

When Parents Feel Like Failures: Dealing with Regrets

Lauren Whitman



rest

The many kinds of regrets

- Missed milestones
- Discipline
- Relational closeness
- Work / life balance
- Education
- Personal struggles
- Marital struggles

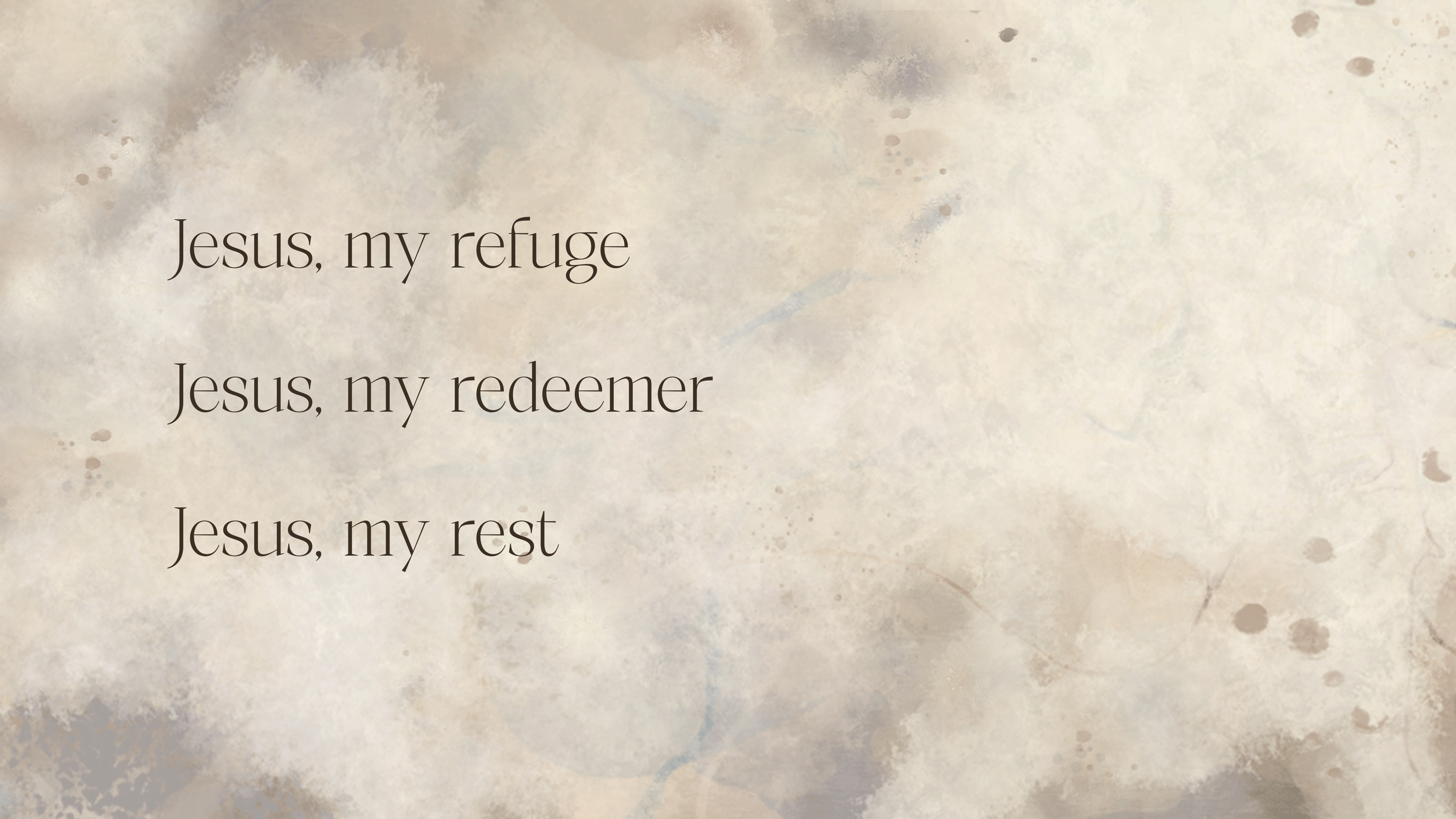
The loop of regrets



The loop of regrets



How things would be better if I had done what I wish I had done.



