteers reviewed the Informed Consent and provided electronic acknowledgement of the information before moving on to the demographic section. Completion of the demographic section then led to the survey section of the portal, which included the PCL-C and PTGI Pre-test.

Three of the four participants did not fully complete the study survey process, instead stopping at the initial phase of testing. Unfortunately, the three participants who did not complete the surveys included the only participant (N=1) who also met the criteria for designation as a trauma survivor, as based on the PCL-C. As mentioned in Chapter 1, participants scoring ≥ 50 on the PCL-C were considered trauma survivors for the purposes of this study. One participant completed all of the surveys, but this participant did not meet the criteria for PTSD.

The four study participants were composed of two males and two females. The mean age of participants was 46 years and four months. One-half (N=2) of the participants were married, one (N=1) was single, and one (N=1) was separated from his or her spouse. There were two proclaimed Catholics and two Protestants in the group. All participants had attended college, and three—or 75%—had acquired an undergraduate degree. All participants (100%) were working full-time jobs; 75% (N=3) had received counseling in the past for a stress-related event.

Regarding attendance at the six symposium sessions, only the total head count is reported in Table 4.1, as the study did not include a procedure for tracking attendance at the sermon series. This was intentional, as it provided greater anonymity to the participants. Therefore, the researcher did not know who, if any, of the 19 persons who registered or any of the four persons who volunteered to participate in the study were included in the head count. In summary, 19 individuals registered electronically for the study. Of those who registered, four proceeded to volunteer. Of those who volunteered, three did not complete the surveys, including the one individual who did meet the criteria for PTSD. One study volunteer completed all of the study surveys, but this individual did not meet the criteria for PTSD. Table 4.1 shows attendance by session and completion of study surveys.

Table 4.1. Overview of Participant Activity

Registration	19						
Attendance	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Session 4	Session 5	Session 6	
	17	20	6	16	12	6	
% of Registered	89.47%	105.26%	31.58%	84.21%	63.16%	31.58%	
Participant ID	Informed Consent	Demographics	PTSD Checklist	Pre-PTGI	Post-PTGI	TIS-Final Survey	PTSD Y/N
146	X	X	X	X	X	X	N
142	X	X	X	X			Y
138	X	X	X	X			N
134	X	X	X	X			N
Notes:	2 attended 1 st session at session 5 and did not register and did not participate in the study						

Figure 4.1 and Table 4.2 show the study demographic data. Due to the small number of study participants, the sample size was not sufficient to support a thorough analyses and synthesis of the data. This leaves the study inconclusive relative to any indications of a positive, neutral, or negative effect that the sermon and setting (independent variable) had upon the participants' attitudinal, affective, social, and spiritual health indicators.

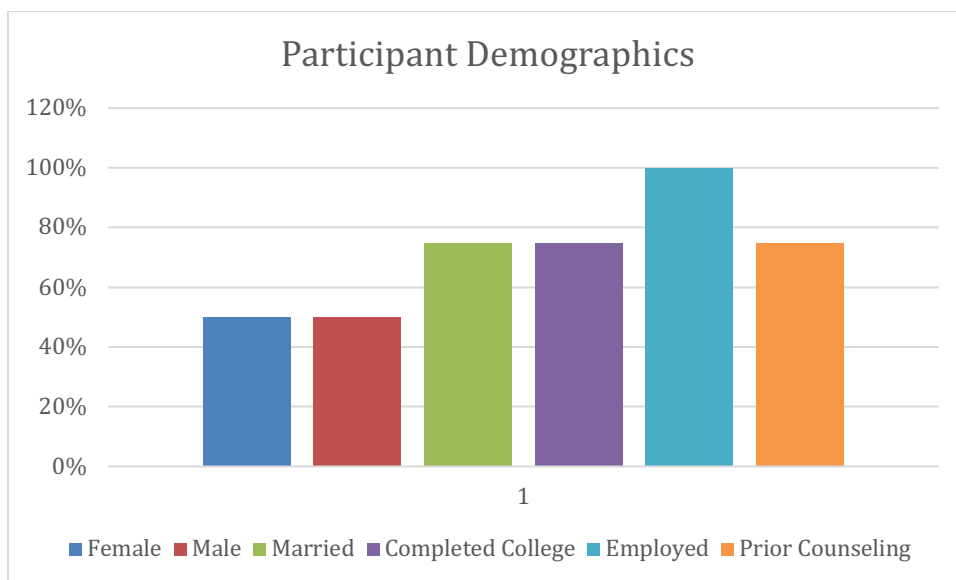


Figure 4.1. Participant demographics.

Table 4.2. Participant Demographic Data

ID	Age	Gender	Relationship Status	Ethnicity/Race/ National Origin	Religious Group	Highest Educ. Level	Student Status	Employment Status	Ever Received Counseling for Stressful Event
146	48	F	Married one time	Blended racial/ national heritage	Catholic	College freshman	Not enrolled	Full-time (35 hrs +/-week)	Yes
142	45	M	Separated	White	Protestant	BA/BS	Not enrolled	Full-time (35 hrs +/-week)	Yes
138	45	M	Single, never married	White	Protestant	BA/BS	Not enrolled	Full-time (35 hrs +/-week)	No
134	47	F	Married one time	White	Catholic	Master's student*	Not enrolled	Full-time (35 hrs +/-week)	Yes

**Probable incorrect answer—likely completed a BA/BS and is enrolled in a graduate program*

Research Question #1: Description of Evidence

Research Question #1: What were the affective, attitudinal, social, and spiritual health indicators of the study participants prior to the preaching series? (As measured by the PTGI Pre-tests)

This question addressed the affective, attitudinal, social, and spiritual health indicators of the study participants prior to the preaching series (as measured by the PTGI Pre-tests). The first step in this process was to distinguish the participant (trauma survivor) from non-trauma survivor, using the PCL-C. As discussed in Chapter 3, the PCL-C uses a five-point Likert scale and asks participants to review statements and to “read each one carefully, then circle one of the numbers to the right to indicate how much you have been bothered by that problem in the past month” (Weathers et al.).

The highest aggregate mean (3.5) and median (3.5) scores for all four participants occurred with the following two questions from the screening (PCL-C) tool:

- Question #8: Do you have trouble remembering important parts of a stressful experience from the past?
- Question #10: Do you feel distant or cut off from other people?

The mean average score on the PCL-C was 45.75. The single, trauma survivor participant who completed this portion of the surveys scored a 72 on the PCL-C, significantly exceeding the minimum threshold of 50 as indicating PTSD. Table 4.3 includes the PCL-C scores of the four participants.

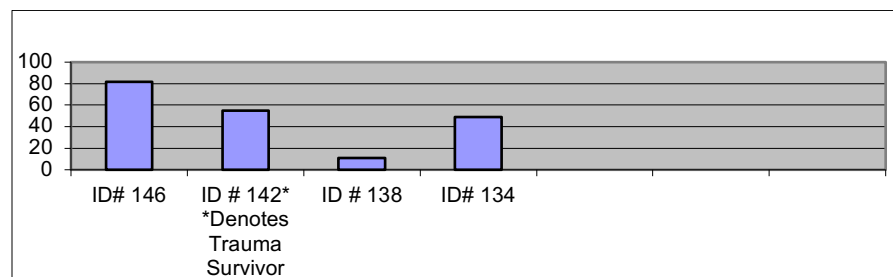
Table 4.3. Participant PCL-C Scores

PCL-C Scores				
ID	Age	Gender	Test Score	PTSD Y/N
146	48	F	42	N
142	45	M	72	Y
138	45	M	39	N
134	47	F	30	N

As previously mentioned, the only trauma survivor participant (Participant ID #142), did not complete the study. Only Participant ID #146 completed the study indicated in post-testing referencing.

The PTGI was administered as a pre- and a post-test. The PTGI uses a Likert scale to assess the respondents' perception to their lives after a traumatic event. The Likert scale produces a response rating from 0 - 5. The higher the number, the more positive the response (see Appendix A).

The overall PTGI scores ranged from 0 - 105. The pre-test scores for all study participants (N=4) ranged from 11 - 84. The pre-test score for the designated trauma survivor participant was 55. The pre-test score for the non-trauma survivor participant who completed the study was 84. The lowest pre-test score of all four participants was 11. See Figure 4.2 for the PTGI pre-test scores of all four participants.

**Figure 4.2. PTGI pre-test scores.**

The PTGI survey assumes that the respondent experienced a traumatic loss within his or her lived experience. If someone takes the survey who has not experienced a tragic loss, they may score low because the questions are relevant to the subjective experience of a tragic loss and, in this case, would not meaningfully apply. In essence, no loss equals no experience and, therefore, a low pre-test score. This may be what occurred with Participant #138, who had the second lowest PCL-C score; he went on to have the lowest PTGI pre-test score.

Therefore, the use of the PCL-C is critical to screening and matching trauma survivors to their relevant trauma experiences when using the PTGI survey for outcome measurements.

Alternatively, a respondent may have experienced a tragic loss and, at the time of the survey, had made no positive changes as a result of the experience.

Finally, a respondent may have made positive progress as a result of the experience. This would result in a high pre-test score.

The PTGI pre-test scores used in this pilot study were used as a baseline for PTGI post-test comparison. It is only within this comparative approach that a proper analysis can occur.

In sum, the four participants completed the PCL-C, and only one scored sufficiently to be designated as a trauma survivor. His score of 72 well exceeded the minimum score of 50. He went on to score a 55 out of 105 on the PTGI pre-test, the third highest of the four participants. A post-test comparison would demonstrate his response and any positive experiences received from intervention within the pilot study.

Research Question #2: Description of Evidence

Research Question # 2: What changes occurred in the affective, attitudinal, social, and spiritual health indicators of the study participants after the preaching series? (As measured by the PTGI Post-tests)

This question addressed the affective, attitudinal, social, and spiritual health indicators of study participants after the preaching series (as measured by the PTGI Post-tests).

The sole trauma survivor who completed the PTGI pre-test did not complete the PTGI post-test. Therefore, no conclusion can be drawn about the impact of the sermon series on post-traumatic growth for trauma survivors. A larger trauma survivor participant sample size (meets criteria for Trauma Survivor) would have generated average score changes across the element factors, which could then be compared and factored into a correlative analysis for both trauma survivors and those who were not designated as such. In this case, only a single participant (did not meet criteria for Trauma Survivor) post-intervention comparative score could be obtained.

Of the three non-trauma participants who completed the PTGI pre-test, only one completed the PTGI post-test. The post-test score for this single participant (N=1) increased (+1 point) across two (2) PTGI element factors. These elements were Appreciation of Life and New Possibilities. The post-test score dropped (-1 point) across three PTGI element factors, which included New Possibilities, Personal Strength, and Relating to Others. The Spiritual Change element factor showed no change. This produced a net change in the overall PTGI score of -3 points, as illustrated Table 4.4.

Table 4.4. PTGI Post-Test Score Comparison: Non-Trauma Participant

PTGI Question #	Element Factor from Post-PTGI	Post-PTGI Change +/-
1, *2, 13	Appreciation of Life	1
*3, 7, *11, *14, 17	New Possibilities	1, -1, -1
*4, *10, 12, 19	Personal Strength	-1, -1
*9, 15, 16, 20, 21	Relating to Others	-1
5, 18	Spiritual Change	0
		Net Change = -3

**Blue Question=increase, *Red Question=decrease*

The pilot test was designed to capture and provide a qualitative measurement in the participant's response to the sermon series. The positive experiences would be compared and scored between the PTGI pre- and post-tests and, ideally, would demonstrate an increase in the overall score change.

In this case study (N=1), the net score change of -3 would initially indicate that the participant regressed from pre- to post-test. That is, the participant did not make progress or positive changes as a result of the study, according to the PTGI comparison. This finding will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 5.

Research Question #3: Description of Evidence

Research Question #3: What elements of the sermon design, delivery, and worship setting assisted the study participants with any positive changes in their affective, attitudinal, social, and spiritual health indicators? (As informed by the TIS response questionnaire)

This question focused upon the elements of the sermon design, delivery, and worship setting that assisted the trauma survivor attendees with any positive changes in

their affective, attitudinal, social, and spiritual health indicators, as acquired through the TIS response questionnaire.

The last step in this process would be to perform a comparative analyses against the change in the PTGI score and the RQ Element. Triangulation would then be performed across the the Setting elements of the TIS that were identified as effective (≥ 4) in questions #1-4, the PTGI post-test change scores, and the Setting/RQ Elements to determine correlation levels of the trauma-informed sermon series effectiveness elements.

In this case, only a single participant (who did not meet the criteria for Trauma Survivor) comparative score was obtained. This participant's responses are presented in Table 4.5. The single participant rated the elements of Safety, Sermon, Gathering, and Integration as "Strongly Agree" when asked if these elements were helpful to the overall symposium experience. Some of the physical setting elements that were accommodated in this setting included soft lighting, regulated sound and temperature, and adequate spacing of the seating arrangements.

