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Praying in Pain: Knowing You Are Heard

Thursday, July 2, 2026

Host: Donna Leland

Guest: Glenna Marshall

2 Corinthians 5; 2 Corinthians 12; Matthew 25

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Scripture Callout

2 Corinthians 5 - Our earthly bodies are temporary, but in Christ we look forward to resurrection life and a body prepared for eternity.

Program Summary

Donna Leland welcomes author Glenna Marshall for a tender and practical conversation about chronic pain, prayer, and learning to trust God when healing has not yet come. Glenna shares how honest vulnerability within the church allows others to obey the biblical call to bear one another's burdens.

The conversation offers wise counsel for anyone walking alongside someone in pain: acknowledge the suffering, avoid comparison or one-upmanship, pray specifically, and look for simple ways to lighten the load. Glenna also explains what it means to steward suffering - receiving even painful circumstances as something God can use for His glory and for the good of others.

The program closes with the hope of the resurrection. Though suffering is real and often long-lasting, it is not forever. In Christ, pain has an expiration date, and believers can look forward to new bodies and endless life with the Lord.

Key Takeaways

- Being honest about pain allows the church family to love, pray, and help bear burdens.
- People in chronic pain often need acknowledgement and compassion more than comparison or quick explanations.
- A simple act of kindness - an ice pack, a prayer, a meal, a listening ear - can become a powerful expression of love.
- Suffering can be stewarded for God's glory when we trust Him and remain faithful through it.
- The resurrection reminds believers that suffering is temporary and will one day give way to eternal joy in Christ.
- God hears His children in pain, even when healing has not yet come.

Scripture References

- Galatians 6:2 - Bear one another's burdens.
- 2 Corinthians 12 - Paul's thorn in the flesh and God's sustaining grace.
- Matthew 25 - The parable of the talents and faithful stewardship.
- 2 Corinthians 5 - The hope of resurrection bodies and eternal life.
- Romans 8:28 - God works all things together for good for those who love Him.

- 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 - The dead in Christ will rise, and believers will be with the Lord.

Quote of the Day

“People can't obey the command to bear one another's burdens if they don't know what your burden is.”

Books & Resources Mentioned

- Praying in Pain: How to Know You're Heard When You Haven't Been Healed - Glenna Marshall
- He Will Hold Me Fast - hymn featured during the broadcast
- Be Thou My Vision - hymn featured during the broadcast

Broadcast Notes

- Glenna Marshall discusses her book Praying in Pain: How to Know You're Heard When You Haven't Been Healed.
- The conversation emphasizes the importance of vulnerability within the church family.
- Practical encouragement is offered for spouses, friends, caregivers, and church members who want to minister wisely to those in chronic pain.
- The broadcast includes the hymns He Will Hold Me Fast and Be Thou My Vision, both reinforcing the themes of God's sustaining grace and eternal hope.

Today's Challenge

Today, ask God to show you one person who may be carrying pain quietly. Reach out with compassion, offer to pray specifically, and consider one practical way to lighten that person's load. If you are the one in pain, consider sharing your burden with a trusted believer so they can help carry it with you.

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You that You hear us in the midst of pain. Help us to steward suffering faithfully, to bear one another's burdens with compassion, and to hold fast to the hope of resurrection life. Use this broadcast to comfort the hurting, encourage caregivers, and draw each of us closer to You. Amen.

Complete Transcript

07 02 2026 Welcome to Mark and Friends, I'm your host Donna Leland. Today we're going to talk about pain, and our response to pain, and actually praying in pain. Glenna Marshall is joining us, and she has written her book, How to Know You're Heard When You Haven't Been Healed.

Maybe you're talking about something today, dear friend, that really hits close to home. Thank you so much, Glenna, for joining us on Mark and Friends. Well, I'm so glad to be back, Donna.

In our conversation last week, Glenna, we were going over your story, and how your symptoms really have never gone away. You're just managing them. And how, as a person fully engaged in ministry with your husband, that it's a little uncomfortable sometimes to admit our need, and go before others with it.

There's a part of me that thinks, oh, it's so attention-seeking, or there are people who are in so much worse shape than I am, I should just tough it out. But what I've learned is that when I'm honest with my church family about my struggles, or I'm having a hard week, or just this past Sunday during our corporate prayer time, I just ask for prayer, because I've been dealing with significant pain in the last couple of weeks. Oh, how they rush to love me, how they pray intentionally for me, how they try to alleviate some of my household burdens for me.

It's not judgment. I've never met with judgment. I've met with love.

And we have these commands in Scripture to bear one another's burdens, but people can't obey that command if they don't know what your burden is. And so, it's not being dramatic or self-seeking to share those burdens with others, it is actually sort of a way to help them obey the commands of Scripture. And then when you're in a good place, you can do that for someone else.