Jesus, my refuge

Jesus, my redeemer

Jesus, my rest

Jesus, my refuge

- When I am safe in Jesus, my refuge, I can be honest.
 - I am honest about myself.
 - I am honest about my sins.
 - I am honest about my limitations.
 - I am honest about my weaknesses.

You have kept count of my tossings, put my
tears in your bottle. Are they not in your book?

Psalm 56:8

Jesus, my redeemer

Mark 5:22–24

²² Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. ²³ He pleaded earnestly with him, "My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live." ²⁴ So Jesus went with him."

Jesus, my redeemer

Mark 5:35–42

"...some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. "Your daughter is dead," they said. "Why bother the teacher anymore?"

³⁶ Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him, "Don't be afraid; just believe."

³⁷ He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. ³⁸ When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. ³⁹ He went in and said to them, "Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep." ⁴⁰ But they laughed at him.

After he put them all out, he took the child's father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. ⁴¹ He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha koum!" (which means "Little girl, I say to you, get up!"). ⁴² Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished."

“I know that my Redeemer lives”

He lives to silence all my fears,

He lives to wipe away my tears,

He lives to calm my troubled heart,

He lives all blessings to impart.

Jesus, my redeemer

Philippians 3:12–14

I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

How Maggie & Carlos can press on

- Accepting their limitations in being human, and therefore not being all-knowing. No parent can know everything there is to know about their child, even if we are faithfully pursuing an accurate understanding of them.
- Seeking the Lord to identify the areas of true failure in how they parented their son. It's not a moral failure to have not known about his difference, but were there ways they sinned against their son in how they responded to him? For them, it was in their discipline, and so confessing this to God and seeking his forgiveness.
- Confessing any true sins and failures to their son and seeking his forgiveness.
- Inviting their son to share with them how he has felt hurt by them. Remaining open to hearing from him about this in the future.
- Educating themselves on autism.
- Grieving together as a couple for the timing of the diagnosis. If it had come sooner, then it would have changed many of their parenting choices. Honestly acknowledging that and lamenting it.
- Choosing to trust God for the timing, even as they grieve the timing.

How Maggie & Carlos can press on

- Offering to be a resource for their son for what he faces now as a young adult: for example: Can they help him brainstorm how to connect with other young adults to broaden his social circle? Would he be willing to go to family counseling with them to strengthen their relationship?
- Committing to pursuing their son relationally if he is currently uninterested in any of the above.
- Giving their son space and grace to be where he is as he himself processes the new diagnosis.
- Committing to praying for their son.
- Repenting of their times of blaming each other. To instead find comfort and reassurance from each other, especially since there may be hard days.

Handout for working through regrets

When Parents Feel Like Failures
Lauren Whitman

Working through Regrets

As you struggle with parenting regrets, work through this process. You can do it with each area/situation that has led to regret.

- I. Jesus is your **refuge**. He is a safe place for you to run to. He has tender compassion on you. [Psalm 56:8]

Be honest about your sins. What were they?

Be honest about your limitations. What were they?

Be honest about your weaknesses. What were they?

Be honest about how you feel. How do you feel?

- II. Jesus is the **Redeemer** of the world. [Mark 5]

Run to him and plead earnestly for your children. What do you want to ask of him?

Ask him for the gifts of faith and hope as it pertains to your children. Take heart because your

Jesus, my rest

Psalm 131

O LORD, my heart is not lifted up;
my eyes are not raised too high;
I do not occupy myself with things
too great and too marvelous for me.
But I have calmed and quieted my soul,
like a weaned child with its mother;
like a weaned child is my soul within me.
O Israel, hope in the LORD
from this time forth and forevermore.

Jesus, my rest

“David’s point is that he has resolved himself and taken an oath to ensure that he will calm and quiet his soul, neither fearing that Yahweh will not keep his word nor thinking more highly of himself than he should.”

—James Hamilton Jr.

From Psalms: Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary