

Pray

Today we are starting a new series = **Emotionally Healthy Spirituality** and I want to encourage everyone to read this book

Emotionally Healthy Spirituality Day by Day – By Pete Scazzero

It is a great book – I have read it four times I

I first came across it when we were in a difficult period of church leadership

St Marys Eversley was going well and had grown from 47 to 147

And so the bishop decided that I should have a second church

BUT

The people who had built the building were still going to this church

And they thought that because they had literally paid for the building

They were in charge and I was supposed to be their chaplain

Now you know me by now

And so you know that I want us all to be growing in our faith

And to welcome our guests and to serve the local community

And they didn't want any of those things

And **Emotionally Healthy Spirituality** was part of the answer for us

1st Point = Some of the symptoms of unhealthy Spirituality**1 Many Christians get STUCK in their Christian faith**

And we all know people like this

They have been going to church for 30 years or more

They say they are Christians and I believe them

But their behaviour.... well shall we say it leaves something to be desired

Its like they have got stuck at the teenager stage

They know what they want and they know how to argue

And if they don't get their way they are going to take their ball home

Well it doesn't have to be like that

Emotionally healthy spirituality enables us to grow in our faith

2 Some people run away from Conflict

Whereas the truth is that in a healthy team

We will be able to trust one another

Because every member is trustworthy

and trusting each other helps us to have healthy disagreements

and a good healthy debate encourages people to be more committed

Emotional Health enables good healthy debate

3 Some people try to live without limits

When I found myself leading 250 people

and four congregations every week on two sites

some days I worked a 10 hour day

and some weeks I worked a 60 hour week

and it was not sustainable

the truth is Jesus said Love your neighbour as you love yourself

and I was loving my neighbour miles more than I was loving myself

Emotionally Healthy Spirituality allowed me to use my skill at Spirituality to train my relative inexperience of emotional health

Emotionally Healthy spirituality integrates three things

1 Loving God 2 Loving our neighbours and 3 Loving ourselves

So if you are stuck
OR you tend to run away from conflict
OR are too busy

Then EHS will help us to restore the balance
And get our spiritual life in balance with our emotional life

I honestly believe this will be an important course for some of us

2 point – Let's adopt a Godly Narrative

Step 1 in salvation history =

Creation - which tells us we are made in the image of God

And so in the Jewish temple and in Christian worship there are no idols

Because you and me we bear the image of God

And when I go into school I Re-Present God in the school

And when you go to the supermarket

you Re-Present God in the supermarket

Step 2 of salvation history =

We all make mistakes and none of us is perfect

If you like we are a bit like God's work of Art

But unfortunately that work of art has been spoiled

And God the master craftsman wants to restore his image in us

So *1 John 18,9* says

If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves + the truth is not in us

But if we confess our sins God is faithful and just

and will forgive us our sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness

Step 3 of salvation history =

God loves you the way you are

We all know the Christmas story – in which God comes down to earth

John 3.16 says

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son,

But that is not the end of the verse

It continues...

that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

and so we play a part in our journey of salvation

we believe and trust in God and

John 1.12 Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God

And so my identity and your identity is

"I am God's beloved child with me he is well pleased"

Step 4 of salvation history =

God loves you too much to leave you the way you are

And so he give us the gift of his Holy Spirit
the same power which raised Christ from the dead is at work in us
and the Fruit of the Spirit is Love Joy and Peace
patience Kindness and goodness
faithfulness Gentleness and self control

Step 5 of salvation history =

The renewal of all things

and this comes in **Revelation 21 and 22**

where God says **“Then I saw ‘a new heaven and a new earth,”**

and greek has two words for new

Neos which means brand new

and **Kainos** which means **Made New Again** or **Renewed**

and New heaven and new earth = **Kainos**

The ultimate vision is The Renewal of all things

When God dwells with us and Eden is extended to the ends of the earth

2 = Let’s adopt a Godly Narrative

Despite what the media tell us

It is not the case that everyone is a sinner and there is no hope

the truth is

we are made in the image of God

and God loves us and wants to restore us

so that we can work with him to restore the earth

3 = Our vision here is

to love God + love our neighbours as ourselves

which is Jesus great commandment

one way we love God is through **Contemplative Spirituality**

or to put it another way

Lets get our vertical relationship right

And lets be willing to learn from monks and nuns

and this will include the spiritual practices of

the Sabbath and daily devotions

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One way we **love our neighbours as ourselves**

Is through **Emotional Health**

Or to put it another way

Lets get our horizontal relationships right

And this will include the spiritual practices of

Humility and Balance

3 = Our vision here is

to love God + love our neighbours as ourselves

And finally – I want to finish with an illustration
Which comes from **Ruth Rice The founder of renew wellbeing**

And I want you to **imagine a coffee cup - Held between two hands**

And **if the coffee cup is you**
Are you half full or half empty?

PAUSE

And Ruth says
“Really the question is the wrong question
The question should be **who is holding your cup?**”

And she goes on
Yes it is good to know which activities fill your cup
and to do more of them
and it is good to know which activities empty your cup
and to do less of them
BUT most important is to know God is holding you

Let's pray