

## HEALING YOUR HURTS

**Sterling UMC**  
**February 14, 2010**  
**Psalm 23:5**

The message I bring you today was originally scheduled for last week, but because of the snow, it got pushed back to today. I think God must have a sense of humor because today on this Valentine's Day and this message is all about relationships. The fact is because we live in an imperfect world, you're going to be hurt. You'll be hurt by accidents, by illnesses. But the deepest hurts you'll have in your life will come from people. Relationships are the greatest source of blessing and the greatest joy in our lives. They can also be the greatest source of stress and pain. People do hurt us, sometimes intentionally, sometimes unintentionally, sometimes accidentally, sometimes on purpose. So this morning I want to explore how the Lord, our Good Shepherd helps us heal the hurts that relationships can cause.

Unfortunately our response to those hurts is usually the wrong thing. So before we can look at how the Lord helps heal your hurts I need to remind you of five wrong ways we often respond to the hurt we experience in life. These are five things that can compound our problems and cause us even more hurt:

### **1. WE IGNORE IT**

You suffer in silence. Bite the bullet. Macho man. Hope it will go away. We try to cope with our hurt by pretending it doesn't exist. There are several ways we do this:

- 1) Flat out denial -- I don't have a problem; I'm not hurting. We deny how we really do feel.
- 2) Minimizing it -- It was no big deal. It didn't hurt me that bad.
- 3) Procrastinate -- We postpone doing anything about it. Sweep it under the carpet. "One of these days...." We keep postponing it because we always try to postpone the unpleasant.

Ignoring your hurt never heals it. The hurt that you're trying to ignore right now won't get any better. People say, "Time heals all wounds" -- sometimes time makes them worse if we keep putting it off. Psalm 39:2-3 (NCV) says, "I kept very quiet... but I became even more upset. I became very angry inside, and as I thought about it, my anger burned." The fact is wounds get infected and spread when we don't deal with them immediately.

### **2. WE RUN FROM IT**

We seek to runaway. Escape. Retreat. Run from your problems.

David tried this too. In Psalm 55:6,8 (NCV) he wrote, "I wish I had wings like a dove. Then I'd fly away and rest... I would hurry to my place of escape..." This is human nature. When we face difficulty we run from it. It's not by accident that all doors in public

buildings open outward. When people panic, they run. We try to get away from our pain. There are many different ways to escape: movies, eating, television, alcohol, drugs. The problem is that you will still have the same problems when you return.

### **3. WE HIDE OUR HURT**

Some people don't run from it or ignore their hurt; they hide it. They keep it to themselves. They don't tell anybody. They wear a mask. Some of you are quite good at camouflaging your pain. You wear nice clothes and have a pleasant smile but the fact is you've been hurt by somebody very deeply. We hate to admit it when we're hurt. Many people seem to think it is a sign of weakness. So we disguise it. Sometimes people camouflage their pain with materialism. They buy nice cars and homes and surround themselves with things, when they hurt they go shopping. Possessions never compensate for pain. When you hurt, all the possessions in the world won't soothe that hurt. Psalm 32:3 (NCV), "When I kept things to myself, I felt weak deep inside me. I moaned all day long." Hiding a hurt only intensifies it. It only makes it worse.

You don't heal your hurt by ignoring it, running from it or hiding it.

### **4. WE WORRY ABOUT IT**

Worry is an attempt to control the uncontrollable. Worry is playing God, it's trying to control something you can't control. When you play God it makes you more miserable because inside you know that you're not God. You can't control everything. You can't change the world by yourself. Job 5:2 (GN) "To worry yourself to death with resentment would be a foolish, senseless thing to do." Worry never solves problems. It never heals hurt. All worry does is increase the size of your pain. Every time you worry about it, it's like playing a bad video in your mind. Every time you rehearse it in your mind it exaggerates, it magnifies. The more you worry about a hurt the bigger it gets.

### **5. WE RESENT IT**

Resentment never helps. Yet we do this when people hurt us. We become bitter, angry, and cynical. We get all closed in and full of self-pity. Job 18:4 (GN) "You are only hurting yourself with your anger." Bitterness hurts you far more than any hurt you will ever receive. No matter what anybody has ever done to you, there is something worse than that, bitterness. It is a poison that will kill you. It eats you up on the inside.

So if none of these approaches will heal my hurt then what do I do?

We find the answer in Psalm 23:5 (NIV), "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil. My cup overflows." In these verses David uses the image of a banquet and in this one verse he gives us three illustrations or symbols that illustrate three steps you need to take in order to let God heal your hurt.

### **1. LET JESUS SETTLE THE SCORE**

David says "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies."

How can you have a feast in the face of your enemies? You can do that when you trust that the Lord will settle the score. In other words you don't need try to get even. You don't need to seek revenge. You don't need to retaliate against those who hurt you.

God says, "I am in control. I will protect you. I will provide for you. I will watch over you. Let me handle those who've hurt you." Romans 12:17,19 (LB), "Never pay back evil for evil. ... never avenge yourselves. Leave that to God, for he has said that he will repay those who deserve it." God knows the people who've hurt you. He saw it and He cares. He can settle the score. The Bible says one day He will settle the score.

