

3- Healing Broken Hearts

Pastor Joe Oakley - GFC – 4/28/24

We're in a sermon series entitled: Greater Freedom. We've been teaching about how hard it is for many Christians to get free and stay free. That's because many times we just deal with symptoms and outward behaviors without ever dealing with root causes of our problems. So – no matter how hard we try - the problems keep coming back. We found a key to freedom in Matthew 3:10 when John the Baptist said:

The ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

So here's the principle – when you're not bearing good fruit, lay the ax to the root! When you're bearing bad fruit – lay the ax to the root.

What are the roots that need to be axed so we can live in freedom? I believe we find some of those roots by understanding what Jesus came to earth to accomplish on our behalf. We find these ministries listed in Luke 4:18-19 when Jesus said-

The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

Last time, we talked about how Jesus came to preach the gospel to the poor and that message is found in Matthew 4:17

From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Remember- repentance is not just feeling bad for what you did. It is a change of mind that leads to a change of heart and a change of lifestyle. The key word is change. You don't repent and stay the same! True repentance lays the ax to the root of sin.

Jesus came to preach the good news to the poor – and secondly – He came to heal the brokenhearted. So, I'm preaching today on **Healing Broken Hearts**.

Do you know where the phrase "broken heart" comes from? It comes from the Bible and is thousands of years old. In Psalm 69:20, David said:

Scorn has broken my heart and has left me helpless; I looked for sympathy, but there was none, for comforters, but I found none.

The New Living Translation says:

Their insults have broken my heart, and I am in despair. If only one person would show some pity; if only one would turn and comfort me.

This verse shows **one of the causes of a broken heart – shame**. The word broken means ‘to break in pieces, crush, hurt.’ It depicts a person who has been shattered or fractured by life.

The Hebrew words translated “heart” refer to a person’s inner being. To the Hebrews, the heart was the seat of the mind, will and emotions.

A broken heart comes from someone having their feelings deeply wounded, usually by something someone they trust says or does.

To be scorned and insulted can cause people to be bound by shame and cause them to feel helpless. We’ll teach on shame in another message.

Another cause of a broken heart is sin – our own sin, but also what the Bible calls the sins of the fathers, or generational iniquity.

Another cause of a broken heart is sorrow from experiencing a loss. A heart-breaking loss can include the death of a loved one, a divorce, or being rejected by someone who we thought loved us.

Failure in life can result in a broken heart. Disappointment about the way life turned out can break our hearts. If we are not careful and we don’t handle this correctly, it can lead to resentment and bitterness. This is especially true when we hold on to past hurts and when we don’t forgive those who hurt us or break our hearts. This can lead to spiritual bondage in our life and we need to deal with it in order to experience greater freedom.

But here’s some amazing news. ***It doesn’t matter what you call a broken heart or how you got it; Jesus can heal it!***

In fact, in Jesus’ very first sermon, He said it’s one of the reasons He came to earth on our behalf. Whether you’ve been let down by disappointment, rejection, or resentment, Jesus came to heal your heart. Psalm 147:3 says:

He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

It’s interesting that the Hebrew word for heal – rapha – has several meanings. It literally means to mend by stitching. It is translated in the Bible as heal, cure, to make whole and it is translated as physician.

So, this is speaking of a healing process overseen by Jehovah Rapha – the Lord our healer, the Lord our physician.

And this healing includes sewing the pieces of our broken hearts back together and then binding them together until the heart is totally healed. I love that!
Jesus came to heal us and to set us free from the detrimental effects of a shattered life.

Even though you may have been broken by life, the anointing of the Holy Spirit has the power to restore and release you from this captivity that has held you in emotional bondage.