And so, I think we lean into those spiritual disciplines rather than away, and I think when we're in pain and not feeling well, the inclination is to lean away. But these are the things God has given us to sustain us and carry us, and so we don't want to divorce ourselves from the very things God has given us to help us endure. Our approach might be different, but we do want to keep coming to Him for our perseverance, for the things that will help us hold fast.

When the tempter would prevail, He will hold me fast. I could never keep my hope through life's fearful path. For my love is often cold, He must hold me fast.

He will hold me fast, He will hold me fast. For my Savior loves me so, He will hold me fast. Those He saves are His delight, Christ will hold me fast.

Precious in His holy sight, He will hold me fast. He'll not let my soul be lost, His promises shall last. Bought by Him at such a cost, He will hold me fast.

He will hold me fast, He will hold me fast. For my Savior loves me so, He will hold me fast. For the life He bled and died, Christ will hold me fast.

Justice has been satisfied, He will hold me fast. Raised with Him to endless life, He will hold me fast. Till my faith is turned to sight, when He comes at last.

He will hold me fast, He will hold me fast. For my Savior loves me so, He will hold me fast. He will hold me fast, He will hold me fast.

For my Savior loves me so, He will hold me fast. Let's talk to people who have someone in their life who does live with chronic pain. And how can we minister to them? I know, you know, it's important not to get compassion fatigue for people.

Because, you know, just to be able to hear, you know, I'm hurting again today. I think we just have got to be okay with hearing that over and over and over and over and over again because that's their reality. And I think they just want to know somebody's in it with them.

Am I right about that? Absolutely. I think one of the things that's hardest for me is when I do voice, I'm having a really bad pain day and I met with, oh, me too. My back's killing me.

You know, I, there almost is a temptation for people. Like they think that commiserating will make you feel better. But for a person who has an actual condition that causes regular intense pain, sometimes that commiserating doesn't help.

It makes you feel like your pain is being belittled to regular aches and pains of life. When probably a person with a chronic condition lives at a pretty high, regular level of pain at all times. And you just, you learn your pain threshold actually gets just higher and higher.

You learn to live with it. And so I, sometimes I think the one-upsmanship can be really discouraging to a person who has a chronic pain condition. So what my, and what my husband who does not have a pain condition, what he has learned to do in our 23 years of marriage is not to say, oh yeah, you know, I'm feeling bad today too.

Or my back was hurting from working in the yard yesterday, but is to say, I'm just sorry. And I'm going to pray for you today. You know, you can just get through this day.

And is there anything I can do? You know, do you need an ice pack? Do you need me to heat up your heating pad? You know, that kind of thing, just an acknowledgement of pain. And, and actually in my book, praying in pain, my husband wrote a section at the end on encouragement for friends, spouses, caregivers, you know, to, here's what to say, here's what not to say as he has learned over the years, the things that I have responded well to and things I haven't responded well to. And one of his big encouragements is we know that God, like we spoke earlier, that God uses suffering to refine our faith and teaches perseverance.

And my husband would say, but you don't get to make the person in your life who's in pain rush through that sanctification process. And you don't need to push them to quickly see what God is doing. That's good in their pain because they hurt and you don't want to just, you know, use God's word as a hammer.

Well, I know you're in pain, but God uses all things together for good for those who love him and are called according to his purpose. Well, that verse is very true, but when a person's in the clutch of a really severe physical pain, the first thing you might want to just say is I'm really sorry. Is there something I can do to lighten your load today? I think that's just acknowledgement is maybe the kindest thing you can do and do pray for them and do, you know, pray that they will see God's goodness as he works through their suffering.

But I think your first response should just be acknowledgement and, and prayer. I'm going to pray for you like this. And then tell them how you're going to pray.

That means a lot to me. So wonderful. It's so simple.

We don't have to immediately become a Nobel peace prize winner and figure it out. It's okay. It really is.

Okay. They just need you to acknowledge it. And again, go get the Tylenol, you know, that's right.

I have a, I have a child, one of my kids, he's my younger one. He is a real mercy person. Like compassion is his thing.

And I can remember him being about six years old and I was in a really bad flare up of my disease and I was having trouble walking. And I remember he, he walked in the living room one day and I had just been on the couch on ice and heat and really struggling for a few days. He walked in one morning and he saw me laying there.

He just turned right around. He went straight to the freezer. He pulled out an ice pack.

He brought it to me. I put it under my back. He pulled the blanket up over me and he kissed me on the forehead and walked away.

And I just remember thinking, I'm going to start crying as I share that. What a simple act of compassion. I'll remember it my entire life.

You know, I just think that's not complicated, but that is love. That is so beautiful. Yeah.

It just makes you want to weep because I know it really does. Not only is God using your illness in your life, but in the lives of other people to create an awareness of need and to receive that and to be a part of that process as well. You talk about stewarding your pain or your illness.

What does that mean? Yeah. So I think that if we think, a lot of times we think about suffering or disease or our thorn in the flesh, as Paul likes to call it in 2 Corinthians 12, we think of it as something to be escaped at all times. And that's kind of, you know, our 21st century American sensibility.

