

HEALED AND WHOLE

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THE REALITY OF SPIRITUAL BATTLES

We've been going through a series, and we're going to wrap things up today - a series called Healed and Whole. This morning I want to do my very best. I'm not out to make enemies, but I am out to tell you the truth, and I'm going to tell you the truth in love. I want us to draw some perspective from what is going on in our world, from some of the statistics that are available to us, and see how that lines up with Scripture.

Turn, if you will, to Matthew chapter 8. If you've been here throughout the series, you know that we've been talking a lot about demonization, evil spirits, demonic powers, demonic possession, demonic oppression - and those things are real.

I remember years ago watching To Kill a Mockingbird. Yes, I watched the movie to cheat because I did not want to read the book. It was that old black-and-white movie, and there was a scene where they go out into the street and there is a mad dog, frothing at the mouth, just going mad. They were telling the kids, 'Stay away from that dog. That dog has an evil spirit.' We don't talk like that anymore. We have pushed those things aside. It's become taboo, even in the church. We don't discuss it very much.

Matthew 8:14-17 (ESV)

14 And when Jesus entered Peter's house, he saw his mother-in-law lying sick with a fever. 15 He touched her hand, and the fever left her, and she rose and began to serve him. 16 That evening they brought to him many who were oppressed by demons, and he cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick. 17 This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: 'He took our illnesses and bore our diseases.'

Jesus arrives at Peter's house. Peter's mother-in-law is sick with a high fever, and He touches her hand. Just touches her. It goes right along with the prayer this morning: all it takes is one touch. All it takes is one word, and it changes everything - as long as it comes from Jesus.

WE HAVE TO HAVE BALANCE

That evening they brought many who were oppressed by demons to Jesus. Something we've gone through throughout this series, and something I want to reiterate as we close it out, is that we have to be very careful not to make the mistake of treating every spiritual problem as though it were merely a physical one.

I don't want you leaving here saying, 'Boy, Jason is a Fruit Loop. He is just fruity as fruity can be.' My dad has preached one word to me for years: balance. We have to have balance. I'm not leaning way over here, and I'm not leaning way over there.

If we tip the scales too far, we can fall off the deep end and start thinking that everything we touch, everything we claim, and everything we say is going to happen simply because we said, 'In Jesus' name.' Only if we're walking in the Spirit will we know the will of God, what to say, and when to say it. Sometimes we pray for somebody and expect healing right then, but maybe Jesus doesn't want to heal that person right now. Maybe He's bringing them through a valley. Maybe He's bringing them through a situation to teach them some things, just like He does with each and every one of us. There will be trouble. There will be trials and tribulations in life, and God uses those things to strengthen our faith.

These people were brought to Jesus because they couldn't fix themselves. The demonized could not free themselves. The sick could not heal themselves. Families could not solve the problem. But they came to Jesus, and everything changed. Praise God. He cast out the evil spirits with a simple command and healed the sick.

What medicine couldn't do, what human effort could not accomplish, Jesus accomplished through His authority. His authority - not my authority, not your authority, His authority.

THE UNSEEN BATTLE

We have to face the reality of evil spirits. We can't believe everything in the Bible and then black out the parts that make us uncomfortable. We can't say, 'I believe it, but that part freaks me out, so let me scratch that out.' Yeah, it should concern us. Modern culture dismisses the existence of evil spirits, but the Bible does not.

Jesus repeatedly encountered demon possession, unclean spirits, spiritual oppression, and satanic bondage. The New Testament presents evil spirits as a reality, not a metaphor. Jesus didn't counsel with the demons. He recognized them. He didn't play patty-cake with them. He cast them out. He didn't medicate the demons. He cast them out.

The church can never lose sight of the fact that some battles are spiritual battles, and those spiritual battles can absolutely affect you physically.

I have seen what I believe was the reality of demon possession. One time I was outside a revival tent in Taylor County, Florida. I did not know Jesus as my Lord and Savior at the time. I watched my dad, an ex-Navy SEAL who was a big man, and two other grown men trying to hold down a little lady, and she was tossing them around like rag dolls.

I was walking outside after the service watching what was happening, and I knew I didn't know Jesus. I knew they were praying, and I was praying too: 'Lord Jesus, don't let those demons come on me. I know I don't know You. I don't have a relationship with You right now, but please don't let them jump on me.' I was uncomfortable. God used that moment in my life to get my attention and point me toward Him. I needed to be saved. God can use fear. He can use whatever He wants in your life to get your attention.

Ephesians 6:12 (ESV)

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

That's in your New Testament. They battled these things in Scripture, and here we are in 2026. Demons are real, but we're not here to give glory to demons. No, no, no, no. There is One with all authority and all power who can cast demons out.

But not every problem is caused by demons. Understand that. Neither is every problem merely physical.

