

The Wound is the Place Where the Light Enters
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Texts: Matthew 11:25-30
Psalm 147

“At that time Jesus said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned and revealed them to little children. 26 Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do.

27 “All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. 28 “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Our time as in the church has taught us that there are many different types of ministries. Throughout the time Jesus walked this earth, his ministry was one of service and healing. He made it his mission to mend and heal weary bodies. But also, not only did he heal the wounds and ailments of the body, but he also healed people’s souls. Those who had been heartbroken, cast away and rejected by society, those who were classified as unredeemable sinners.

In many cases he did one or the other, in some cases he healed both. Body and soul. But I think Jesus was aware of the mind body soul connection. And he knew that if one suffered, so did the rest, so he made it his mission to tend to all of our needs.

One thing that fascinates me about Jesus’ ministry, is the passion for God a lot of people gained after he healed them. When we look at the gospel of Matthew 8:14 he heals Peters mother in law of a fever and she got up and began to serve on. **(Read)** In that Matthew 9:27 he restores the sight to 2 blind men and after they spread the news about him and the power of God all over the region. **(Read)** In Acts chapter 3 Peter and John heal the paralyzed man outside the temple in the name of Jesus (which invokes the presence of Jesus) and he gets up, walks and goes on praising God. The theme here is that after these people were healed by Jesus or through the power of the holy spirit in his name, their bodies are healed yes, but something inside their souls was healed to because they were inspired and filled with passion to go forth and praise God. I know from experience that feeling whole inspires me to give thanks and gratitude to God. **It’s safe to say that Jesus healed the body as a way to get to their souls. It’s safe to say that the healing of the body and the soul or both directly connected.** Healing was not just about showing compassion and mercy on these individuals, but it was about showing to them the power of the most high God so that their lives would forever be transformed. Receiving this power inspired them to become servants themselves.

But the most important lesson that I’ve taken away from our text for today as well as these stories of healing is that before we can grow spiritually closer to God, usually there is great internal healing that needs to take place inside of us. But we must prioritize our own healing and welcome God into that process. **Because as Rumi once said our wounds are the place where the light wants to enter.** Healing does a couple things.

1. It mends the heart and soul wounds that we have and causes a part of us to become more whole, that part of us is opened up and available for to love deeper. So here we see healing is necessary if we are to have the energy and strength to love others, love ourselves, and to serve God.
2. God Cannot work as efficiently in our lives and bring us to new places if we are continuously burdened by our own traumas, our own wounds, therefore we must actively work through them, WITH GOD, not by ourselves.

Our wounds, emotional, spiritual, physical or internal are all opportunities to welcome God in, they are opportunities to welcome Jesus into our own pain, because the wounds we carry are where the light enters. The wounds we carry are the door that Jesus desperately wants to enter. Those wounds Jesus himself felt, he continues to feel year after year, day after day! and he empathizes with us in our pain. You know how we always hear in church that Jesus feels with us, he suffers with us. And sometimes we can hear that so much that it may lose its value. It turns into something we expect to hear around Good Friday and Easter. But this truth is a central part of our tradition, when we also understand how the holy spirit works, we must remember that it is there during low points of pain, heartache, hardship, that a wound has been opened on the canvas of the soul, it is through that wound, that vulnerability, that we cry out for rest and healing, through that wound God has the space to come in and grant us the healing we desire. There is something about those wounds, in a spiritual sense that God is drawn to because he knows, Jesus knows what it is like to be in that place..... But we have to be willing to receive the light, and when we welcome it in, we have to shine it on the shadows parts of ourselves we may not want to look at. The parts we choose to ignore or forget. The parts we choose to keep in the dark. We have to be willing to do the work to wade through all the murky internal Waters, to ask the hard questions, to do the difficult work of healing, self-reflection, introspection, self-improvement, while also being gentle with ourselves remembering that we're not perfect. This is not an easy thing by any means. But we have to remind ourselves that healing eases the physical and or internal pain that we may carry yes. But also, the wound is where the light and God enters , the healing of the wound allows the light and God to REMAIN, as they are sealed inside of us. When this happens, we can love ourselves more deeply, love others more deeply.

To go deeper into my first point, **restate**, tending to our wounds gives us more space to love others and to serve God.

