METAPHOR

A BRIDGE BETWEEN PAIN & UNDERSTANDING



METAPHOR AS MIRROR

Metaphors spark new understandings by helping us express the difficult parts of our stories in more easily accessible ways. They help us explain a situation others may have little or no experience with.

Metaphors help build a comparison between pain or illness, (something that can be difficult to explain, and even more challenging to understand) with something readily familiar.

Paul Phillips wrote that metaphors are ***Mirrors that reflect a picture of truth.*** Metaphors shape our understanding of truth, experience, pain, loss, and illness, and it often sounds more like poetry than prose.

> *In the beginning, was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God ... In him was life; and the life was the light of men ... And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory ...) full of grace and truth.* (John 1:1, 4, 14)

METAPHOR AS A TOOL

Metaphor is a powerful tool for the poet and the pray-er. It comes from a Greek word meaning to transfer. In other words, this becomes that. (Megan Willome)

METAPHOR AND GRIEF

According to Zack Eswine, Biblical metaphors offer us "space to grieve. They don't force [us] to cover every detail or angle of suffering. They allow for nuance and difference. And metaphors require further thought and exploration. In other words, they do not slap a band-aid on [our] suffering. They are a gift before the happy ending."

SCRIPTURE PULSES WITH METAPHOR

- *The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life.* (Proverbs 13:14)
- *We are the clay, and you are the potter.* (Isaiah 64:8)
- *The Lord is my shepherd.* (Psalm 23:1)
- *I am the bread of life.* (John 6:35)
- *I am the Light of the world.* (John 8:12)
- *The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer.* (Psalm 18:2)
- *Judah is a lion's cub.* (Genesis 49:9)
- *I am the vine; you are the branches.* (John 15:5)
- *You are the salt of the earth.* (Matthew 5:13)
- *The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.* (Psalm 18:2)

METAPHORS FOR THIRSTY SOULS

You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you;
I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you,
in a dry and parched land where there is no water. (Psalm 63:1)

As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God.
My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. (Psalm 42:1-2)

LIMBS LIKE WET WASHCLOTHS

My limbs feel like wet washcloths being twisted and wrung dry, but with 10-pound weights hanging from them. (Sarah N.)

BLANCHED

Sometimes I feel like I have been quickly dipped in boiling water – blanched. (Jade R.)

PRICKED BY A HUNDRED NEEDLES!

Knives in my joints, or a hedgehog aggressively rolling down my skin (pricked by a hundred needles!). (Nae W.)

SLUGGISH MOLASSES

Some days I feel like I'm walking through prickly, painful molasses. On other days, it's plain molasses. Either way, everything is slow and sluggish. (Colleen S.)

The Bible uses comparisons (metaphors and similes)
to give the suffering a language to express how they feel.
(Dr. Terry Powell)