Table 4.5. Single Participant Triangulation Data Analyses Approach

PTGI Q#	Element Factor from Post-PTGI	Post-PTGI Change +/-	TIS Q#	Setting Element	TIS Score (>4 or Positive Impact)	RQ Element	Correlation Y/N
1, *2, 13	Appreciation of Life	1	4	Worship	3	Affective	N/A
			1	Safety	5	Affective	N/A
*3, 7, *11, *14, 17	New Possibilities	1, -1, -1	5	Sermon	5	Attitudinal	N/A
*4, *10, 12, 19	Personal Strength	-1, -1	6	Sermon	5	Attitudinal	N/A
			2	Educational	4	Attitudinal	N/A
*9, 15, 16, 20, 21	Relating to Others	-1	9	Gathering	5	Social	N/A
			10	Gathering	N/A-did not meet threshold	Social	N/A
5, 18	Spiritual Change	0	7	Integration of Experience	5	Spiritual Health	N/A
		Net Change = -3	8	Integration of Experience	5	Spiritual Health	N/A
			3	Application/ Utilitarian/ Pragmatic	4	Spiritual Health	N/A

*Blue Question=increase, Red Question=decrease

Summary of Major Findings

The pilot study accomplished the goals of creating and implementing a trauma-informed sermon series that could be held within a trauma-informed setting and applied to a group of adults with a prior experience of trauma. The participant sample size was too small for inferential statistical analysis or to provide thematic data. However, the findings have provided relevant material for consideration and pillars upon which to build a platform for conducting further research. In particular, the study found:

1. Recruitment, attendance, and participation in trauma-related studies can be challenging. Specifically, engaging this population within and outside the church membership seems to present challenges beyond the effectiveness of

traditional marketing campaigns. All four study participants were in their mid-to late-forties.

2. The pilot study was able to capture distinctions in the participants as either trauma survivors or not trauma survivors. The study was not designed to fully analyze the full spectrum of differential characteristics. However, there were some frequent connecting experiences between the two groups, as evidenced by the common, highest aggregate scores of two questions on the PCL-C, as reiterated below. The four study participants scored highest in the PCL-C questions related to: A) #8—Trouble remembering important parts of a stressful experience from the past and B) #10—Feeling distant or cut off from other people.
3. Implementation of the research design requires reconceptualization in order to increase sample size. Three of the four attendees (75%) did not complete the study.
4. Healing is not necessarily a linear, upward trajectory. Symptoms may increase instead of decreasing for a period of time as survivors reconceptualize the meaning of the event in light of the Gospel message. PTGI pre-test scores ranged from 11 - 84 out of a possible 105. The only trauma survivor scored 55, while the lowest score was 11. The only participant who completed the study scored 84 on the PTGI pre-test and 81 on the PTGI post-test, a drop of three (3) points.
5. The single participant who completed the study rated the elements of Safety, Sermon, Gathering, and Integration as “Strongly Agree” when asked on the

TIS response questionnaire if these elements were helpful to the overall
symposium experience.

Further implications from these findings will be addressed in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

LEARNING REPORT FOR THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

The problem that this project attempted to address is rooted within our contemporary, postmodern setting, which requires the church to overcome the obstacles that arise in preaching the Gospel to adults who have been negatively impacted by significant trauma within their life experience. In an effort to pursue this objective, the ministry transformation project was designed to evaluate the preaching effectiveness of a trauma-informed Gospel message. This message was delivered within a culturally sensitive setting and measured through the affective, attitudinal, social, and spiritual health changes in the study participants attending a church-sponsored symposium, delivered through a six-session, trauma-informed sermon series at The Vail Church in Edwards, Colorado.

This chapter will integrate the major themes (target population attributes and biblical/theological themes) from the Literature Review (Chapter 2) with the major findings of the project. Additionally, this chapter will offer recommendations for improving and moving the project from a pilot study toward a more comprehensive research study.

Major Findings

First Finding—The Challenge of Recruiting for Trauma-Related Studies

Recruitment, attendance, and participation in trauma-related studies can be challenging. Specifically, engaging this population within and outside the church

membership seems to present challenges beyond the effectiveness of traditional marketing campaigns.

The attendance for this symposium never exceeded 20 adults, thus casual observations were fairly easy to assess. All of the adults within the symposium appeared to be over 40 years of age, with the exception of two who appeared to be in their late 20s or early 30s. All four study participants were in their mid- to late-forties.

While the pilot study literature review did not specifically address the typical onset of age for PTSD manifestations within adult trauma survivors, this researcher's experience within the professional addiction counseling field has revealed that many adults begin to address these issues as they manifest themselves in middle adulthood, as well as in the middle years of the recovery process. Specifically, for the recovering community, years six-through nine of recovery are often the developmental timeframes wherein family of origin issues arise. PTSD manifestations often present as anxiety, depression, and existential identity crises that are rooted in obsolete, cognitive mandates and injunctions that interfere with normal relational and formational identity and integration (Miller and Gorski, Session 4.3).

The biblical and theological framework for this study supports the search for meaning that is propagated within a life's narrative, that is cultivated through nurture, is pruned in adversity, and is guided toward a full and robust integration of identity (J. Eldredge, *Waking*). God sets the course for our lives within a Divine plan and weaves all of our experiences—traumatic, terrific, and otherwise—into a cohesive narrative that engages tension and desire toward seeking and responding to our humanistic needs for a divine romance. The smaller story of the individual's life collides within the larger story

of the Gospel (God's relentless search and rescue of the human heart) in regeneration and restoration (Willard).

Adults in western culture often, and predictably, experience a mid-life crisis, whereby they assess the second half of their lives against the accomplishments, failures, desires, and losses of their histories. Trauma survivors and those impacted by desecrating loss will often mirror this experience at the mid-life juncture, asking the same questions in their search for meaning from the tragedy or tragedies that have influenced their lived experiences (Allender, *Wounded*). It is within this tension that the Gospel message finds a fertile heart in which to sow the seeds of hope, healing, and encouragement.

Second Finding—Similarities between Trauma Survivors and Those Who Are Not Trauma Survivors

The purpose of using the PCL-C in the pilot study was not to diagnose trauma survivors with PTSD. Instead, the PCL-C illustrates the accompanying symptomology of PTSD and was used to distinguish people who had experienced sacred or desecrating losses in their lives from those who had a traumatic experience. The trauma survivor—that is, one who has had a traumatic experience—has been impacted to a degree that they still mirror active symptoms of PTSD.

Characteristics of trauma survivors include:

- “Repeated, disturbing dreams of a stressful experience from the past”;
- “Suddenly acting or feeling as if a stressful experience were happening again (as if reliving it)”;
- “Feeling very upset when reminded of a stressful experience from the past”;

- “Having physical reactions (e.g., heart pounding, trouble breathing, or sweating) when reminded of a stressful experience from the past”;
- “Avoiding activities or situations because they remind the victim of a stressful experience from the past”;
- “Loss of interest in things that used to be enjoyed”;
- “Feeling distant or cut off from other people”;
- “Feeling emotionally numb or being unable to have loving feelings for those close to the victim”;
- “Feeling as if the future will somehow be cut short”; and/or
- Being “super alert” or watchful; on guard (Weathers et al.).

The pilot study was able to capture distinctions in the participants as either trauma survivors or *not* trauma survivors. The study was not designed to fully analyze the full spectrum of differential characteristics. However, there were some frequent connecting experiences between the two groups, as evidenced by the common, highest aggregate scores of two questions on the PCL-C. The four study participants scored highest in the PCL-C questions related to: A) #8— Trouble remembering important parts of a stressful experience from the past and B) #10—Feeling distant or cut off from other people.

These questions represent the highest participant rating responses among all ten of the PCL-C questions, demonstrating the participants’ similarities in experiencing a psychologically/spiritually disruptive experience from their past. These scores are directly attributable to the characteristics of trauma survivors found within the literature review for this pilot study (Weathers et al.). The commonality of this group’s experiences associated with the high scoring response to these questions may have some implications

for further research. These similarities of trauma survivors and those who have experienced a sacred or tragic loss (those who are not trauma survivors) may be more unified than previously realized. Sermon messages that capture the sensitivities and needs of this combined group, which can be found within a generalized congregation sample, could be helpful in meeting the emotional, psychological, and spiritual needs of the church. Postmodern life is often shaped from a perspective of loss, either impending or prevalent. This is a relevant paradigm to consider in preaching effectively within a cultural context.

The difficulties and disparities found in the effort of reconstructing memory from trauma create an impediment to reasoning and the integration of the tragic experience. In *The Body Keeps the Score*, van der Kolk describes the basis of a trauma survivor's attributes as sourced within the function of memory; specifically, that of traumatic memory. There are two major components that he addresses within this paradigm:

- The problem of traumatic memory
- The unbearable heaviness of remembering

The problem of traumatic memory stems from the overwhelming force of the event(s) and the brain's inability to properly interpret, store, and recall the event with sufficient context and meaning. Thus, "The imprints of traumatic images are organized not as coherent logical narratives but in fragmented sensory and emotional traces: images, sounds and physical sensations" (van der Kolk 178).

This can create a perpetual sense of personal inadequacy, guilt, and shame. The social response to this anxiety-provoking experience is to isolate and pull away from other people and social settings. These questions evoke sequential subjective and

behavioral responses: confusion leading to isolation. As such, these are people who struggle to join community and the church that is attempting to engage them. “To the degree that our identity serves to distinguish the self from others, thereby facilitating meaningful interactions with others, traumatization isolates the persons from his or her significant others” (Ganzevoort 22). Special consideration of this population’s attributes and needs are critical to effective ministry with these adults.

The theological basis for this study and for this imperative example is supported as it relates to God’s commands to His people for serving the poor, the oppressed, the alien, and the foreigner. The Gospel narrative opposes exclusivity and demonstrates time and again the inclusivity and embrace that Jesus provided for those who were marginalized, spiritually and psychologically wounded, and socially isolated and rejected. As Miroslav Volf proclaims in his work on the topic of exclusion in society, “I reject exclusion because the prophets, evangelists and apostles tell me that this is a wrong way to treat human beings, any human being, anywhere and I am persuaded to have good reasons to believe them” (68). This researcher believes Volf is on a solid, theological footing to make such a proclamation that bends toward a Divine embrace for sensitivity and inclusion.

In summary, the common experiences of adults experiencing a tragic loss and those who suffer as trauma survivors may point to a more homogeneous group that can be found within any typical church congregation. In other words, there may be more prevalence of trauma within the church body than previously realized. Sensitivity to these issues should be considered by church leadership. The Gospel as it is related in the Book of John, with its theological context of love, grace, and mercy, is applicable toward a

group who is learning a reorientation to God against a backdrop of their losses and tragedies. The Gospel of Matthew, with its connotations of triumphal power, authority, and judgment, can be dicey. However, a selective approach can be used, as in Matthew Chapter 9, where Jesus' ministry of approaching, touching, and healing the marginalized is so evident of God's intentions toward the wounded and alienated.

Third Finding—Need to Increase Sample Size

Implementation of the research design would require a reconceptualization in order to increase sample size. Three of the four attendees did not complete the study. This equates to a 75% attrition rate, which is an excessive amount for a pilot study.

The purpose of this pilot study was to overcome the obstacles that arise in preaching the Gospel to trauma survivors. Attracting and engaging this population within a church setting has its own set of challenges. Many survivors once embraced a legitimate and working faith, even a sense of hope and optimism. However, these same adherents to the faith have often lost the coherence of an existential construct and are instead consumed with theological questions laced with disillusionment. Filling in the theological or doctrinal gaps with circular references to selectivity—that is, extracted pieces of scripture outside of a theologically, congruent context—will not draw, or retain, today's postmodern listener, certainly not the survivor of trauma. It is essential to bring more than fragmented, ideologically extracted bullet points to the podium if there is to be any effective Gospel proclamation.

The attributes of trauma survivors were studied and addressed within the literature review. One key attribute is described as social isolation. This can best be described as the avoidance of large crowds, close and proximal physical spaces, and locations without

multiple exit options. It is the tendency of trauma survivors to be avoidant of intimate conversations or scrutinizing engagements. Survivors are often plagued by a sense of shame and inadequacy; they do not identify or relate with others very well. They often describe this experience as feeling like they are living “on the outside” of social circles. Survivors are hypervigilant to semantics and dual meanings of words and social interactions. Because their worldview upon the aspect of safety has been altered, their ability to navigate social interactions and to interpret verbal meaning within communication has been affected in such a manner as to create an experience of anxiety and cognitive distortion.

The pilot study attempted to alleviate obstacles in preaching to the trauma survivor by providing cultural awareness and sensitivity to the setting and the sermon. Some of the high attrition and low recruitment rates can be attributed to the small participant sample size, which comprised a low number of attendees. A more comprehensive recruitment effort, whereby additional preliminary marketing and repetitive exposure of announcements were made across the church membership, may have helped this effort.

An additional factor that may have contributed to the high attrition rate can be found in the structure of the study. It was spread across six weekly sessions. This created much exposure to variables outside of the study’s purview, where waning commitment for participation, subjective dissonance, and logistical issues could affect the consistency of participation. There could also be aversive responses from the experience, as painful memories are raised that can cause cognitive dissonance and grief and subsequent lack of attendance in the next session.

If this study were held within a closed retreat setting (e.g., six sessions across two or three days), it could help alleviate the aversion response of dropping out of the study, as well as eliminate the logistical challenges that can arise in an extended timeframe. This would ultimately increase the participation level for engagement and completions of the classes and surveys.

Spiritual retreats held within settings that align with a trauma-informed care setting can include quiet reflection time, personal space, and the opportunity to seek and commune with God within the crucible of distress. There are ample invitations in the Gospel where Jesus calls his sheep to “come and see” (*NIV* John 1.39), to shed self-consciousness or performance and, instead, to take on the easy yoke of His life and calling.