PHYSICAL HELP AND SPIRITUAL REALITY

There is a danger in treating the spiritual with only physical medicine. Again, I want to be balanced in this message. I thank God for doctors. I thank God for men and women who have answered the call to serve and help others. I appreciate our hospitals, our medical advances, and the technology that has helped us.

Just this past week, we had to take our daughter to the hospital. You know what kind of service we had last Sunday. God moved through that service, and my daughter was here listening to the message. We talked about it afterward. God had moved in her life and spoken to her.

Then Monday came. The enemy shows up. Chrissy got a phone call from Lexi saying, 'I need you to come pick me up. I'm feeling a little funny.' She's had panic and anxiety attacks before. Chrissy was headed that way, and I was getting close to quitting time at work. Something stirred in my heart and told me, 'You need to go.'

I got there four or five minutes after Chrissy. Lexi had been moved to an exam table in a private room where she works. By the grace of God, a firefighter who was EMT-trained happened to be there getting an adjustment. He was right by Lexi's side checking her vitals.

I walked into the room and saw Chrissy trying to get Lexi's attention. She was completely out of it, unresponsive, and at times not breathing. I saw him checking her pulse. When she did breathe, she would gasp and then go back out. She had no clue we were there.

We called the ambulance and got her to the hospital. They checked everything. She stayed a couple of nights. They did MRIs, an EEG, all of it. And praise God, what they found was a severe panic attack. I praised the Lord for that, because that is something we can address through life change - changing schedules, changing habits, making changes where they need to be made.

So I thank God for doctors, hospitals, and medical advances. Physical illnesses often require medical treatment. Those who go to war and come home with PTSD because of what they have seen and what they've been asked to do may need help. They may need counseling. They may need temporary support while they learn how to cope. God can work through physicians. I've seen Him put believing doctors in front of our family and in front of some of your families - doctors who will pray with you before surgery. Those things are good.

The danger arises when society assumes that every struggle is purely biological while ignoring the spiritual dimension of human life. There is a spiritual aspect to our lives, and we have to recognize that.

WHAT THE NUMBERS CANNOT FIX

I looked up some statistics. Mental-health challenges have continued to rise even though there is more diagnosis, more treatment, and more medication than ever before. Let that sink in for a minute. With all of the advancement and all of the diagnosis, it isn't getting better. It's getting worse.

The numbers I found were staggering: tens of millions of adults in the United States dealing with mental-health struggles, depression diagnoses climbing, and more than a billion people worldwide living with mental-health conditions. Those numbers don't mean every case is demonic. Human suffering can have physical, emotional, social, and spiritual causes. But they do show us that medicine by itself has not solved the crisis.

I got to thinking about when the rise became pronounced. I found the early 1990s. Then I asked, when did the church begin to decline in America? The answer I found pointed back to the 1960s and 1970s. Then you get to the 1990s and you have the generation that came out of that decline raising children. Don't tell me that is just coincidence. When the church became silent, when people moved farther away from God, consequences followed.

THE LIMITS OF MEDICATION

Thank God for medication. Thank God for physicians and hospitals. But research on antidepressants shows mixed results. I looked at studies that say they can provide benefits for many people, but the improvements vary from person to person. I looked at one of the largest depression-treatment studies ever conducted, and it found that success rates declined as additional medication trials became necessary.

You can look this up for yourself. The way I read the numbers, you might as well pull a coin out of your pocket and flip it for whether one approach is going to work for one person. But I serve a God who works one hundred percent of the time. That is the difference-maker, y'all. We have an Authority - the Almighty Authority.

And I'm not a conspiracy theorist, but I'm just going to tell you like it is. Why do you think somebody is making hand over fist while they pump out commercial after commercial telling you that because this isn't working anymore, you need to add another medicine to it? The studies themselves say later treatment strategies often yield only modest results.

The point is not that medication never helps. The point is that medication cannot heal the soul. It cannot forgive sins. It cannot cast out demons. It cannot restore a broken spirit or bring a person into right relationship with God. A prescription may calm symptoms, but only Jesus can make a person whole. Amen.

There is a time and a place for medical care. But the circumstances and situations behind a person's anxiety or depression may still need to be dealt with. Medication may give somebody a break from symptoms, but it cannot by itself change everything in a person's life. Jesus is the One who transforms at the deepest level.

And Jesus still sets captives free. Praise God.

JESUS STILL SETS CAPTIVES FREE

The people in Matthew chapter 8 did the right thing. They brought their problems to Jesus. They didn't just seek relief; they sought the Deliverer. The same Jesus who commanded evil spirits then still has authority today. He's still in control. He still breaks chains. He still heals wounded hearts. He restores minds. He still delivers captives. He still makes people whole.

Some people need physical healing. Some people need emotional healing. Some people need spiritual deliverance. Jesus is able to meet every need.

God has given us the ability to reason. Look at the statistics and ask a simple question: if everything we're doing were solving the crisis, why would the numbers keep climbing? Why would we need more and more treatments added on top of one another?