In the meantime there's only one way you'll ever get relief and that's forgiveness. Forgiveness doesn't mean that you say, "It's OK that you hurt me." Forgiveness is not saying, "What you did is not a bad deal." Forgiveness is not saying it didn't hurt.

Forgiveness means giving my hurt to God and letting Him settle the score. Just trust God to handle the situation and not try to get even. Let Him prepare a table before you in the presence of your enemies. Don't try to get even.

## **2. LET JESUS SOOTH MY WOUNDS.**

The Psalm says, "You anoint my head with oil."

Shepherds put oil on the heads of sheep for two reasons: to sooth and to heal. One of the worst enemies of sheep is flies. They hate flies. They can't shake off the flies either by their hooves or their tail. In the summertime the flies drive them crazy. Sometimes you'll see a sheep banging its head against a rock because he's going crazy from the flies. He can't do anything about it.

You ever feel like that? Isn't it amazing that it's the little things in life that really irritate you, that make you want to bang your head against the wall? So what shepherds do is take olive oil and mix it with sulfur and anoint the head of the sheep and it's like an insect repellent. This represents the shepherd saying, "I'll take care of the irritations. The things that irritate you, I'll take care of them."

The other way oil is used is as a salve, an ointment. When a sheep has an open wound the shepherd would use it as an ointment. It would protect them and it was soothing. When David says, "You anoint my head with oil" he is saying God is going to sooth my wounds.

This is the same thing Jesus wants to do with the hurts in your life. Psalm 147:3 (NCV), "God heals the brokenhearted and bandages their wounds." He says, "If you'll come to Me and let Me have your hurts, I'll sooth those hurts. I can bandage them up."

When you get a small cut you don't need a bandage. The deeper the wound in your life (divorce, rejection by parents, abuse, taken advantage of, rejection, betrayal) -- those

things don't heal quickly. A deep wound must be bandaged and dressed. It takes time to heal.

Those of you who are hurting from a major hurt right now must understand two things:  
1) Healing occurs in two phases. You know this physically but it's also emotional. When you are hurt -- surgery or you break a bone -- there are always two phases to the healing.

First is the "be still" stage -- you lay in the bed after the surgery. Or they put a cast on your arm so you can't move it. You stay still. After a while they cut the cast off and tell you to move your body. That's the second stage -- the "get moving" stage.

And so it is with us. When you are hurt you have to first be still and wait on God. Allow yourself the time to allow His Spirit to bring healing. But then there comes the time to get moving. To get back on your feet, to get on with your life and not allow that hurt to continue to hold you back.

2) Even after you've been totally healed, you're going to have a scar. There are always scars after you've been hurt. When you have a scar you have a choice: every time you look at the scar -- because you're going to see it -- you can either remember your hurt or you can remember your Healer and the healing. That's your alternative.

Look at the scar and think of God's grace. When you remember the defeat, the failure, that divorce, that hurt, you think "I am a trophy of God's grace". Instead of focusing on the hurt, focus on the Healer.

### **3. LET JESUS SATISFY MY NEEDS**

David says, "My cup overflows". In the Bible, an overflowing cup, is a symbol for total satisfaction. It means, "I've got everything I need.." In the Middle East, it's mostly desert. When someone gives you a cup that is overflowing, it's extravagant. You don't waste water in the desert unless you've got more than you need.

When you need to get over a hurt, you need to look to God to meet all your needs. Why is that so important? The major reason we get hurt is we expect other people to meet needs only God can meet. No person can give you absolute security in life. No person can give you all the love you need. No person can make you complete happy.

If you expect that from somebody you're going to be bitterly disappointed and you're going to be hurt. You have needs that only God can meet. When you expect other people to meet those needs you're going to get resentful because they can't do it. They can't love you unconditionally 24 hours a day. They can't make you secure 24 hours a day. They can't make you happy 24 hours a day. They can't meet all your needs. They're not God.

On the other hand, God can meet all of your needs. He never runs dry. He never has a bad mood. He never lets you down. If you look to Him your cup will overflow.

Overflow with what?

1) With Hope

Romans 15:13 "God will help you overflow with hope in him through the Holy Spirit's power within you."

2) With love

"May the Lord make your love to grow and overflow." I Thessalonians 3:12

3) With joy

"Ask, using my name, and you will receive, and your cup of joy will overflow." John 16:24

When God says to you, "I'm going to fill your cup to overflowing" it means you matter to God and you're special to Him. If you're hurting because somebody has hurt you badly, Jesus invites you to a banquet. He says "I'll prepare a table before you in the presence of your enemies. I'll anoint your head with oil. Your cup will overflow." You don't believe me? Look at this. This is the table he has prepared for us. A table that has a place for everyone. A table where you can come with all your hurts and find healing. A table where you can come with all your pain and find comfort. A table where you can come with all your weakness and find strength. A table where you can come with all your sins and find forgiveness. Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd will settle the score, sooth your wounds, satisfy every one of your needs. It's a deal you can't refuse. It's a banquet of wholeness, help, salvation. Let us come and receive His gift of grace.