Recently I realized that all of us have been wounded in our life time whether through heart break, loss, regret, shame guilt, betrayal, rejection, fill in the blank. But follow me very closely, the things that have happened to us don't just disappear when we get over the initial turmoil and shock of it. The things that have happened to us don't just disappear when we get over the initial turmoil and shock of it. They leave a lasting mark on our hearts, bodies, and souls. Hear this, emotional or soul wounds affect us physically. Think about what heartbreak does to the body, it can make you feel like you're literally dying. And also, physical wounds can affect us emotionally and leave an impact on our soul. Think about what happens to people after injuries accidents. Just one example, but. Jesus knew all this. This is why healing of all kinds was so important to him you see. Healing those people was a way for him to tend to their needs and bring them closer to God, because he knew they would believe, love and serve God after being healed. We have to remember this is well before the age of modern medicine. Many of these people are living in the shadow of the largest most powerful empire the world had ever seen, and whatever holistic or natural healing practices of their ancestors, it's safe to say many people had been cut off from. In my research I was amazed to see the extent to which people suffered through all types of illnesses

in the ancient world. There was no CVS with vitamin supplements, Health, true health wasn't as common as we may imagine. So, Jesus knew that healing those people was so much more than just helping them walk or see, it gave them hope in a time of hopelessness. It gave them a chance at life. And in that hope, they would become living walking testimonies. As the Bible describes it, I do believe in miracles and the power of God to heal as it is described. In the 21st century and the age of rationalism, it might be hard for some folks to read those stories and think God can heal us like that which I understand. But even if you don't believe in healing in that way, fortunately God has given us access to alternative forms of healing rituals, whether that's therapy or personal rituals or many other things. One thing I learned in pastoral care training was that we must come up with rituals of healing and release so the ties that we still have to our wounds and other people's wounds can be loosened and one day released.

And I say all this from personal experience. I recently went through a pretty bad break up that had me feeling very fractured. But eventually I took it upon myself to embark on the journey towards healing and to seek the counsel of wise friends, loved ones, professionals to understand more about how things unfolded the way they did. I started to uncover things within myself. I started to shed light on patterns of behavior, habits, and all. I started to pray and reflect on these things while seeking the counsel of God. And I can confidently say that this work, although difficult has opened up a lot of room in me to love others and to love myself more intensely. It makes me want to serve God. I realized we all are dealing with something. Whether current, from many years ago, or from childhood. But we have to face it, we can't just try to bury it and forget about it. Healing gives us the chance to refill the cups of our heart, so we can give back to others. When you feel good, when you feel, whole, or like you are on your way to it, you want to spread love to the world! You want to take risks, to try new things, to go to new places, to love those who previously you may have not had energy for. Your passion and zest for life is strengthened. This strengthens our relationship to God when we recognize God was present all along. Then we might find ourselves in roles like the ones we saw in Matthew chapter 8 or Acts 3. We want to go out and tell somebody about what happened.

2. To that second point I made, God cannot work on us and bring us to new places when we are constantly burdened by our own fears and wounds. So, healing prepares us to enter new territories and places in our lives. I've experienced this first hand as well. And I say this while also reminding you to be gentle with yourself and to trust the process, you can't rush the process, but know that sometimes if we find ourselves stagnant or stuck, there is inner work that we haven't done yet to prepare us to go to the new places that God wants to bring us! Because if God did try to bring us there when we weren't ready or were resistant, Gods efforts would be futile right? We can always pray and ask God to guide us and bring us to new heights, new places, new relationships, new vocations, new experiences, but we must do a personal inventory first and ask, am I ready to go there? If God brought me to that place tomorrow, do I have the confidence and the faith to actually perform or do I need more time to rest and heal? There's no shame if it's the latter, that's fine! It's better to know what we need to do to get to where we want to go instead of ignoring things.

God knows where we are better than we do, we just have to face it and know that we are not alone, and healing is possible...

No matter what we experience in this life we must always remember that the wound is where the light enters, and God has the power to help us heal. For healing mends the soul wounds that we have, allows us to love deeper, to serve God, and it also helps God to bring us to the new horizons that our hearts yearn for.

Amen