Fourth Finding—Symptoms Could Worsen before Improving

Healing is not necessarily a linear, upward trajectory. Symptoms may increase instead of decreasing for a period of time as survivors reconceptualize the meaning of the event in light of the Gospel message. This explanation may be found in the phenomenon of psychological symptom regression, which can be reasonably anticipated with any healing or cathartic experience. The saying that “things get worse before they get better” is applicable to this event and this population, as traumatic event recall interfaces with the reintegration process. This reintegration process is the end goal of trauma restoration (van der Kolk), whereby extracting the meaningless losses from the narrative cognitive loop and reintegrating them against the context of a deeper purpose and meaning can create a sustainable experience of connection, hope, resilience, and confidence. Given the proper

opportunities and process for recovery, the end effect of experiencing a traumatic event can create a positive change in approaching life's challenges (Tedeschi and Calhoun).

PTGI pre-test scores ranged from 11 - 84 out of a possible 105. The only trauma survivor scored 55, while the lowest participant score was 11. These participants did not complete a PTGI post-test for comparative analyses.

The only participant who completed the study scored 84 on the PTGI pre-test and 81 on the PTGI post-test, a drop of three (3) points. This post-test, qualitative net score change of negative three (-3) would indicate that the participant regressed, or did not progress, as a result of attending the symposium. It is possible that numerical changes in this immediate post-test score may not reflect the “felt” sense of change within the participant.

Certainly, the low study sample size makes any inferential interpretations unreliable. However, the researcher was approached by the sole participant who completed the study; this participant voluntarily disclosed her participation and her completion of all sessions and the post-test surveys. She was verbally affirming of how the experience (sermons, setting) had helped her in various ways and summarized this by concluding that she was “better for it.” This would seem to contradict the quantitative data indicating that a decrease in scores implied psychological regression.

A larger sample size could alleviate the outlier potential and perhaps align the qualitative outcome with the subjective experience that this participant reported.

Fifth Finding—Importance of the Worship Environment

The single TIS response questionnaire participant rated the elements of Safety, Sermon, Gathering, and Integration as “Strongly Agree” when asked if these elements

were helpful to the overall symposium experience. Since any congregation is likely to include persons who have experienced trauma, church leaders may want to assess the extent to which their worship environment promotes hearing the Good News of the Gospel for traumatized individuals.

It may be assumed that the effort given to the trauma-informed setting aligned with the literature review, thus supporting both the needs of trauma survivors and the most effective methods in communicating with this population. Some of the physical setting elements that were accommodated to the needs included soft lighting, regulated sound and temperature, and adequate spacing of seating arrangements. Effective communication approaches included the use of illustrative multimedia (music, video, and PowerPoint), which may have impacted the integration element. The theological presupposition of the sermons delivered through a calm/moderated delivery style supported the effectiveness of the communication.

Ministry Implications of the Findings

The foundational justifications and the pilot project design have been sufficiently established to provide a roadmap for further research on this topic. It would be necessary to recruit a statistically significant number of eligible participants (≥ 40) to support an analysis of the data and to determine the reliability of the researcher-designed TIS response questionnaire.

The commonality of experiences shared by both the trauma survivor and those who did not meet this threshold may point to a prevalence of trauma and loss experiences that should be considered when preaching to a congregation. Life in the postmodern world is often shaped by anxiety, impending loss, and hopelessness. Trauma and loss are

often hidden from social view due to stigma, shame, and avoidance. Church leadership can help illuminate these issues and can create effective cultural acceptance and sensitivities where healing can be encouraged. Much of this can also be supported from the pulpit.

Creating a trauma-informed environment can be an effective action plan to assist the church with its mission, regardless of any other specificities within the mission. For example, a common mission found in many Christian churches is to “make disciples of Christ,” which can always begin by propagating an awareness of those who suffer or are impacted by trauma. Developing a cultural awareness through church leadership training on the prevalence, attributes, and needs of trauma survivors can be an excellent start to building this foundation. Surveys that include trauma-informed questions may assist in identifying current needs, as indicated through responses.

Support groups that recognize the need for engaging authentic and safe discussions surrounding grief, loss, and the theological implications of God in a suffering world can support a holistic and pragmatic application of these tenets.

The implementation of recurrent sermon themes that reinforce theological constructs of grace, grief, mercy, and restoration, even embedded within biblical exegeses, can help sustain hope and recovery for the affected congregant.

Limitations of the Study

The major limitation of the pilot study was an insufficient sample size. Registration and attendance were much lower than anticipated. Seventy-five percent (three out of four) of the participants did not complete the post-study surveys.

The study setting relied upon the participants' sustained commitment to attend all of the sessions, as well as participant resilience to remain engaged in spite of difficult, or negative, emotions that may have been experienced as part of exposure to sensitive and triggering content. Raising the questions and the theological implications of God and evil can often create significant cognitive and spiritual dissonance. The setting could not mitigate any logistical or subjective challenges that participants may have experienced during the six-week series such as transportation, work, fatigue, or reduced interest.

Tracking specific participant attendance was impossible, as the priority was given to confidentiality. With no "role call procedure," it was impossible to ascertain consistency with engagement. The open group concept also allowed "contamination" of the attendee sample, as people could come and go without regard to the constraints of registration or, at least, some moderate form of tracking and engagement.

No qualified participants (those designated as a trauma survivor based upon the PCL-C) completed the study, nor did the corresponding surveys provide sufficient data for outcome analyses. The researcher-designed tool for triangulation (the TIS response questionnaire) could not be tested for reliability.

Unexpected Observations

The pilot study did not draw enough participants to allow for a full-scale analysis and a meaningful findings outcome as had been intended. Ideally, the sample size would have allowed for comparative data from the PTGI pre- and post-test scores, which could then be triangulated across the TIS response questionnaire to determine positive or negative correlations of the independent variables (Sermon\Setting) against the dependent variables (health indicators of Attitudinal, Affective, Social, and Spiritual). In the final

analyses, only one participant met the study criteria for trauma survivor (but did not complete the study), and only one participant (who did not meet the criteria for trauma survivor) completed the post-surveys and testing. Comparative data for the differential designations (trauma survivor and *not* trauma survivor) were also limited due to the small sample size.

Four additional experiences also represent observations from the pilot study. The first is related to the project marketing plan, candidate recruitment, and message. The registration and attendance were much lower than anticipated. However, the marketing resources were robust. The Vail Church professional staff supported the graphic development, communication mechanisms, and product development of the invitation. A flier was developed, as was a video that played during the church service announcement segment. The church website allowed for an informative registration process to help with logistical planning.

The attendance at Vail Church is often affected by seasonal changes. This project was marketed in the summer months, which can often be attended by people who are not there in the fall, when the study occurred. Improvements could have been made by increasing the frequency of this information in additional church services to target additional potential participants. Additionally, it would be helpful to hold this event across multiple church calendar seasons to capture seasonal visitors. Another approach would be to hold the study within a closed retreat setting, with the six sessions spread across two or three days with spiritual reflections and social and recreational breaks scheduled between the sessions.

The second observation relates to the TIS quantitative results and reduction of the PTGI post-test score. As described in Chapter 3, the negative responses to the TIS qualitative questions were segregated for further discussion in this chapter. The project is focused upon the participant's "positive changes in affective, attitudinal, social, and spiritual health indicators" (Research Question #3). The only post-study participant provided a negative response to Question #10 regarding the temperature, which she thought was cold at times. The researcher also personally noted this on occasion and later worked with the church staff to mitigate this.

The PTGI post-test scores also dropped by a net of -3 with the same participant. While this is only one participant's score and is statistically insignificant, it requires consideration as to why the score decreased instead of increased. This participant was mentioned earlier as having disclosed her role to the researcher, also proclaiming the positive experience she had with the symposium. Assuming this was a legitimate report (and not a motive driven by attempting to please the researcher), then the small sample size of the study may be skewing the outcome. Another conclusion can be drawn that a one-point differentiation in the score may not be significant to indicate a positive or negative change.

The third observation relates to the variance in attendance and consistency challenges (Sessions # 1 through # 6= 17, 20, 6, 16, 12, 6, respectively). Some people attended without registering and some (N=2) attended the symposium for the first time late in the series (i.e., in Session #5). The symposium was designed to allow for open attendance without identifying others or who specifically participated in the study. While this improved confidentiality, it may have impeded the conveyed importance of the study

requirement for the participant to complete all of the sessions and all of the surveys. As previously mentioned, this study could have been more informative if applied within a closed setting. Also, it may have been more effective if applied within a shorter period of time such as at a retreat. Another surprise developed along the way within the technical execution of the sermon in Session #5. This session used several film clips to assist with the illustration of the message. Due to a failure with the audio portion, the researcher quickly improvised by providing a narrative description of events as the visual portion played out on the screen above the stage. This eroded the effectiveness of the illustration, as robust movie clips with sound and visual imagery are often highly effective in engaging the participant.

There were three different technical assistants used during the symposium presentation. The lack of consistent training created mostly minor problems in the presentation such as sound levels of media and slide presentation timing, but on one occasion, an entire loss of sound associated with the movie clips occurred. These clips were an essential element of content for that presentation, and the effect was lost. Having a single, trained technical assistant with a backup person who is equally trained would be helpful during the sessions.

The fourth observation relates to the study participation rate and includes educating and engaging with the participants and encouraging them to complete the study. Significant effort went into providing concise, informed consent for participants to consider in their decision. However, 75% (three of the four) participants did not complete the study surveys. There may have been some confusion about how and when these surveys were to be taken and in what sequence. Providing time to reinforce and

encourage the study participation during the study may improve completion rates. The use of a research assistant, who could monitor the web portal for survey completion and remind the attendees of the process while answering any questions, would be helpful to improve completion rates. The challenge exists for the researcher, who must balance participant freedom to withdraw from the study without penalty within the paradigm of providing ongoing encouragement to complete the post-tests. These post-tests are crucial to gaining insights into the components that can be enhanced, or negated, to more effectively impact the trauma survivor through impactful and sensitive preaching of the Gospel message.

Recommendations

Preaching effectiveness in the postmodern world holds similarities to preaching the Gospel to trauma survivors. Approaching people from a posture of humility, invitation, respect, and sensitivity to their cultural context can bring a level of engagement, retention, and discipleship that can overcome the inherent challenges in this place and time and with this population.

The pilot study was not as thorough as was hoped, as it lacked the critical mass from which to draw conclusions. However, there is still much to be gained from this attempt. Addressing the needs of trauma survivors within the Gospel message is a noble and necessary mission. The observations and anecdotal lessons learned can be applied to future studies on this topic and with this population.

A larger attendee sample can be reasonably acquired through a comprehensive recruitment effort. Whether applied in an open setting such as weekly sessions or compressed into a weekend day or overnight retreat, the attraction of the question “Where

are you God?” is often a compelling question that calls out to those who hold this inquiry within the tension of their day-to-day lives. God is calling out to His children. Pastors and teachers can help these disillusioned, spiritual sojourners to respond to this Divine invitation and to explore more of the Divine mystery by engaging in this sermon series.

Postscript

I studied martial arts for more than 20 years in my adult life. After enrolling my teenaged children in a local class, I felt compelled to join them in the journey to black belt. This (1st degree) required about four years of regular class attendance and the mastery of skills, techniques, language, and philosophy of the martial arts system.

There are approximately 10 distinct belts (colors), or steps, to acquiring a black belt. My mentor and instructor taught and reminded us along the way that it is not the color of the belt that you have acquired that defines the person; it is what one becomes in the process of earning the belt.

I can say that this development is similar in post-graduate, academic training. The process of what I have become in the journey through doctoral training, as well as in working through this ministry transformation project, has made an indelible mark upon my psyche. I am hopeful that it is for the better.

I have gained a stronger grasp of the biblical and theological foundations of working with people who have been psychologically traumatized. I respect the pleadings of theological inquiry, along with the benefit of the pain and suffering that comes from wrestling with God within the bold and penetrating questions that arise from the depths of our wounded souls.

I am constantly amazed at the human capacity for resiliency and the unrelenting faithfulness of God to stand by His children, to pursue them, to stand firm in the accusations of their confused state of rebellion and anger and to humbly and tenderly call them back to an intimate and restorative relationship.

I am committed to pursuing the healing path for myself and to assist others within my life and the scope of ministry that Jesus is leading me to and through. I am grateful to all who have helped along the way (as noted in the Acknowledgements of this paper), but, most significantly, I am grateful to my spouse of 28 years, who has stood by me with encouragement, guidance, nurturing, and the sacrifices that come with my chronic absenteeism as I have been absorbed within this project.