Insults, scorn, shame, rejection, the loss of a loved one and sin can all lead to broken hearts. I've already addressed sin in previous messages. I just want to remind you that there are always consequences to sin. **One of the results of sin is brokenness - broken hearts, broken people, and broken families.**

Remember - Sin will take you farther than you want to go and teach you things you need not know.
 Sin will keep you longer than you want to stay and cost you more than you want to pay.
 Sin will take you places you wish you could leave and cause you pain you cannot believe.
 Sin will start some things you wish would quit and give you memories you want to forget.

That's why we need to live a lifestyle of repentance. And we can only repent if we have godly sorrow for our sin. We must have broken hearts over our sin.
 Psalm 51:17 says:

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart — These, O God, You will not despise.

The word contrite means to be crushed. It also means to feel sorry and show remorse. God can take our being crushed, bruised and broken and forgive us, heal us and transform us. James 4:8-10 says:

Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up.

Some of us want to keep our sin, but God wants us to weep over sin.
 Some of us have hardened our hearts because of sin, but God wants to break our hearts over our sin.

This is how we experience greater freedom. As Paul says in 2 Timothy 2:25-26

...repentance leads us to know the truth so that we can come to our senses and escape from the trap of the devil.

We need to know the truth about our sins and the sins of our fathers. That speaks of generational iniquity that results in broken people and broken families.

I've preached on this many times but I want to remind you that if there are areas of your life that you just don't understand - If there are hang-ups or sins or tendencies you can't seem to overcome - You could be dealing with generational iniquity.

There is a reason people grow up to be alcoholics or addicts.

There is a reason people spend a lifetime in prison.

There is a reason people go through divorce after divorce.

When we see those things happening we tend to see the same sins over and over in the same families.

Here's how it happens: a person practices a sin over and over until it becomes a stronghold in their lives. They develop a weakness toward a certain sinful behavior. That is iniquity and that can be passed down to future generations.

I want to be clear that everyone is accountable for their own sins. Ezekiel 18:20 says:

The person who sins is the one who will die. The son will not share the guilt of the father, nor will the father share the guilt of the son.

You are not responsible for the sins of your parents and they are not responsible for yours. But Lamentations 5:7 says:

Our fathers sinned and they have died, but we bear their iniquities.

That doesn't make sense unless you understand the difference between sin and iniquity.

Biblical definitions for sin include things like: missing the mark, falling short of God's glory, going astray, trespassing. Sins are things we do or don't do that are outside the will of God. But iniquity is different. The Hebrew word for iniquity means "to bend or deviate from the way." It means to distort, twist or pervert.

While sins are the outward action, iniquity is the inner orientation and motivation that drives people to sin. Sin is the outward fruit of an inner root of iniquity. And iniquity can be passed down through generations.

If you have a hard time with that - think about this - Adam's iniquity has been passed down to every single person who ever lived. Romans 5:12 says:

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.

The curse of sin entered the world through one man – Adam. Because of that, we all sin. But we all struggle with different sins.

By the way, one way to identify an iniquity is to recognize what tempts you. Hebrews 12:1 says:

...let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily ensnares us.

New Living Translation says: ***...the sin that so easily trips us up.***

There are many different temptations that people struggle with, such as overeating, substance abuse, illicit sex, or some other destructive behavior. Or you can be tempted with negative attitudes like anger, worry or hopelessness or discouragement.

So you might never be tempted by drugs, but you could be easily tempted by Twinkies. Eating Twinkies is not a sin, but gluttony is. **The point is - We all have a different bent or twist to our sins.**

The age-old question is: are these tendencies the result of nature or nurture? Is it the result of genetics or upbringing? I believe it is both of those things – plus the element of iniquity.

Here's the good news! We saw earlier that the curse of sin came to earth through one man. The good news is that the curse of sin was defeated by one man – Jesus Christ. Romans 5:19 says:

For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one Man the many will be made righteous.

