

## Session Three: Four Emotional Horsemen of the Apocalypse

First a note about Anxiety:

Speed Leas ("Moving Your Church Through Conflict") names the Levels of Conflict (which I am using for anxiety) in behavioral terms. When we see the behaviors, we can discern the level of anxiety at which the group is operating.

Constructive Process is inversely proportional to the Level of Anxiety!

Managing anxiety is both an individual and corporate responsibility.

Anxiety is a secondary emotion, indicating that something is off. What is the primary emotion?

Exploring four options:

I. Pain

- A. church is often proficient navigating health/death/dying pain
- B. What of pain received within the community of faith? Church sometimes hurts.
- C. William Faulkner "The past is never dead. It's not even past."
- D. CS Lewis "Mental (and I would say, spiritual) pain is less dramatic than physical pain, but it is more common and also more hard to bear. The frequent attempt to conceal mental pain increases the burden: it is easier to say "My tooth is aching" than to say "My heart is broken."
- E. Hurt people tend to hurt people

II. Fear

- A. List your fears. How many? How long did it take to make the list?
- B. Scripture's voice regarding fear:
  - 1. Do not be afraid
  - 2. cultivate Fear-of-the-Lord
  - 3. Jesus in John 14: 27, " Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."

III. Grief

- A. Congregations experience corporate grief. What are your stories of grief?
- B. The biblical tradition of Lament
  - 1. How have you been able to corporately lament your stories of grief?
- C. Psalm 42 "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God. My soul thirst for God, for the living God. Where can I go and meet with God? My tears have been my food day and night while people say to me all day long, "Where is your God?"... Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God"

IV. (Mis)Trust (perhaps not an emotion per se, but certainly emotional in orientation)

- A. Broken trust incurs all three above emotions. Trust is hard to build and easy to subvert
- B. We live in a deeply skeptical culture. We are impacted by that culture.
- C. Scripture's voice regarding trust:
  - 1. Don't trust in humanity
  - 2. Trust in God
- D. Jane Hooper Peifer "God does not need us to trust each other," "God needs us to trust God and love each other. The Lord is our rock and our refuge."

Our desire is to be led by God's voice/energy/leading/Spirit. The base emotions are powerful... god-like power. They influence us. They drive us. They cause us to make decisions. Base emotions are personal but rarely remain private. They are transmitted into others (even generationally). Getting in touch with our base emotions is an exercise that allows us to discern their voice from God's voice in our lives.