APPENDIXES

Appendix A: Results/Surveys and Scales

PTGI Pre-Test Scores

[illegible]

PTGI Post-Test Scores

ID	I changed my priorities about what is important in life	I have a greater appreciation for the value of my own life	I developed new interests	I have a greater feeling of self-reliance	I have a better understanding of spiritual matters	I more clearly see that I can count on people in times of trouble	I established a new path for my life	I have a greater sense of closeness with others	I am more willing to express my emotions	I know better that I can handle difficulties	I am able to do better things with my life
146	4	5	3	3	5	4	4	4	4	4	3

I am better able to accept the way things work out	I can better appreciate each day	New opportunities are available which wouldn't have been otherwise	I have more compassion for others	I put more effort into my relationships	I am more likely to try to change things which need changing	I have a stronger religious faith	I discovered that I'm stronger than I thought I was	I learned a great deal about how wonderful people are	I better accept needing others	Created By (User Id)	Entry Id
3	4	3	4	3	4	4	5	4	4		151

PTGI Comparison Scores

		I changed my priorities about what is important in life	I have a greater appreciation for the value of my own life	I developed new interests	I have a greater feeling of self-reliance	I have a better understanding of spiritual matters	I more clearly see that I can count on people in times of trouble	I established a new path for my life	I have a greater sense of closeness with others	I am more willing to express my emotions	I know better that I can handle difficulties	I am able to do better things with my life	I am better able to accept the way things work out	I can better appreciate each day	New opportunities are available which wouldn't have been otherwise	I have more compassion for others	I put more effort into my relationships	I am more likely to try to change things which need changing	I have a stronger religious faith	I discovered that I'm stronger than I thought I was	I learned a great deal about how wonderful people are	I better accept needing others
Pre Score	ID																					
84/105	146	4	4	2	4	5	4	4	4	5	5	4	3	4	4	4	3	4	4	5	4	4
Post Score	146	4	5	3	3	5	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	4	3	4	3	4	4	5	4	4
81/105																						
Change		0	1	1	-1	0	0	0	0	-1	-1	-1	0	0	-1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pre Score	142																					
55/105		5	2	2	2	3	2	3	3	3	2	2	1	1	1	4	4	4	4	2	3	2
Pre Score	138																					
11/105		0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	1	0
Pre Score	134																					
49/105		1	2	1	3	3	3	1	1	3	4	3	3	2	2	2	1	3	2	4	3	2

PCL-C Scores

[illegible]

Participant Demographics

[illegible][illegible]

Participation Activity

Registration	19						
Attendance	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Session 4	Session 5	Session 6	
	17	20	6	16	12	6	
% of Registered	89.47%	105.26%	31.58%	84.21%	63.16%	31.58%	
Participant ID	Informed Consent	Demographics	PTSD Cklist	Pre-PTGI	Post PTGI	TIS-Final Survey	PTSD Y\N
146	x	x	x	x	x	x	N
142	x	x	x	x			Y
138	x	x	x	x			N
134	x	x	x	x			N
Notes:	2 attended 1st session at session 5 and did not register and did not participate in the study						

TIS Responses (Questions #6-10)

Q6	What emotions, or feelings would you use to describe your experience from the sermon series? (Feel free to use the accompanying 'Feelings Wheel')
Setting Element	Sermon
RQ Element	Attitudinal
Response	Intimate. Nurturing. Relaxed. Valuable. Stimulating. Worthwhile. Peaceful. Hopeful.
Q7	What did you learn during your experience from the sermon series?
Setting Element	Integration of Experience
RQ Element	Spiritual Health
Response	I'm still learning. Learning about the truth that I am not who I thought I was. That there is purpose to be found in tragedy... Even if the purpose is solely to turn to God. I'm longing for a more intimate connection with the God of my understanding
Q8	How will you apply this sermon series experience to your life moving forward?
Setting Element	Integration of Experience
RQ Element	Spiritual Health
Response	I will continue to expand my growth through the suggested literature... I will continue to expand my relationship with a power greater than myself. I will continue to stay open minded and teachable, so as to not cut myself off from growth and further knowledge to be gained
Q9	What about the setting (room, lights, music, video, chair spacing, refreshments, conversations, people) were <u>most</u> helpful with this sermon series experience?
Setting Element	Gathering
RQ Element	Social
Response	It all together provided a comfortable, safe, and inviting environment.
Q10	What about the setting (room, lighting, music, video, chair spacing, refreshments, conversations, people) were <u>least</u> helpful with this sermon series experience?
Setting Element	Gathering
RQ Element	Social
Response	It was a bit chilly at times.

TIS Triangulation Example

<u>PTGI Question #</u>	<u>Element Factor from Post PTGI</u>	<u>Average (Mean) Post PTGI Change +/-</u>	<u>TIS Q #</u>	<u>Setting Element</u>	<u>TIS Score (>4 or Positive Impact)</u>	<u>RQ Element</u>	<u>Correlation-Yes\No</u>
1,2,13	Appreciation of Life	2	4	Worship	5	Affective	Yes
			1	Safety	5	Affective	Yes
3,7,11,14,17	New Possibilitites	1	5	Sermon	Pos=5	Attitudinal	Yes
4,10,12,19	Personal Strength	1	6	Sermon	Pos=5	Attitudinal	Yes
			2	Educational*	N\A-did not meet threshold	Attitudinal	No
9,15,16,20,21	Relating to Others	3	9	Gathering	Pos=5	Social	Yes
			10	Gathering	Pos=5	Social	Yes
5,18	Spiritual Change	4	7	Integration of experience	Pos=5	Spiritual Health	Yes
			8	Integration of experience	N\A-did not meet threshold	Spiritual Health	No
			3	Application\Utilitarian\Pragmatic*	4	Spiritual Health	Yes
Results	Results	Results	Results	Results	Results	Results	Results
<u>PTGI Question #</u>	<u>Element Factor from Post PTGI</u>	<u>Post PTGI Change +/-</u>	<u>TIS Q #</u>	<u>Setting Element</u>	<u>TIS Score (>4 or Positive Impact)</u>	<u>RQ Element</u>	<u>Correlation-Yes\No</u>
1, *2,13	Appreciation of Life	1	4	Worship	3	Affective	N\A
			1	Safety	5	Affective	N\A
*3,7,*11,*14,17	New Possibilitites	1,-1,-1	5	Sermon	5	Attitudinal	N\A
4, 10,12,19	Personal Strength	-1,-1	6	Sermon	5	Attitudinal	N\A
			2	Educational	4	Attitudinal	N\A
*9,15,16,20,21	Relating to Others	-1	9	Gathering	5	Social	N\A
			10	Gathering	N\A-did not meet threshold	Social	N\A
5,18	Spiritual Change	0	7	Integration of experience	5	Spiritual Health	N\A
		Net Change=-3	8	Integration of experience	5	Spiritual Health	N\A
			3	Application\Utilitarian\Pragmatic	4	Spiritual Health	N\A

Informed Consent Data

User IP	Email
24.11.162.160	james@jameseastman.com
187.7.104.196	lucas.don@live.com
192.88.135.5	jbrooks@apnlodge.com
192.88.135.5	alexandra_marie@hotmail.com
185.93.229.5	mrsjrbrooks@gmail.com
185.93.229.5	jr2brooks@gmail.com
185.93.229.5	angela.kristi.tombari@gmail.com
185.93.229.5	hoffmannh@cofc.edu
192.88.135.5	jbrooks@ccgmgmt.com
192.88.135.5	jeff@3daysrising.com
66.248.201.5	info@cnmwebsite.com
66.248.202.5	test@example.com
192.88.135.5	a.m.henchy@gmail.com
66.248.200.5	toddy.holeman@asburyseminary.edu
192.88.135.5	heatherparker360@gmail.com
192.88.135.5	Danvailcolorado@gmail.com
192.88.135.5	Focus41@live.com
66.248.200.5	ashy@centurytel.net

PTGI Post-test

[illegible][illegible]

PTGI Pre-Test

[illegible]

Post-PTGI

	I changed my priorities about what is important in life	I have a greater appreciation for the value of my own life	I developed new interests	I have a greater feeling of self-reliance	I have a better understanding of spiritual matters	I more clearly see that I can count on people in times of trouble	I established a new path for my life	I have a greater sense of closeness with others	I am more willing to express my emotions	I know better that I can handle difficulties	I am able to do better things with my life	I am better able to accept the way things work out
ID	146	4	5	3	3	5	4	4	4	4	3	3

I can better appreciate each day	New opportunities are available which wouldn't have been otherwise	I have more compassion for others	I put more effort into my relationships	I am more likely to try to change things which need changing	I have a stronger religious faith	I discovered that I'm stronger than I thought I was	I learned a great deal about how wonderful people are	I better accept needing others	Created By (User Id)	Entry Id
4	3	4	3	4	4	5	4	4		151

Comparison

[illegible]

PCL-C

		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17			
						Having physical reactions (e.g., heart pounding, trouble breathing, sweating)	Avoiding thinking about or talking about a stressful experience from the past or avoiding you of a stressful experience from the past?	Avoiding activities or situations because remembering important parts of a stressful experience from the past?				Feeling emotionally numb or being unable to have, loving, feelings for those close to you?	Feeling as if your future will be cut short?	Trouble falling or staying asleep?	Feeling irritable or having angry outbursts?	Having difficulty concentrating?	Being "super-alert" or on guard?	Feeling jump or easily startled?			
ID	PTSD Score	Repeated, disturbing memories, thoughts, or images of a stressful experience from the past?	Repeated, disturbing dreams of a stressful experience from the past?	Suddenly acting or feeling as if a stressful experience were happening again (as if you were reliving it)?	Reminded you of a stressful experience from the past?	Reminded you of a stressful experience from the past?	Reminded you of a stressful experience from the past?	Reminded you of a stressful experience from the past?	Reminded you of a stressful experience from the past?	Loss of interest in activities that you used to enjoy?	Feeling distant or cut off from other people?	Not at all	Not at all	Trouble falling or staying asleep?	Feeling irritable or having angry outbursts?	Having difficulty concentrating?	Being "super-alert" or on guard?	Feeling jump or easily startled?	Created By (User Id)	Entry Id	Entry Date
	146	Not at all	A little bit	Not at all	Not at all	A little bit	Not at all	Not at all	A little bit	A little bit	A little bit	Not at all	Not at all	A little bit	A little bit	A little bit	A little bit	Not at all		148	9/24/19 21:49
	142	Extremely	Extremely	Quite a bit	Extremely	Moderately	Quite a bit	Quite a bit	Extremely	Extremely	Extremely	Quite a bit	Extremely	Extremely	Moderately	Quite a bit	Moderately			144	9/9/19 20:44
	138	Not at all	Not at all	Not at all	Not at all	Not at all	Moderately	Not at all	Extremely	A little bit	Quite a bit	Moderately	Moderately	Quite a bit	Moderately	A little bit	A little bit	A little bit		140	9/2/19 6:09
	134	A little bit	Not at all	Not at all	Not at all	Not at all	A little bit	Not at all	A little bit	A little bit	Moderately	Moderately	Moderately	Not at all	A little bit	A little bit	A little bit	Not at all		136	8/28/19 18:49

PCL-C Scoring

[illegible]

PCL-C Overview

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Checklist

<http://www.istss.org/assessing-trauma/posttraumatic-stress-disorder-checklist.aspx>

Summary

This 17-item self-report scale for PTSD is based on DSM-IV criteria and takes 5-7 mins to complete. There are slightly different versions for use with military (M) or civilian (C) populations, as well as a version focused on a "specific stressful experience" (S).

Author/publisher details

National Center for PTSD, Boston, USA.

<http://www.ptsd.va.gov>

Date

1993

Description

The PCL is a 17-item self-report checklist of PTSD symptoms based closely on the DSM-IV criteria.

Respondents rate each item from 1 ("not at all") to 5 ("extremely") to indicate the degree to which they have been bothered by that particular symptom over the past month.

Three versions of the PCL are available, although the differences are slight. The PCL-M is a military version and questions refer to "*a stressful military experience*". The PCL-C is a general civilian version that is not linked to a specific event; the questions refer to "*a stressful experience from the past*". The PCL-S can be referenced to any specific traumatic event; participants are asked to nominate the event and questions refer to "*the stressful experience*". Scoring is the same for all three versions.

Versions of the PCL are also available in Bosnian, Chinese and Spanish (see below).

Scoring

Respondents rate each item from 1 ("not at all") to 5 ("extremely") to indicate the degree to which they have been bothered by that particular symptom over the past month. Thus, total possible scores range from 17 to 85. Notwithstanding the fact that self-report scales should not be used to make a formal diagnosis, the PCL has shown good diagnostic utility, with Weathers et al. (1993) recommending a cut-off score of 50 as optimal for indicating a probable diagnosis of combat-related PTSD. An alternative strategy is to use individual items according to the DSM criteria (i.e., at least one symptom from items 1 - 5, and at least three from items 6 - 12, and at least two from items 13 - 17). They suggest a cut off score of 3 or more for each item as being most appropriate for this approach.

Psychometrics

The PCL has demonstrated strong psychometric properties. Estimates of internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) range between .94 (Blanchard et al, 1996) to .97

(Weathers et al. 1993) . Test-retest reliability has been reported as .96 at 2-3 days and .88 at 1 week (Blanchard et al.,1996; Ruggiero et al.,2003).

The PCL correlates positively with the Mississippi PTSD Scale with convergent validity of between $r = .85$ and $.93$ (Weathers et al, 1993). Strong correlations have also been reported with MMPI-2 Keane PTSD Scale (.77), IES (.77-.90) and CAPS .92 (Blanchard et. al., 1996)

A cutoff score of 50 for a PTSD diagnosis has demonstrated good sensitivity (.78 to .82) and specificity (.83 to .86). Lowering the cutoff score to 44 revealed better sensitivity (.94), specificity (.86) and overall diagnostic efficiency (.90) with MVA victims (Blanchard et. al., 1996).