I've reached the age of the Sunday-through-Saturday pill holder. Praise God. Mine are vitamins. I'm a firm believer in natural stuff and vitamins. If I'm not feeling well, I may add something for respiratory issues or whatever I need. But I feel sorry for people who need two or three of those pill organizers just to keep track of everything. I'd need a doctor's degree just to remember what I was taking.

Again, the goal of the gospel is not symptom management. The goal is transformation. Jesus didn't come just to make our days a little better. He came to redeem, restore, and make people whole.

THE CROSS AND WHOLENESS

A healed body without a healed spirit is still incomplete. That hit me, because we can talk about being close to Jesus while not treating our bodies well. Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. I want to manage my body well so that I can complete the work He has for me to do. Too often I have abused this body as if I were invincible.

Jesus wants to touch every part of our lives. He healed and delivered people because He was fulfilling a promise spoken centuries earlier through the prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah 53:5 (ESV)

But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

The chastisement that brought us peace was upon Him. I want some peace. Jesus has already paid for it. Praise God.

The cross did not simply address our sin. It addressed the brokenness that sin brought into the world. Jesus came to heal, deliver, restore, and redeem.

Maybe today you need healing in your body. Maybe you need freedom from fear, oppression, addiction, anxiety, bitterness, or spiritual bondage. Some of you have tried everything the world has to offer and you still find yourself hurting.

But God.

The same Jesus who walked into Peter's house, rebuked sickness, cast out evil spirits, and healed the sick is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He still has power over disease. He still has power over demons. He still has power over despair. He still has power over every chain the enemy has placed on your life.

Don't settle for just being treated when Jesus offers transformation. Don't settle for symptom management when Jesus offers freedom. Don't settle for partial healing when Jesus purchased wholeness.

Healed and whole.

Bring your burdens to Him. Cast your cares upon the Lord. Bring your sickness to Him. Bring your wounded heart to Him. Bring your troubled mind to Him. Do you ever feel like you've got a thousand voices in your head, all pulling you in a thousand different directions? He can speak peace in the midst of those storms.

Bring your life to Him, because the Lord who heals is also the Lord who makes you whole. Amen. Healed and whole.

A TESTIMONY OF HEALING

I was talking with Jayden last week after the sermon and at lunch. I told her where I was heading this week, and she started sharing her story. She said, 'I sure would like to testify.' So this is that opportunity - a moment to hear from someone who has been there, faced this stuff, and understands what God can do.

Jayden shared: 'I have battled anxiety and depression for most of my life. It got worse once I had to go through growth-hormone treatments because I was born very premature, and I've always had issues reaching the right height and weight for my age. The medicines they were giving me caused more turmoil in my mind. Because of trauma I went through as a kid, there was more anxiety and depression in my life, and it felt like I had demons.

'I tried to treat it with medicine for about two or three years, on and off. When I initially started medicine, I started Zoloft as an anxiety antidepressant. After a couple of weeks, it worked for about a month. I felt like I was happy again and didn't have so much going on in my head. Then it got to the point where I didn't have anything going on in my head. It felt like it stopped working, but not only did it stop working, it made me numb. It didn't just stop the bad thoughts; it stopped the happy ones too.

'So I temporarily stopped the medication. Even after I stopped it, the anxiety and depression got worse. I went back on the medication at a higher dosage. The same thing happened. I stopped it and then got back on at the highest dosage they could give me, and that's when I bottomed out. I got to one of the worst places in my life. I was so numb that I started harming myself just to feel something. I felt like there was nothing in here anymore.

'At that point, I was at the farthest place from God that I had ever been. I started giving myself back to God because I thought, nothing in this world is going to work, so I just have to look to Him. That's what I did. I haven't had to take medicine like that for a couple of years now, and I'm hoping I don't have to again. I share this story to show what God has done for me. For physical reasons,

obviously medicine can help, but in my experience, what I needed at the deepest level was something God could heal.'

And through all of that, now she's married. She's got a beautiful baby boy. God blesses. God uses. It's an amazing thing. Praise God for His healing and for His power to make us healed and whole.

THE GETTING-RIGHT PLACE

Medicine can treat you for a moment, but only Jesus can save your soul. Only Jesus can redeem you. Only Jesus can forgive you. Only Jesus is the One who can break those chains. Jesus is the One who can cast out demons.

This is the getting-right place, y'all. This is where we do business with God. You know what you're battling. You know what you're facing. God has already spoken to your heart this morning. So have a conversation with Him. Come to the One who will never leave you, never forsake you, and never fail you. Amen?

Let's bow.

CLOSING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we thank You so much for this day. God, we thank You for this opportunity. Have Your will and way in our hearts and our lives right now. Lord, as we take this time to spend with You, to talk to You, to be honest with You, and to be obedient to You, Lord God, speak afresh and anew. In Jesus' name, amen.

You be obedient to Him.