The cross deals with the sin issue. The blood of Christ deals also deals with iniquity. That's why Isaiah 53:5-6 says:

He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Jesus was wounded and bled outwardly for our outward transgressions. But He was bruised and bled inwardly for our iniquities – our inward tendencies – our generational sins. You don't have to know how iniquity got into your family, but you do need to know the way out! **The cross is the way out. The cross breaks the power of sin in our lives. The blood redeemed us from generational iniquity.**

If you don't break the power of generational iniquity, it will not stop on its own.

In fact, it only gets worse. So we must overcome the power of iniquity in our lives. We do that through repenting of our sins and the sins of our fathers. Revelation 12:11 shows us three things required to overcome:

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

The blood of Jesus forgives our sins and iniquity. So **we must plead the blood of Jesus over our sins and our father's.**

We must repent and confess our sins and the sins of our fathers.

NO – you are not guilty of their sins, but their iniquity is passed down. You will find people confessing the sins of their fathers over and over in the Bible – including Ezra, Nehemiah, Daniel and Jeremiah 14:20

We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedness and the iniquity of our fathers, for we have sinned against You.

So we must confess and repent of our sins and our fathers.

We must speak the word – verbally break the curse in Jesus' name.

We must die to self.

We die to those sinful tendencies by acting in the opposite spirit. We find this principle in Romans 12:21

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

If you were raised with anger in your household, sow the seeds of peace.

If you had divorce in your family, sow the seeds of commitment.

If you were raised with cursing in your household, sow blessing.

1 Peter 3:9 says:

Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.

This is not natural! It's natural to respond in the flesh selfishly. But if we want to overcome iniquity and inherit a blessing – we must die to ourselves and act in the opposite spirit instead of in the flesh.

There are some families who have been devastated for generations. The sins of the fathers have wounded generation after generation. But Isaiah 61:4 says:

They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations. Jesus wants to bring restoration to the devastation and give a new destination to future generations!

We experience the curse of sin because we are born in Adam – in his fallen, sinful condition. That's why we need to be born again and placed in Christ.
1 Corinthians 15:45-49 says:

So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second Man from heaven. As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the Man from heaven.

When we are born – we are born in Adam and so we live like Adam.
When we are born again – we are born in Christ, so we live like Christ.

I want you to notice that Jesus is called the last Adam and the second man. Some people call Jesus the second Adam, but the Bible never calls Him that – He's the last Adam. That's because when we are saved – **Jesus is the end of Adam for us and the Father of a new royal family.**

God cuts off everything that flowed from that old source: all the sin, all the lies, all the guilt, all the shame, all the generational curses. We are taken out of Adam and placed into Christ and now everything flows from His source!

We are not now who we once were. That was then; this is now!
We used to be in Adam, but we are now in Christ.
We used to be guilty, but we are now forgiven.
We used to be sinful, but we are now righteous.
We used to be destined for wrath, but now we are destined for heaven.
And the power of generational iniquity has been broken!

Regardless of your past, Satan cannot dictate your future!
Regardless of where you came from, Satan cannot control where you are going!
Regardless of what you've been through, Satan cannot hold you back.
Regardless of your origination, Satan cannot dictate your destination.

Jesus died to save you from your sin and to destroy the works of the devil in your life. He can heal your broken heart and break the power of iniquity in your life!
And He wants to restore everything you've lost!

You might have grown up poor – but now all your needs are met in Christ.
You might have grown up fatherless – but now you have a Heavenly Father.
You might have been rejected and discriminated against – but how you are accepted in the beloved!

And He wants to give you a new heart.
He will take your stony heart and give you a heart of flesh!

He will take your sin-stained heart and give you a clean heart!

And God can take your broken heart and heal it.

For the heart broken by sin, He can give you a repentant heart.

For the heart broken by loss, He can give you a rejoicing heart.

For the heart broken by shame, He can give you a renewed heart.

We can pray as David did in Psalm 51:10

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

So thank God for greater freedom through greater understanding of the Greater One who is working in us to heal our broken hearts, give us new hearts and a destiny that He will fulfill in Jesus name!!!