Non-English Translations

Bosnian (Charney et al, unpublished)

To our knowledge the Bosnian version is unpublished. Enquiries should be directed to: Dr Meredith Charney, Department of Psychiatry, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, MA mecharney@partners.org

Chinese (Wu et.al In Press)

The PCL has been translated in to traditional 'complex' Chinese (the written Chinese used in Hong Kong and Taiwan), and simple Chinese (the written Chinese used in Mainland China) . Wu etal tested the psychometric properties in a sample of 481 survivors of motor vehicle accidents. Reliability and validity of the Chinese PCL were found to be satisfactory. The translation was validated by stringent back-translation. Taking into consideration the difference in language and culture, a bilingual clinical psychologist first translated the PCL aiming at retaining the meaning of each item in the Chinese version. Then an independent bilingual clinical psychologist back-translated the translated PCL into English for content comparison. The content of the final Chinese PCL was further verified by back-translation procedure until the meaning of each item matched with the original item. For more details see the paper or contact the author. Enquiries about the Chinese version should be directed to: Dr Kitty Wu, Department of Clinical Psychology, Caritas Medical Center, 111 Wing Hong Street, Shamshuipo, Kowloon, Hong Kong, China. wukykyk@ha.orh.hk

Spanish (Marshall, 2004; Orlando & Marshall, 2002)

The psychometrics of the Spanish PCL have been reported in detail in two papers. They attest to the general equivalence of English and Spanish language versions of the PCL as tools for measuring PTSD symptom severity in Spanish and English speaking trauma survivors. When using this version please note that the wording has been adjusted to enquire about a specific trauma ('attack'). As a cautionary note, Orlando and Marshall (2002) report that although the English and Spanish versions are not fully equivalent on an item-by item basis, no bias was observed at the level of composite PCL scale score, indicating that the 2 language versions are suitably similar for scale-level analyses (i.e the total PCL score). The Spanish version was developed using double translation procedures, detailed on page 52 of the 2002 paper. For further information see the papers,

or contact the authors: RAND 1776 Main Street, Santa Monica, CA USA 90407
Grant.marshall@rand.org

Key/Core References

Blanchard, E. B., Jones Alexander, J., Buckley, T. C., & Forneris, C. A. (1996). Psychometric properties of the PTSD Checklist (PCL). *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 34, 669-673.

Forbes, D., Creamer, M., & Biddle, D. (2001). The validity of the PTSD checklist as a measure of symptomatic change in combat-related PTSD. *Behaviour Research & Therapy*, 39, 977-986.

Ruggiero, K. J., Del Ben, K., Scotti, J. R., & Rabalais, A. E. (2003). Psychometric Properties of the PTSD Checklist--Civilian Version. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 16, 495-502.

Weathers, F. W., Litz, B. T., Herman, D. S., Huska, J. A., & Keane, T. M. (1993). *The PTSD Checklist (PCL): Reliability, validity, and diagnostic utility*. Paper presented at the 9th Annual Conference of the ISTSS, San Antonio, TX.

PCL-C Instructions

PCL-C

INSTRUCTIONS: Below is a list of problems and complaints that people sometimes have in response to stressful life experiences. Please read each one carefully, then circle one of the numbers to the right to indicate how much you have been bothered by that problem in the past month.

	Not at all	A little bit	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely
1. Repeated, disturbing <i>memories, thoughts, or images</i> of a stressful experience from the past?	1	2	3	4	5
2. Repeated, disturbing <i>dreams</i> of a stressful experience from the past?	1	2	3	4	5
3. Suddenly <i>acting or feeling</i> as if a stressful experience <i>were happening again</i> (as if you were reliving it)?	1	2	3	4	5
4. Feeling <i>very upset</i> when <i>something reminded you</i> of a stressful experience from the past?	1	2	3	4	5
5. Having <i>physical reactions</i> (e.g., heart pounding, trouble breathing, sweating) when <i>something reminded you</i> of a stressful experience from the past?	1	2	3	4	5
6. Avoiding <i>thinking about</i> or <i>talking about</i> a stressful experience from the past or avoiding <i>having feelings</i> related to it?	1	2	3	4	5
7. Avoiding <i>activities or situations</i> because <i>they reminded you</i> of a stressful experience from the past?	1	2	3	4	5
8. Trouble <i>remembering important parts</i> of a stressful experience from the past?	1	2	3	4	5
9. <i>Loss of interest</i> in activities that you used to enjoy?	1	2	3	4	5
10. Feeling <i>distant</i> or <i>cut off</i> from other people?	1	2	3	4	5
11. Feeling <i>emotionally numb</i> or being unable to have loving feelings for those close to you?	1	2	3	4	5
12. Feeling as if your <i>future</i> will somehow be <i>cut short</i> ?	1	2	3	4	5
13. Trouble <i>falling or staying asleep</i> ?	1	2	3	4	5
14. Feeling <i>irritable</i> or having <i>angry outbursts</i> ?	1	2	3	4	5
15. Having <i>difficulty concentrating</i> ?	1	2	3	4	5
16. Being " <i>super-alert</i> " or watchful or on guard?	1	2	3	4	5
17. Feeling <i>jumpy</i> or easily startled?	1	2	3	4	5

Tables and Instruments: Holeman's Table

<u>RQ Element</u>	<u>PTGI Question #</u>	<u>Element Factor from PTGI</u>	<u>Factor #</u>
Affective	1,2,13	Appreciation of Life	V
Attitudinal	3,7,11,14,17	New Possibilitites	II
	4,10,12,19	Personal Strength	III
Social	9,15,16,20,21	Relating to Others	I
Spiritual Health	5,18	Spiritual Change	IV

RQ Element – PTGI

<u>RQ Element</u>	<u>PTGI Question #</u>	<u>Element Factor from PTGI</u>	<u>Factor #</u>	<u>Researcher Descriptor</u>
Affective	1,2,13	Appreciation of Life	V	Gratitude
Attitudinal	3,7,11,14,17	New Possibilitites	II	Hope
	4,10,12,19	Personal Strength	III	Confidence
Social	9,15,16,20,21	Relating to Others	I	Belonging
Spiritual Health	5,18	Spiritual Change	IV	Intimacy

TIS-RQ-PTGI Setting Elements

<u>TIS Q.#</u>	<u>Setting Element</u>	<u>RQ Element</u>	<u>Element Factor from Post PTGI</u>	<u>Change +/-</u>	<u>Factor #</u>	<u>Researcher Descriptor</u>
4	Worship	Affective	Appreciation of Life		V	Gratitude
5,6	Sermon	Attitudinal	New Possibilitites		II	Hope
			Personal Strength		III	Confidence
9,10	Gathering	Social	Relating to Others		I	Belonging
7,8	Integration of experience	Spiritual Health	Spiritual Change		IV	Intimacy
1	Safety					
2	Educational					
3	Application\Utilitarian\Pragmatic					

TIS Response Questionnaire

Trauma Informed Sermon Series Response Questionnaire

Please answer the following to the best of your ability:

1. I felt safe in this setting.
Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Agree

Strongly agree
2. I found the sermon series content to be informative.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Agree

Strongly agree
3. I found the video clips to be helpful in connecting the point of the sermon series.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Agree

Strongly agree

4. The worship music helped me connect with God.

Strongly disagree

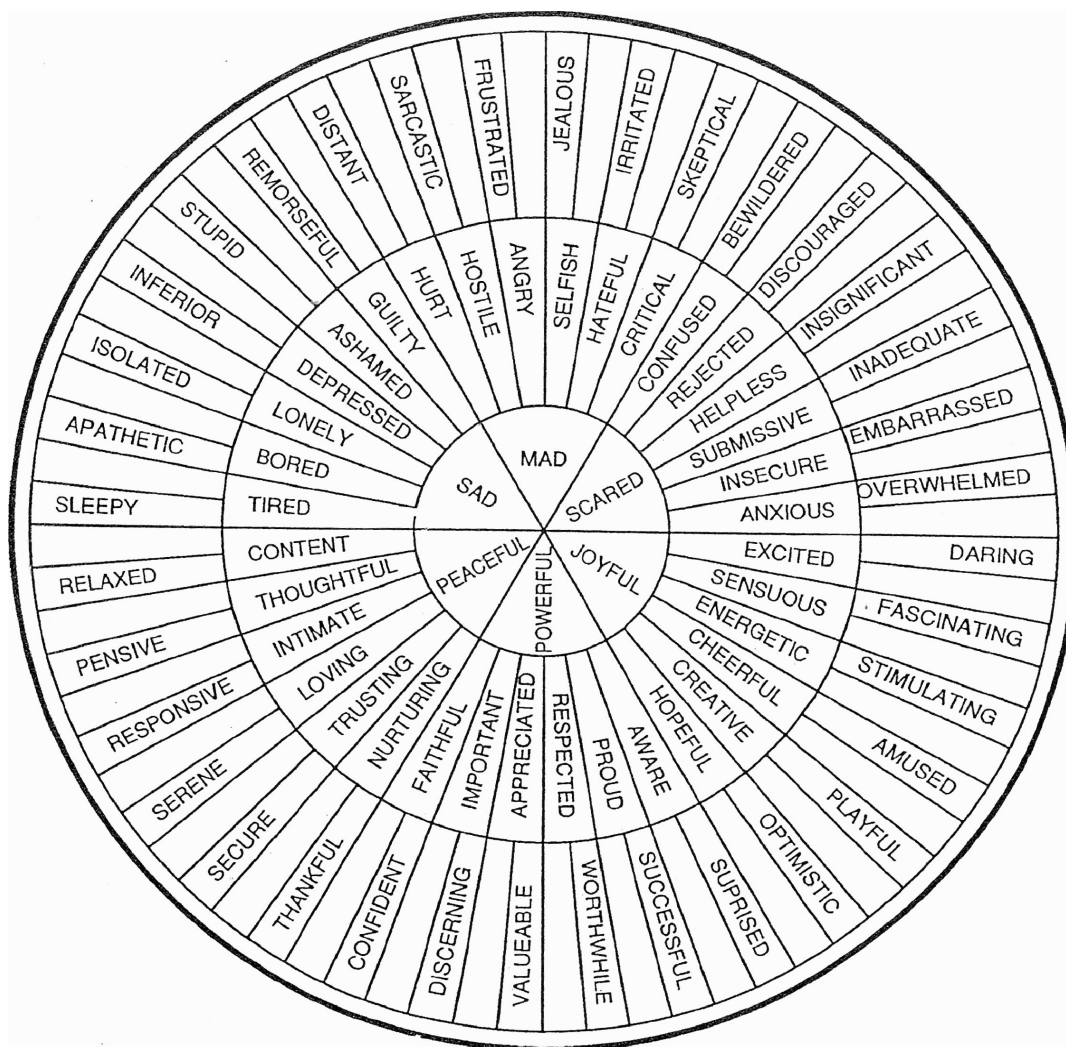
Disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Agree

Strongly agree

5. What were your thoughts (interpretations) about this sermon series experience?
6. What emotions, or feelings would you use to describe your experience from the sermon series? (Feel free to use the accompanying 'Feelings Wheel')
7. What did you learn during your experience from the sermon series?
8. How will you apply this sermon series experience to your life moving forward?
9. What about the setting (room, lights, music, video, chair spacing, refreshments, conversations, people) were most helpful with this sermon series experience?
10. What about the setting (room, lighting, music, video, chair spacing, refreshments, conversations, people) were least helpful with this sermon series experience?



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St. Petersburg, FL 33743

PTGI Form**Post Traumatic Growth Inventory**

Client Name: _____ Today's Date: _____

Indicate for each of the statements below the degree to which this change occurred in your life as a result of the crisis/disaster, using the following scale.

- 0 = I did not experience this change as a result of my crisis.
 1 = I experienced this change to a very small degree as a result of my crisis.
 2 = I experienced this change to a small degree as a result of my crisis.
 3 = I experienced this change to a moderate degree as a result of my crisis.
 4 = I experienced this change to a great degree as a result of my crisis.
 5 = I experienced this change to a very great degree as a result of my crisis.

Possible Areas of Growth and Change	0	1	2	3	4	5
1. I changed my priorities about what is important in life.						
2. I have a greater appreciation for the value of my own life.						
3. I developed new interests.						
4. I have a greater feeling of self-reliance.						
5. I have a better understanding of spiritual matters.						
6. I more clearly see that I can count on people in times of trouble.						
7. I established a new path for my life.						
8. I have a greater sense of closeness with others.						
9. I am more willing to express my emotions.						
10. I know better that I can handle difficulties.						
11. I am able to do better things with my life.						
12. I am better able to accept the way things work out.						
13. I can better appreciate each day.						
14. New opportunities are available which wouldn't have been otherwise.						
15. I have more compassion for others.						
16. I put more effort into my relationships.						
17. I am more likely to try to change things which need changing.						
18. I have a stronger religious faith.						
19. I discovered that I'm stronger than I thought I was.						
20. I learned a great deal about how wonderful people are.						
21. I better accept needing others.						

Post Traumatic Growth Inventory Scoring

The Post Traumatic Growth Inventory (PTGI) is scored by adding all the responses. Individual factors are scored by adding responses to items on each factor. Factors are indicated by the Roman numerals after each item below. Items to which factors belong are not listed on the form administered to clients.