Pain, suffering is a thing we try to escape with all of our heart. But sometimes I think we need to look at it as something that God's entrusted us with. You know, we think of stewardship in terms of money or possessions or opportunities or influence our career, our job, like I want to steward this job.

Well, I want to steward my money well. But what if we said I want to steward my suffering? Well, if this is something that God has chosen not to remove from my life, then there must be purpose in it because God is purposeful in everything that he does. He does nothing arbitrarily because he works for his glory and for our good.

So I want to approach it like the parable of the talents that Jesus gives. I think it's in Matthew 25.

I might not be right on that. Someone can check our notes where he gives this parable of the rich master who goes on a journey and he leaves his three servants with talents or gold. And so one of them owes and he invests it and he doubles his money.

The other one is given a little bit less, but he does the same thing and he doubles his money. And then the final servants given very little and he just decides to bury it in the ground. And so then when the master comes back, he praises the first two for how well they stewarded the money that he gave them.

And he says, enter into the joy of your master. And then to the third, he says, you buried it. What were you thinking? And he says, well, I know that you are trying to make money off of my work and that's not really fair.

And he's like, the master's like, it's my money and I gave it to you to steward. And so he is thrown into judgment for that. And I think about that in terms of suffering.

If the Lord has given me something that can be used to glorify him, then I want to be the first two servants. I want there to be a return for this. And some of that is an innate desire for my suffering not to be purposeless.

I need it to mean something. And I know as a Christian that it can bring glory to the Lord if I endure it and trust him anyway. And so I think if we kind of flip the script that suffering, I mean, I do seek to escape it in that I'm on a treatment that, you know, has helped and I'm thankful.

But if the treatment fails, I'm still going to trust the Lord with it. I'm not going to, as Job's wife said, curse God and die. I'm going to keep going because I know that the Lord has carried me to this point and he will carry me to eternity.

And I want to stand before him someday and say, Lord, this was really hard, but you got me to the end and I praise you for it. I think it's a precious thing to be up in the night full of pain and to be able to say, Lord, I trust you. Just hold on to me.

Hold on to me. I think that's exactly where the Lord wants me in this. And so that's what it means to steward it well.

That's what I want to do. And you mentioned the promise of the resurrection and going through the suffering. You just know it's not forever, which I think helps a lot.

This has an end. Absolutely. Your suffering has an expiration date and that should encourage you.

There's a passage in 2 Corinthians five that I love so much where Paul talks about we have to get rid of our earthly tents. And he's talking about our bodies here, like a tent that we dwell in. We're going to get rid of it when we die because these bodies weren't created to last forever.

And thank goodness I don't want this body forever. This one's failed me many times. I don't want to live in it for eternity.

And so then he says, but we're not taking off these tents so that we would be unclothed. So anyone who thinks that heaven is like this gauzy, ethereal, floaty, see-through existence has not read 2 Corinthians five. Because what he actually says is, no, no, we're going to be further clothed with new bodies that will be built to last forever.

And he's talking about the resurrection. Because when Christ returns, the dead in Christ will rise and meet him in the air first, followed by those who are still living. And we will be given brand new bodies that will never hurt and never feel sadness or grief or pain.

No cancer, no arthritis, no MS, no infertility. I mean, nothing that has made our bodies betray us and hurt. We won't have those things.

And in comparison, the suffering that we endure now, though it is difficult and real and hard, it is preparing us for an eternity without suffering. And that's good news for us. This, this is coming to an end someday.

It might not feel like light and temporary, but it is achieving for us an eternal weight of glory that will far outweigh them all. Well, thank you so much, Glenna, for taking time out of your day today. And can we just pray for you? And let's pray for everyone else who today is experiencing chronic pain.

Thank you, Lord Jesus, that you hear our cry in the midst of our pain. And Lord, help us steward it. Help us to take the pain and use it for your glory and other people's good.

Create a sensitivity for all of us to be okay with hearing about a person's pain and wanting to pray with them and care for them in the moment. In Jesus' name, amen. My presence, my light.

Be thou my wisdom and thou my true word. I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord. Thou my true son.

Thou my dwelling and I with thee one. Be thou my battle shield, sword for the fight. Be thou my anchor and be my soul's shelter.

Thou my high tower. Raise thou me heavenward, O power of the ages. I heed not nor man's empty praise.

Thou my inheritance, now and always. Thou and thou only, first in my heart. High king of heaven, my treasure thou art.

High king of heaven, my treasure thou art. High king of heaven, my victory won. May I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's sun.

Heart of my own heart, still be my vision, O Ruler of all. This is Mark and Friends, a ministry of Great News Media.

Coming up tomorrow on Mark and Friends, it's the Bible study, and we get to hear what was on the heart of the team, Mark and his many friends. That's tomorrow, right here on Mark and Friends. We'll see you then.

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