

LISA CRESSMAN
BACKSTORY PREACHING



The Gospel People Don't Want to Hear:
Preaching Challenging Messages



Workshop goals

- Identify the types of listeners' losses.
- Preach with greater insight and empathy.
- Invite the promise of Easter that arises after every Good Friday.

Let us pray.



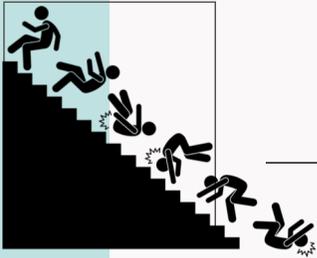
Introductions

Please tell us your name.

Where do you serve?

In one sentence, what is one thing you see that has fallen, is falling, or you fear will fall apart?
(Local context, the nation, or the world)





Themes

What did you hear?

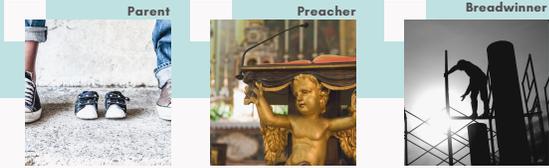
CATEGORIES OF LOSS

- Roles
- Systems
- Livelihoods
- Well-being
- Relationships
- Identity

Categories of Loss defined by Kenneth R. Mitchell and Michael Posner. All Our Lives, All Our Goals: Resources for Postcard Care Leaders. Westborough, John Wiley, 1995.

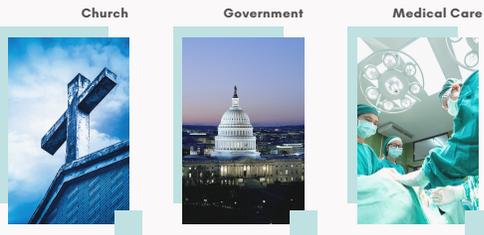


**ROLES: HOW DO YOU DEFINE YOUR PURPOSE?
FOR EXAMPLE...**



SYSTEMS

Can't live without 'em.



LIVELIHOOD

Everything needed to create and keep a roof over your head.

- Education
- Training
- Job
- Transportation
- Continuing education
- Pension
- Insurance
- Financial institutions and markets
- Ability to relocate
- Appropriate clothes



Body Mind Spirit

WELL-BEING _____



RELATIONSHIPS
Family, friends, co-workers...



RELATIONSHIPS
Church, neighborhood, nation...



RELATIONSHIPS
Pets, teams, collections.





Identity

Who am I?



Ubuntu

"I am because we are."

I define myself in relation to.

Identity: We describe ourselves in relation to.



Daughter/Son/Child



Sibling



Clergy

Identity: We describe ourselves in relation to.



Petowner



Seminary Grad



Hometown

Identity: We describe ourselves in relation to.



Hobbies



Inventions



Disposition (e.g., extrovert/introvert)

Identity: We describe ourselves in relation to.



Ideals

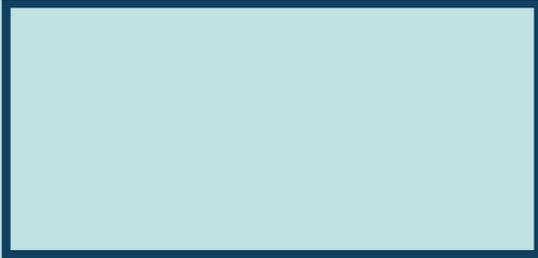


Hopes/memories



Beliefs

When identity, roles, relationships, well-being, systems, or livelihoods we value fall apart, we may feel like we are too.



We're not sure who we are in the broken pieces.

To the extent we valued it, reconstruction will be painful, uncertain, and time consuming.



Clues:
We may hear things like...

Life isn't worth living without 'X.'

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I don't recognize this country.

Clues:
We may hear things like...

Life isn't worth living without 'X.'

I don't recognize this country.

This isn't the world I thought I would give my kids.

Clues:
We may hear things like...

Life isn't worth living without 'X.'

I don't recognize this country.

This isn't the world I thought I would give my kids.

Over my dead body.

This feels scary.

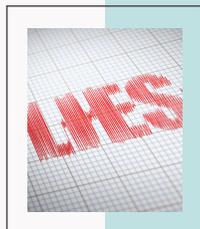


A sermon is perceived to be challenging when listeners feel something they value is threatened, including their identities, roles, relationships, well-being, systems, or livelihoods.

IF WE SAY WE CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT "IT"

we deceive ourselves

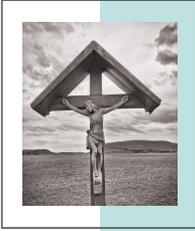
and the truth is not in us.



IN ESSENCE WE'RE SAYING:

**Good Friday
is the end of
the story.**

Resurrection to new life is impossible.





**We don't trust
God can make
something new.**

What is it exactly we don't trust?

3 ASPECTS OF TRUST

Reliable



Competent



Sincere

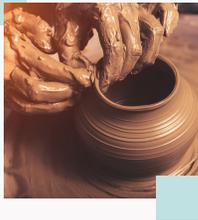


How is God reliable in real life?



Reliable: Keep your promises; be counted on.

Skill; time; bandwidth; capacity



Competent: You're able to do what you said you would.

God isn't "playing" us.



Sincere: Mean what you say, and say what you mean.

Discussion

Reliable



Competent



Sincere



1) IN REAL LIFE, WHAT TELLS YOU GOD IS TRUSTWORTHY?

2) CONSIDER A LOSS FOR YOUR LISTENERS: HOW MIGHT THEY CALL INTO QUESTION GOD'S TRUSTWORTHINESS?

Suggestions for Preaching



Empathy
We're in this together.

Consider listeners' potential losses.
What losses might the sermon imply or name?

Trust God.
Show (without "church talk") how God is reliable, competent, and sincere.

Christ heals the human spirit.
Preach Christ instead of "issues."

Preach our identity that cannot change.
We are children of God.

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Easter Sunday:
We agree to live *without.*
We consent to love *newly.*

Love again. Love afresh. Love differently.

Lisa Cressman
BACKSTORY PREACHING

lisa@backstorypreaching.com
www.backstorypreaching.com

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