PTGI Factors

Factor I: Relating to Others

Factor II: New Possibilities

Factor III: Personal Strength

Factor IV: Spiritual Change

Factor V: Appreciation of Life

1. I changed my priorities about what is important in life. (V)
2. I have a greater appreciation for the value of my own life. (V)
3. I developed new interests. (II)
4. I have a greater feeling of self-reliance. (III)
5. I have a better understanding of spiritual matters. (IV)
6. I more clearly see that I can count on people in times of trouble. (I)
7. I established a new path for my life. (II)
8. I have a greater sense of closeness with others. (I)
9. I am more willing to express my emotions. (I)
10. I know better that I can handle difficulties. (III)
11. I am able to do better things with my life. (II)
12. I am better able to accept the way things work out. (III)
13. I can better appreciate each day. (V)
14. New opportunities are available which wouldn't have been otherwise. (II)
15. I have more compassion for others. (I)
16. I put more effort into my relationships. (I)
17. I am more likely to try to change things which need changing. (II)
18. I have a stronger religious faith. (IV)
19. I discovered that I'm stronger than I thought I was. (III)
20. I learned a great deal about how wonderful people are. (I)
21. I better accept needing others. (I)

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In Reciprocation

There is no charge for the PTGI, and there is no charge for the reproduction of the scale for use in research. In reciprocation, we would like you to send us a gratis copy of any manuscripts, theses, dissertations, research reports, preprints, and publications you prepare in which our materials, or any version of them, is used. Both L. G. Calhoun and R. G. Tedeschi can be contacted at: Department of Psychology - UNC Charlotte - Charlotte, NC 28223 USA.

Appendix B: Sermon Series Information

Music and Video Clip List

- I. Music to Play in background prior to start (Sermons 1-6)
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PXsWAAhnGhc&list=RDPXsWAAhnGhc&start_radio=1&t=54
 - <https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=daughtry&view=detail&mid=F82DBAB5D9C5AB40DAC0F82DBAB5D9C5AB40DAC0&FORM=VIRE>
 - <https://youtu.be/nJzBcKM3ZIE>
 - <https://youtu.be/kPBzTxZQG5Q>
 - <https://youtu.be/5anLPw0Efmo>
 - <https://youtu.be/FdKVvx64elg>
 - https://youtu.be/o8Dbud_sTaU
 - <https://youtu.be/QKxShU52NDQ>
 - <https://youtu.be/3YxaaGgTQYM>
 - <https://youtu.be/7bnX-6sJZBw>
 - <https://youtu.be/uLQkaKW43pY>
 - <https://youtu.be/x59X-mynNmM>
 - Loud Harp YouTube various artist mix:
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=RD2RwyAVKalB0>
 - Add Josh White songs-Anchor album: “Jesus let me see your hands”

- II. Music selections for Sermons:
 - Sermon One
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PXsWAAhnGhc&list=RDPXsWAAhnGhc&start_radio=1&t=54
 - <https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=daughtry&view=detail&mid=F82DBAB5D9C5AB40DAC0F82DBAB5D9C5AB40DAC0&FORM=VIRE>
 - <https://youtu.be/nJzBcKM3ZIE>
 - <https://youtu.be/kPBzTxZQG5Q>
 - <https://youtu.be/5anLPw0Efmo>
 - <https://youtu.be/RCMXO9sBIcU>

 - Sermon Two
 - <https://youtu.be/5anLPw0Efmo>
 - <https://youtu.be/FdKVvx64elg>
 - https://youtu.be/o8Dbud_sTaU
 - <https://youtu.be/QKxShU52NDQ>
 - <https://youtu.be/3YxaaGgTQYM>

- <https://youtu.be/QnluibKQ6DY>
- <https://youtu.be/odZJMAy4JKE>
- <https://youtu.be/RCMXO9sBIcU>

Sermon Three

- <https://youtu.be/QKxShU52NDQ>
- <https://youtu.be/3YxaaGgTQYM>
- <https://youtu.be/7bnX-6sJZBw>
- <https://youtu.be/uLQkaKW43pY>
- https://youtu.be/_QAOXHIAfOs
- <https://youtu.be/N5jpKFuo4-Q>
- <https://youtu.be/U4D6lNpoyZs>
- https://youtu.be/xID_t--BrqE

Sermon Four

- Obsession (Crowder): <https://youtu.be/dVFVqrmR7Yw>
- <https://youtu.be/cDSbApXeyTg>

Sermon Five

- <https://youtu.be/hoC26eVwuQg>
- <https://youtu.be/Qbyr6aPPMvM>
- <https://youtu.be/1MAmDI7g77Q>
- <https://youtu.be/VHhGJhtSN4k>
- https://youtu.be/tNQFS8_g73U
- <https://youtu.be/8OPDjcZdEEw>
- <https://youtu.be/t-9vmyJQ6BI>
- https://youtu.be/2appia_mrXs
- <https://youtu.be/Wz9VtSIVTYc>

Sermon Six

- https://youtu.be/iv_Pf7bDZj4
- Crowder “Come & Listen”: <https://youtu.be/6fvSfrit6fUE>
- Crowder “Only You”: <https://youtu.be/sPs-2hn5ZOg>

III. Video selections for Sermons:

Sermon One

- *Big Fish* Trailer: <https://youtu.be/dF-Iy7vIOJA>
- *Lord of the Rings* Trailer: <https://youtu.be/V75dMMIW2B4>
- *Bagger Vance* clip, “The Woods”: https://youtu.be/_Mk2Tca88Xo

Sermon Two

- *The Matrix* clip: “Tumbling down the rabbit hole”
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TbYirSi08m4>
- *Bagger Vance* clip, “See the Field” <https://youtu.be/NeMjWb9mwQs>

Sermon Three

- The Shack: <https://youtu.be/hUiW7bOqGPA> (00:3:59)
- Seabiscuit: <https://youtu.be/h0BWxrXdhAY>
- Morgan Harper Nichols-Story Teller: https://youtu.be/xID_t--BrqE
- The Shack, Boat Scene:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G1OHyINxuRQ>

Sermon Four

- The Shack, Being Pulled Under:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G1OHyINxuRQ>
- Sidewalk Prophets, Passion of The Christ—You Loved me anyway:
<https://youtu.be/yc8J7fo8dcA> (4:28)

Sermon Five

- The Shack: <https://youtu.be/DNwLXsaZqnU>
- Seabiscuit: <https://youtu.be/N1xvQ7iLD0I>
- Scenes on Judgement from the Shack:
<https://youtu.be/hUiW7bOqGPA>

Sermon Six

- No video this session

Resources for a Continued Journey

Healing & Restoration: Resources for Continuing the Journey

Books

- Allender, Dan. “The Wounded Heart: Hope for Adult Victims of Childhood Sexual Abuse”.
- Allender, Dan. “To Be Told: Know Your Story, Shape Your Future”.
- Cooper, Burton Z. “Why God?”
- Brooks, Jeff. “Holding on for Life”.
- Eldredge, John. “Beautiful Outlaw”
- Eldredge, John. “Waking the Dead”
- Eldredge, John. “Wild at Heart”
- Eldredge, John & Stacy. “Captivating”
- Manning, Brennan. “Ragamuffin Gospel”
- Seamands, Stephen A. “Wounds That Heal: Bringing Our Hurts to the Cross”

Movies

- Seabiscuit
- The Shack
- The Legend of Bagger Vance
- The Matrix
- Big Fish
- The Lord of the Rings (Trilogy)
- The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe

Retreats (that can help you go deeper into the journey)

Go to www.ransomedheart.org to learn more:

- Wild at Heart (Beginner & Advanced)
- Captivating (Beginner and Advanced)

Sermon Series Outline

Working title: Preaching the Gospel to Trauma Survivors

Promotional Title: Where are you God? Finding Meaning in the Tragedy of Life.

A six session lecture series designed to bring clarity, meaning, purpose and restoration to the wounded soul. All are welcome, no assumptions of faith, religious identity or belief are required. No question is off limits.

Session 1: Life is A Story-Where Does Mine Begin?

You were thought of before you were born. You were born in purpose and intention.

These statements are often met with a mix of skepticism and faint hope. In our postmodern era, life is explained away as relative, random and reckless. But what if there was an honorable intentionality- a noble purpose to what you were called to be? We must go backwards in the larger story before we can proceed forward.

Trauma data overview: <https://acestoohigh.com/got-your-ace-score/>

- Life as a tragedy-describe the theatrical attributes of tragedy and its correlation to Life, meaning, purpose and assault (orientation). *“To live is to suffer, to survive is to find meaning in the suffering.”*
— Viktor Frankl
- So, who and where is God?
- (Epic-John Eldredge)It Starts in Relationship-Trinitarian love and perichoresis.
- Before the Creation of the world and its inhabitants, God is known in relationship within the love, laughter and joy of the Trinity. Life emanates from this Holy Love and God creates the angels to share in the awe and worship of God’s glory and all that is good. We long for love and belonging because humans are created in the image of this relational love ‘...and our hearts are restless until we find our rest in God’ (Augustine).
- You were thought of before you were born.
- You were born in purpose and intention.
- Add reflection time and questions with music #1

Session 2: Why is life so hard?

Why does every good thing we try to do seem so opposed? Those intentions to find love, be a better friend, spouse or parent-we make some movements towards that and then it blows up in our face. How about trying to lose weight or improve in some functionality in life-part of us wants to and part of us doesn't. what's this all about?

- The entrance of evil-Lucifer, war in heaven and banishment
- The Creation & The Imago Dei
- The Fall
- Add reflection time and questions with music #2

Session 3: Who Am I, Where Am I and Who\What is God Doing In All Of This?

Life is often like a reading a novel by starting in the middle section Something important is happening and it seems the main character should be involved in an intentional way. But what to make of all these other people. Danger lurks and friends are scarce-even nonexistent. Who to trust, which way to go and what's the point anyhow?

- The Story We Live In: The Flesh, The World and the Evil One; *"The Story of Your Life is the story of the long and brutal assault upon your heart by the one who knows who what you can be and fears it"*. (Waking the Dead-John Eldredge)
- Agreements-*"Your world is severely broken. You demanded your independence, and now you are angry with the One who loved you enough to give it to you."* (The Shack-William P. Young)
- Peter Storey: "God has not wanted any to suffer". Disease and decay as part of the fallen world, but not necessary human imposed-. Poverty, greed oppression and war-human imposed. God trusting us with suffering-only way is through, not around. Jesus suffered.
- It was not meant to be like this-you were made of love & joy.
- Add reflection time and questions with music #3

Session 4: Ties that bind-The Wound, The False Self & Agreements

Life has a way of shaping us into the people we were not meant to be. Our personalities and preferences are often shaped by unconscious mandates and injunctions. These are the survival mechanisms that shout to us what we must and must not do. Where do these come from and when did we learn them? This is exhausting. Are these helpful or hurtful in our pursuit of life, freedom and authenticity?

- *"We are afraid of being truly seen, and so we hide our truest selves and offer only what we believe is wanted. ... more tragic than the things that have happened to us is what we have done with them. ... We embraced the messages of our wounds". (John & Stacey Eldredge)*

- From Shawshank Redemption:

Andy Dufresne: *You know what the Mexicans say about the Pacific?*

Red: *No.*

Andy Dufresne: *They say it has no memory. That's where I want to live the rest of my life. A warm place with no memory.*

- Daily Reading June 6, 2019: Until We are Broken

Add reflection time and questions with music #4

Session 5: Waiting for Superman-Rescue and Redemption-The Father's Heart

Is there any hope or help to be expected from God? Is He indifferent, detached or even demanding that we pull it together? Discover His role and His heart as the One who is fierce in His intentionality as He pursues, rescues, redeems and restores.

"She's talking to angels, she's counting the stars
 Making a wish on a passing car
 She's dancing with strangers, she's falling apart
 Waiting for Superman to pick her up
 In his arms yeah, oh in his arms yeah
 She's waiting for Superman
 To lift her up and take her anywhere
 Show her love and climbing through the air
 Save her now before it's too late tonight
 She's waiting for Superman"
 Songwriters: MARTIN JOHNSON
 © Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC
 Performed by Chris Daughtry. Baptized. 2013

- Where can I go from your Spirit. Where can I flee from your presence? (Psalm 139:7)
- Poem-The Hound of Heaven: *"The name is strange. It startles one at first. It is so bold, so new, so fearless. It does not attract, rather the reverse. But when one reads the poem this strangeness disappears. The meaning is understood. As the hound follows the hare, never ceasing in its running, ever drawing nearer in the chase, with unhurrying and imperturbed pace, so does God follow the fleeing soul by His Divine grace. And though in sin or in human love, away from God it seeks*

to hide itself, Divine grace follows after, unwearyingly follows ever after, till the soul feels its pressure forcing it to turn to Him alone in that never-ending pursuit." J.F.X. O'Connor, S.J.

- Mulholland-Invitation to Journey: (Page 25)
- Add worship segment # 5

Session 6: Who Is This Man? Healing and Restoration (Beautiful Outlaw-John Eldredge)

Jesus is the most controversial figure in human history. Was He a good man with good intentions? A moral philosopher and teacher-perhaps a model of the best in humanity? What of His claims, his life's work and His death? Many claimed to have witnessed remarkable events and had even seen Him after His death- to the point that their testimony caused their own torturous demise. What's this all about and what hope and meaning does this offer have for our story?

- In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God and the Word was with God. (John 1:1)
- Healing and Restoration "The glory of God is man fully alive" (Irenaeus)
- *"He woos, he confronts, he delivers, he heals, he shoots straight, and then he uses intrigue. He lives out before them the most compelling view of God, shows them an incredibly attractive holiness while shattering the religious glaze. But still, he lets them walk away if they choose."* (John Eldredge)
- Coming Home: Purpose, Identity, Calling and Community: Your Place in the Larger Story.
- Daily Reading-June 20, 2019.
- "I Hold the Pen" song lyrics and the story behind the song.
- Farther along-Josh Garrels: <https://youtu.be/IctD9l4F-ag>
- Add worship segment #6
- Add Communion

SAMPLE SERMON-Who Is This Man?

