

Beyond Pleasantville



“Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered.” Hebrews 5:8

Pleasantville was a disturbing movie about a fictional town where everyone sought predictability, security, and was a place without conflict. For dramatic effect, all the characters were shown only in black and white through most of the film. While their life was pleasant, it was not fulfilling. Two outsiders stumbled into the pleasantly boring reality and challenged the status quo, bringing unfamiliar risk and passion. With these new situations, the people of *Pleasantville* began to experience hardships and, to everyone's surprise, joy.

When we crave security in this life above all else, and not the Giver of life, the security we desire ultimately disappears like a vapor. Sadly, even the people of God in their human stubbornness pleaded for the pleasant life, “They say to the seers, ‘See no more visions!’ and to the prophets, ‘Give us no more visions of what is right! Tell us *pleasant* things, prophesy illusions...Stop confronting us with the Holy One of Israel!’” (Isaiah 30:10-11). Left to our own strategies, we can easily seek comfort over truth. When truth becomes a casualty, we are in the land of illusion.

But what if God, in his infinite wisdom and love for us, *has rigged the world to not work?* God sees the eternal value of maturing our character in his wise use of pain and suffering in our lives. C.S. Lewis once boldly stated, “Pain insists on being attended to... It is his [God's] megaphone to rouse a deaf world.” Pain is often God's vehicle in the refining process of growing us in godliness right in the middle of the confusion.

One of Genesis' core values is God's *redemptive* use of pain and suffering to *transform* us. People seek our biblical counseling and soul care training for spiritual assistance in finding God through the pain and suffering as we surrender to his will.

It is for this reason that we have invited national speaker, recording artist, and prolific author, Sheila Walsh, as our keynote speaker to our Genesis' *Evening of Stories* funding event this October 19th. She powerfully conveys her painful yet redemptive story of God's amazing grace in the midst of her despair and brokenness. Her story will draw people into the larger story of God's healing and redemption. This message is indeed good news that is desperate to be heard in our cynical world.

Left to our own, people strive for pleasant things and, inescapably, it leaves us empty. The citizens of *Pleasantville* did not know color and the richness of life until they experienced authentic suffering. Thankfully God strategically uses the church to give meaningful comfort and deep spiritual guidance to the distressed to move beyond '*Pleasantville*', and with Jesus, we can learn wisdom and love through our own suffering.

Warmly in Christ,

Dave

Executive Director

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