The Gospel of John 1:1-18;

In the beginning the Word already existed.

The Word was with God,
and the Word was God.

2He existed in the beginning with God.

3God created everything through him,
and nothing was created except through him.

4The Word gave life to everything that was created,^a
and his life brought light to everyone.

5The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness can never extinguish it.^b

6God sent a man, John the Baptist,^c **7**to tell about the light so that everyone might believe because of his testimony. **8**John himself was not the light; he was simply a witness to tell about the light. **9**The one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.

10He came into the very world he created, but the world didn't recognize him. **11**He came to his own people, and even they rejected him. **12**But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. **13**They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God.

14So the Word became human^d and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness.^e And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son.

15John testified about him when he shouted to the crowds, "This is the one I was talking about when I said, 'Someone is coming after me who is far greater than I am, for he existed long before me.'"

16From his abundance we have all received one gracious blessing after another.^f **17**For the law was given through Moses, but God's unfailing love and faithfulness came through Jesus Christ. **18**No one has ever seen God. But the unique One, who is himself God,^g is near to the Father's heart. He has revealed God to us.

Who is this man they call Jesus?

We left off from our last meeting discussing the Kingdom of God. We asked ourselves:
Is it here now?

What does it look like?

What is my role?

How do I apply this in areas of my life and the lives of others?

We concluded (or, at least I did), that the Kingdom of God is:

- Proclaimed to be present by the man known as Jesus.
- It holds characteristics of being here- Now and Not yet.
- It is accessible to us.
- That we play a critical role in manifesting the Kingdom.

We further determined that the Kingdom of God is similar to what happened in World War II, at D Day. The invasion by the Allied forces ushered in a victory that was only partial. Many battles were fought and lives lost in the march to Berlin. The victory in Normandy defeated an enemy, but it was only in taking Berlin that the enemy was finally destroyed.

Today, I want to lead us into the season that the Church has called Lent. Lent is the six weeks that precedes Easter and Easter is held as the most Holy of Christian holidays.

To get started, I want to address the man known as Jesus. His life and His work. These are two distinct areas that hold the pillars of the entire Christian faith. Indeed, our faith is anchored upon key truths about this man. If any of this falters, if we stray but just a little from who He is and what He did, we undermine the entire basis of our faith. If this is lost, so is our reason and with it, our hope. It is therefore crucial to our reason and purpose, indeed, our confidence in faith, that we establish ourselves firmly on this topic. So, let's get started.

I mentioned last week that you can appraise the value of something by what is paid, or done for it. For example, if you kidnap my dog and demand a 6 figure sum for its safe return, I am going to grieve and tell you "enjoy the dog".

However, if you take my child or my wife, we have another matter at hand. I will call upon my friends and every resource at my disposal to find and rescue my loved one. I will move heaven and earth to rescue my beloved. I will break laws, place myself in danger and risk everything I own to get her back. It will consume everything about and within me. I will not rest until the mission is accomplished.

If this moves you, even a little, then you have an inkling, a hint of what God has experienced-has done and is doing on our behalf.

What do I mean by this?

To really understand what has been done for us, we have to look at the larger story-the context of human history and how it intersects with our lives. We have to survey the

world in which we reside, considering both the seen and the unseen. There is much going on here. Some of this precedes us, some of it is occurring around us and some of it is yet to occur.

To put it directly, we live our lives in the midst of a battle-a cosmic battle if you will. There are two distinct kingdoms-one of darkness and one of light. Put another way, one of evil and one of good.

Think about all of the stories that move your heart and you will get a sense of the real-life drama at hand. A villain, a quest, a hero and a beloved, held in captivity. Something has gone terribly wrong and the villain holds sway over the beloved. The hero must overcome great odds and usually, a cost of his\her own life to rescue the beloved from the evil one. And what of the beloved-how did he\she get into this peril? And what will be her response to the hero's valiant attempts at rescue? Has she been entrapped so long that she has become comfortable with her captor. Has her mind been so tainted that she no longer recognizes her hero? Has she resigned herself to a life of slavery, trading familiarity over truth?

And this is where we find ourselves. It is late in the saga and we are just now becoming aware of all that is going on.

And what *IS* going on?

Well, before the birth of the promised One over 2,000 years ago, that is, the Messiah, it would look like this:

Mankind had been in spiritual bondage for over 4,000 years. And it showed. It showed in the physical world, where death, disease, famine and war were the familiar woes of existence. The average life expectancy was varied. The ancient Greeks were on the lucky end at 25-35 years. The Egyptians at 20 years and the Chinese around 25 years. The quality of life for the vast majority of humans was so substandard, we would balk at living like that for even a day.

What went wrong? We have to go further back in the narrative to get a glimpse of this. As most of us grew up learning, there was a garden and two inhabitants (human inhabitants, that is). They were the crown of creation-God's very Image walking upon the earth. We get a sense of daily life and the intimacy of this relationship from the book of Genesis. Imagine for a moment, if you will, what a day in the garden would have been like:

There is warmth and beauty, purpose and belonging. You have been given a name by your Father and He speaks with you, walks with you daily, unencumbered by distance, confusion, busyness or worry. You are fully aware of who you are and whose you are, basking in the confidence and glow of a deep and resounding love. Your steps have purpose. You were created to rule and share in the glory of God. There is no blemish, no stain, no brokenness. Only divine perfection, bestowed by the hands of a loving Creator. Think of the best moments in your life, where 'all is well' settled deeply into your soul.

(PAUSE). Now, think of that as a design for eternity and you get both a glimpse of Eden and a glimmer of heaven.

But our story unfolds and something does indeed go terribly wrong. Two things actually.

1. Another being enters the picture. It is described as a serpent. But don't be fooled here. This is biblical language used to describe something detestable and sinister. It would take more than a simple snake to alter the course of human history.

This is no mere physical creation or mortal. It is the embodiment of a powerful and dark force-the former Captain of Heaven's Armies. Before becoming a groveling reptile, he was known as Lucifer-The Angel of Light. He walked the courts of heaven in an unfathomable beauty and authority. He was the second only to the Holy Trinity in his majesty and power. And he fell prey to his own glory-a pride that would consume him and fuel the fires of a burning rage and rebellion against God.

We are told in the book of Revelation & Ezekial that he attempted a revolt-a gruesome and notorious effort to overtake God and declare himself king. In this effort, he recruited one-third of the angels. There was war in heaven. Listen to the description from Ezekial 28: 11-19. (Read from the Bible).

So, Lucifer the angel become Satan the evil one, defeated in his revolt-cast from the thrown of heaven. But not destroyed. Not yet.

2. So enter our characters-our ancestral beginnings known as Adam and Eve. God has chosen to risk and create yet again. Something different-not quite angelic and not quite God. A human-never seen before. Even the angels were amazed.

These beings are known to be 'just a little under' the angels of heaven, in regards to their stature and perhaps their power. But there is something more divinely unique about them that none had ever seen. What was distinct about these two were that they were created in the very image of God himself. They would have free will.

Free will to love, to choose and even, to reject. Nothing had ever been created with this ability and nothing ever has sense.

So the story of the apple holds another important detail about human nature and human dignity. It is the ability to choose. We know the backdrop here. There are two trees-one we can eat from and the other we are to stay away from. Call it boundaries, or rules. A plumb line for our souls that allow us the dignity to choose and to honor, to obey and to commit. To be and to become. Choices do that.

So the serpent arrives with an idea, a plan in mind. To deceive God's beloved. Where he could not defeat his enemy in direct confrontation, the evil One sneaks around to the weaker side and attempts to capture God's heart-His very own creation in man.

Up to this moment, all of creation, including free will, was held within the dominion of mankind. It was ours to rule and ours to lose. And we did-lose.

The conversation between Satan and Eve set the stage for doubt- a poisonous element that will destroy a relationship from the inside out. It was pride that took out Lucifer, but suspicion that took out the first humans. Through the brief discourse in Eden, we bought the lie that God was holding out on us and that we could find life on our own. A conviction of self-sufficiency and a response in rebellion.

And in this transaction-the lie that we could eat from the tree and be 'like God', we handed over our free will and destiny to a fearful creature-bent upon vengeance against God. He would have us for himself and with it, the keys to govern the earth.

We handed it all over on a lie. Cooperative degradation. A partner in crime.

It would take an impossible rescue to break the chains of our captivity and a cost that we could not bear.

But why can't God just overlook this issue and make things right? A common question and certainly, a legitimate one. But as a friend of mine says, we can be foolish creatures. We ask like naïve children who, with innocent eyes, look to our father and ask-"can I have the moon"? We know not of what we ask. The implications of a forgetful God would shatter the entire universe as we know it. It is complicated, but let me say this. We want a God that is unchanging-steady and certain in all decisions. We want a God of justice. It is what holds the universe together-justice, rules of law and certainty.

So our God has a choice-let his beloved linger in an existence of an indefinite, tortuous captivity, or launch a daring rescue. And HE is a God of integrity, meaning, He has self-imposed rules to follow-Satan does not.

At what price does an offense against a Holy God come? How much can I pay to recompense the One who has given me life, provided for my well-being and who holds such great affection and determination for our relationship?

This is another complicated issue. There are several types of justice. The one we are referring to is retributive justice. Payback. It involves both balancing the equation and compensation for the loss. As an example-if I damage your car, I have to pay to get it repaired-restore to it's original condition. But there is more-loss of time, nature of the offense, my motives against you. All of that is factored in. What about the harm done in loss of trust? If I borrowed your car and intentionally drove it recklessly, what does that do to our relationship beyond a dented quarter panel? It is complex. And if somehow, you just forgave me and let the offense go, it does not change the fact that something has been altered. We have issues of trust, reliability and even my own welfare in the mix. If you allow

me to abuse our relationship, it simply gives me permission to continue in the behavior that I have chosen. I will be worse off than before it started. So, just letting the matter go is a cop out-a head in the sand response. It smacks of avoidance. I don't want a God that avoids the tough issues.

So, the offense, that is, the sin, must be addressed. God deals with both offenders in the garden. In Genesis 3, he condemns the serpent and banishes Adam and Eve from paradise. It is painful, but it has to be done.

But look a little closer into the heart of God. There are two attributes that render a clear perspective on how much God loves us:

1. He is merciful to His beloved and provides for their journey. They are not cast outside into the desolation of a decaying world. Instead, they are given accommodations in the form of clothing and wisdom concerning the new conditions of the world in which they enter. It will be difficult, but He will not abandon them. He will come back for them.
2. While He is steady in His response to the offense, He has already crafted a plan to redeem mankind. It will come at a great cost. Genesis 3: 14-15:

Then the Lord God said to the serpent,
 "Because you have done this, you are cursed
 more than all animals, domestic and wild.
 You will crawl on your belly,
 groveling in the dust as long as you live.

15And I will cause hostility between you and the woman,
 and between your offspring and her offspring.
 He will strike^b your head,
 and you will strike his heel."

This is a foreshadowing of the arrival of God's Son, who will be sent to redeem mankind through His sacrificial death to pay for our sin and to ransom the captives. He comes to restore the Kingdom of Heaven to a fallen world. It will happen because Jesus defeats Satan-beats him at his own game-crushes the head of the serpent. In this defeat, He rescues the captives.

And why would HE do this-leave the comforts of heaven and His magisterial role as Son of the Living God-The Word, whereby all things are created?

He does it because of love. And Love changes everything. But, even with this dramatic sacrifice, would His beloved respond? After all, she rebelled once and she has freedom to choose. There is still some remnant of the Divine Image branded upon the human heart-one that entails free will. She would have to respond freely for the relationship to be restored. Rejection a second time is more painful than the first. Could she and would she give her heart back?

Of course, God could make her love Him and remove all risk. It would be in everyone's best interest, really. But God will not operate like that. He honors free will and in that, human dignity. He will not compromise on this principle. So, how to determine if she is willing to return and love again?

You see, love is not really love if it is not conveyed and returned under the auspices of free will. God was not looking to create a subject. Listen to the 19th century theologian, Soren Kierkegaard's version of the story:

Suppose there was a king who loved a humble maiden. The king was like no other king. No one dared breathe a word against him, for he had the strength to crush all opponents. And yet this mighty king was melted by love for a humble maiden. How could he declare his love for her? In an odd sort of way, his kingliness tied his hands. If he brought her to the palace and crowned her head with jewels and clothed her body in royal robes, she would surely not resist—no one dared resist him. But would she love him?

She would say she loved him, of course, but would she truly? Or would she live with him in fear, nursing a private grief for the life she had left behind? Would she be happy at his side? How could he know? If he rode to her forest cottage in his royal carriage, with an armed escort waving bright banners, that too would overwhelm her. He did not want a cringing subject. He wanted a lover, an equal. He wanted her to forget that he was a king and she a humble maiden and to let shared love cross the gulf between them. For it is only in love that the unequal can be made equal. (as quoted in *Disappointment with God*)

Christian author and teacher John Eldredge describe it like this for us The king clothes himself as a beggar and renounces his throne in order to win her hand. The Incarnation, the life and the death of Jesus, answers once and for all the question, "What is God's heart toward me?" This is why Paul says in Romans 5, "Look here, at the Cross. Here is the demonstration of God's heart. At the point of our deepest betrayal, when we had run our farthest from him and gotten so lost in the woods we could never find our way home, God came and died to rescue us."

From the book-Sacred Romance (John Eldredge)

We opened our session with John Chapter 1. *In the Beginning was the Word*. This is Jesus Christ, in His divinity, existing from eternity. This is the Jesus, in His humanity, who leaves the majestic domain of heaven to defeat the power of darkness once and for all and to bring God's children back home.

So, when we talked last time about Jesus announcing His purpose for coming to earth, we can look back at this scripture a little more informed. Now listen, with all that has been said in mind:

The Gospel of Mathew- 4:12-17

12When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he left Judea and returned to Galilee.
13He went first to Nazareth, then left there and moved to Capernaum, beside the Sea of Galilee, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali. **14**This fulfilled what God said through the prophet Isaiah:

15“In the land of Zebulun and of Naphtali,

beside the sea, beyond the Jordan River,

in Galilee where so many Gentiles live,

16the people who sat in darkness

have seen a great light.

And for those who lived in the land where death casts its shadow,

a light has shined.”^f

17From then on Jesus began to preach, “Repent of your sins and turn to God, *for the Kingdom of Heaven is near.*”^g

So, our first glimpse into who this man is can now be clarified. He is the Son of God, sent to redeem mankind, who rebelled against God and forfeited the earthly realm to the evil one. In closing, let’s take a peek at what we will discuss about His work at the next meeting. From author Max Lucado, in His book *A Gentle Thunder*, he quotes John 1:46: “Nathaniel said to Philip, “Can anything good come from Nazareth?” Philip answered, “Come and see”.

He then writes:

Nathaniel’s question still lingers, even two thousand years later...Can anything good come out of Nazareth? Come and see.

Come and see the changed lives:

The alcoholic now dry,

The embittered now joyful,

The shamed now forgiven...

Marriages rebuilt, the orphans embraced,

The imprisoned inspired...

Come and see the pierced hand of God touch the most common heart, wipe the tear from the wrinkled face, and forgive the ugliest sin.

Come and see. He avoids no seeker. He ignores no probe. He fears no search. Come and see.

Let us pray.

There are no applications for this week's message. Instead of application, there is reflection. That is a part of what the season of Lent is-a time to reflect and a time to remember. You will find a list of questions to take with you for our time of quiet reflection and to use during your devotional time this week.

SHIFT INTO REFLECTION COMMUNION TIME & SONG "Come and Listen-David Crowder.

NOTE: After the Communion song, put up- Slide 6 : Reflection Questions\Time with God

Appendix C: Study Forms

Confidentiality Agreement Form

Confidentiality Agreement for assisting with the project:

Preaching the Gospel to Trauma Survivors

I, _____, will be assisting the researcher by
 _____ (specific job description, e.g., being an interpreter/translator)

I agree to abide by the following guidelines regarding confidentiality:

1. Hold in strictest confidence the identification of any individual(s) that may be revealed during the course of performing research or logistical assistance throughout the research process and after it is complete.
2. Keep all the research information shared with me confidential by not discussing or sharing the research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) with anyone other than the *Researcher(s)*.
3. Keep all research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) secure while it is in my possession (e.g., using a password-protected computer).
4. Return all research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) to the *Researcher(s)* when I have completed the research tasks.
5. After consulting with the *Researcher(s)*, erase or destroy all research information in any form or format regarding this research project that is not returnable to the *Researcher(s)* (e.g., information stored on computer hard drive) upon completion of the research tasks.

(Print Name)

(Signature)

(Date)

Participant Invitation

Dear Valued Participant,

My name is Jeff Brooks, and I am a Doctor of Ministry student at Asbury Theological Seminary, located in Wilmore, Kentucky. I am reaching out to you with the hope that you would consider participating in a research study that explores effective ways to preach the Gospel to those who have experienced a traumatic event in their lives. As a researcher, my goal is to work with pastors and churches to investigate and improve upon areas of preaching and ministry that are most helpful to the people in their congregations and communities. Your experiences are important and are critical to improving ministry practice. Thank you for your willingness to be a part of this effort!

This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at Asbury Theological Seminary (IRB ID # 19-14). You are eligible to participate in this study even if you do not meet the criteria for trauma survivor

Your participation in this study is *voluntary* and all responses will be *anonymous*. No personal identifiable information will be associated with your responses. There are five parts to the study:

1. Initial, online consent form and screening survey. This takes about 15 minutes.
2. A new page for a Post Traumatic Growth Inventory pre-test will be provided. This takes about 10 minutes.
3. Attendance at 6, consecutive weekly sermon sessions. These take about 1 hour and 15 minutes each, for a total of 7.25 hours.
4. A Post Traumatic Growth Inventory post test after attending the sermon sessions. This takes about 10 minutes.
5. A post sermon series questionnaire asking about your experience.

Please follow this link to the Initial Survey: Informed Consent.

<https://tragedyandhealing.com/first-form/>

Your participation in this study is important, and it will help to contribute to a growing body of ministry research that will, hopefully, help to strengthen pastoral training and improve the welfare of those who have experienced a traumatic event in their lives. If you have questions concerning the study, please do not hesitate to contact me, Jeff Brooks, by

email at jeff.brooks@asburyseminary.edu or my faculty advisor, Virginia T. Holeman, PhD., LMFT, LPCC by email at toddy.holeman@asburyseminary.edu

Thank you for your time,

Jeff R. Brooks

Doctoral of Ministry Student

Asbury Theological Seminary

204 N. Lexington Ave | Wilmore, Kentucky 40390-1199

Informed Consent

INFORMED CONSENT

Where are you God? Finding God in the Tragedy of Life

You are invited to participate in a research study being done by **Jeff R. Brooks** from Asbury Theological Seminary. You are invited because *of your response to the invitation to participate in the study.*

If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to:

1. Attend 6 weekly scheduled lecture\preaching & gathering sessions. These will last for 1 hour and 15 minutes. The sessions will begin at 6pm each Monday evening, beginning September 9th and ending on October 13th, 2019. Childcare will also be provided. The location of the sessions will be The Vail Church: 39209 US Hwy 6, Avon CO 81620.
 2. Complete up to 4 brief surveys through your assigned, confidential, online portal- A PTSD screening survey will begin the process. A Post Traumatic Growth Inventory pre-test will follow. After the sermon series, a Post Traumatic Growth Inventory post-test and a questionnaire asking about your experience will follow. If you prefer a paper version, this can be provided to you at your request. Each survey takes approximately 5-10 minutes to complete, though some participants may prefer to take longer.
 3. All email addresses and the data information collected is encrypted and blinded from the researcher. This means that Jeff Brooks will never know the contact information of the participant, nor the identity of the specific participant that is answering the questions.
- The sessions and refreshments are offered at no cost to you. There is no compensation offered to you for your participation and time.
 - Confidentiality is important and we will honor your privacy as a participant in this study. You may recognize other participants in the study. We ask that you not reveal anyone else's name, or anything else about their participation in the sessions. If anyone else is given information about you, they will not know your name. Instead, for research purposes, a number or initials will be used instead of your name. There will be no recording devices or any other research assistants involved in the study. However, you may occasionally see a staff member or volunteer who assists with set up, technology or other logistical needs. Anyone involved in this effort have also signed a confidentiality statement, agreeing to not identify any of the participants that they may see while performing assistance to the sessions.
 - By signing this consent, you also agree to not share any information about others participation in the sessions. The only limitation to confidentiality is in the

unlikely event that there is a clear threat of harm to self or others. The researcher will work to ensure a safe and sacred space for everyone participating in the study.

- If something makes you feel uncomfortable in any way while you are in the study, you may leave the session at any time. You may also tell **Jeff Brooks**, who can be reached at jeff.brooks@asburyseminary.edu, or by phone (970-648-4400). There is also a list of qualified counselors to assist you. Participants incur counseling costs at their own expense. You can also refuse to respond to any or all of the survey questions, and you may withdrawal from the process at any time.
- If you would like to know the results of the study, a copy of the final dissertation report can be made available to you at no cost. You will be notified by secure email as to the results of the study, which will be provided through the same link and access as used for the study. This is anticipated to be on or about July 1, 2020.
- If you have any *questions* about the research study, please contact **Jeff Brooks** at jeff.brooks@asburyseminary.edu. Phone-970-648-4400. Providing your email and clicking on 'SUBMIT' means that you have read this or had it read to you, and that you want to be in the study. ***If you do not want to be in the study, please do not proceed.*** Being in the study is up to you, and no one will be upset if you do not sign this paper or even if you change your mind later. You agree that you have been informed about this study and why it is being done and what to do.

EMAIL

SUBMIT

Background Information about You

We need to collect some basic information about you to help with our research. This helps us make better interpretations of the data we collect. All information is held in strict confidentiality. Your name will never be associated with this information.

Please tell us your:

1. Age _____
2. Gender:
 - ☐ Female
 - ☐ Male
3. Relationship Status (Please select the one that best fits you at this moment)
 - ☐ Single, never married
 - ☐ Single, divorced
 - ☐ Single, widowed
 - ☐ In a consistent dating relationship

- ☐ Living with a partner
- ☐ Separated from spouse or committed partner
- ☐ Married one time
- ☐ Remarried

4. Ethnicity/race/national origin (mark one):

- ☐ **American Indian or Alaskan Native:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.
- ☐ **Asian:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent, including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, the Philippine Islands.
- ☐ **Black or African American:** A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.
- ☐ **Hispanic or Latino/a:** A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.
- ☐ **Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa or other Pacific Islands.
- ☐ **White:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East or North Africa.
- ☐ **Blended racial/national heritage:** A person who considers herself/himself a part of more than one of the groups listed here. If you marked this option, please give details: _____

5. Please indicate which religious group you identify with:

- ☐ Protestant _____
- ☐ Catholic _____
- ☐ Jewish _____
- ☐ Buddhist _____
- ☐ Hindu _____
- ☐ Humanism
- ☐ Native American Religion
- ☐ Other _____
- ☐ Not affiliated with any religious group

6. Please indicate your highest educational level

- ☐ High school graduate
- ☐ College freshman
- ☐ College sophomore

- ☐ College junior
- ☐ College senior
- ☐ AA degree
- ☐ BA/BS degree
- ☐ Master's student
- ☐ Master's degree
- ☐ PhD student/candidate (abd)
- ☐ PhD
- ☐ Other _____

7. Please indicate your current student status

- ☐ Full time student
- ☐ Part time student
- ☐ Not enrolled in any degree program

8. Employment

- ☐ Full time employment (35 hours + per week)
- ☐ Part time employment
- ☐ Not working

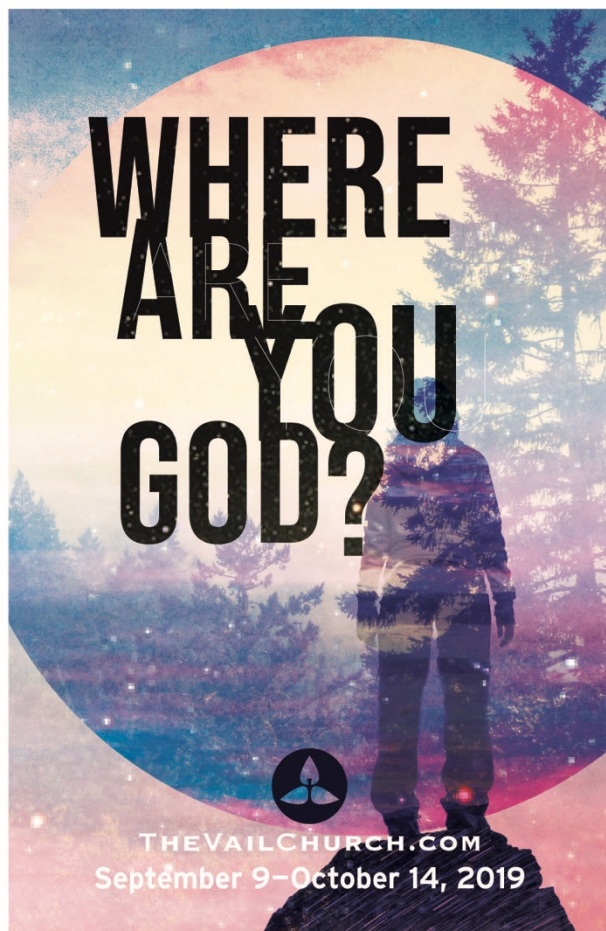
9. Have you ever received or been in counseling for a stressful event?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not yet, but would like to

Informed Consent Appendix A-Counseling Resources

1. Samaritan Counseling Center
THE SAMARITAN CENTER OF THE ROCKIES
PO BOX 122 | EDWARDS, CO 81632
970.926.8558 | INFO@SAMARITAN-VAIL.ORG
<http://samaritan-vail.org/>
2. Hope Center
Eagle River Valley
PO BOX 2127 Eagle CO 81631
970) 306-4673 (HOPE)
admin@ourhopecenter.org
<https://ourhopecenter.org/>
3. Mindsprings Health
Crisis Line-888-207-4004
<https://www.mindspringshealth.org/about/>

Study Flier (Front and Back)



THE VAIL CHURCH • PO Box 955 • 39209 HWY 6 • AVON, CO 81620-0955
 YOU CAN FIND US ON FACEBOOK, OR BY DOWNLOADING OUR APP



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