

The Essentials Series – Part 7: Healing & Freedom

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Intro & Recap & Fall Fest

Today we're looking at one of the unique features of our church culture and way of life—our passion for healing and freedom. You can go back and watch our teaching series called,

Slide: He Loves Me Recap

- Intimate Fatherliness of God
- You are worthy to him as his child
- Identifying lies I believe and replacing them with the truth
- Living free from offense
- Breaking out of sexual bondage
- Leading others to the healer

Slide: HEALING AND FREEDOM

We are devoted to developing a culture of compassion and healing. Freedom comes through God's gracious love and redemptive truths, and through loving and committed relationships. These are essential ingredients to the restoration of our lives, families, and communities.

Analogy

Some of you have a green thumb. In our house we have two types of plants. They are either dead or in the process of dying.

One of our plants is dropping its leaves. I think that's a bad sign. I'm like, "you're not an outdoor tree. You're allowed to keep your leaves over winter." My plants like, "I'm tired of being on your table." You know what I noticed when living things start dying, when living things get disconnected from life, leaves that used to be best friends are now disconnected? Everything falls away from each other.

This is the catastrophe of self-reliance. When we push away from the Life Source, isolation, performance, loneliness, self-protection, mistrust, and division become so normal we don't even realize we're sick.

God wants to bring every part of you back into order, back into alignment with infinite love. What does it look like for every part of me to be rooted in the soil of trustworthy friendship I have nothing to fear or protect or compare? God cares about every part of you (even my bunny's toenail). Your relationships. Your body. Your finances. Your thought life.

Story #1

Luke 5:12-14

v.12 While Jesus was in one of the towns, a man came along who was covered with leprosy.

- His body is literally decaying. He is being eaten away by this horrible disease.
- People were terrified of him. He is a biological monster.
- Economically devastated.
- Relationally thrown out, to live in the uninhabited places
- (Son cries when sisters lock him out)
- Severed from the presence of God in worship, wasn't permitted to go to the temple.
- This is a man who is wilting in every direction.

Have you ever been locked out of a room or a house? What if a loved one was on the other side of that door and you desperately wanted to reach them? What if everyone you loved was on the other side of that door? What if your salvation, life itself was on the other side of the door and you felt so completely helpless to do anything...?

V.12 When he saw Jesus, he fell with his face to the ground and begged him, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean."

Apparently, he knew Jesus was powerful, but he didn't know his heart. What kind of a god is this? Would Jesus consider him trash to be thrown out like everyone else, not worth the time or investment? Give it to the better people, the more deserving. This man had lived so long across the black empty bridge of loneliness that his sense of personal worth had vanished.

He didn't know the Heavenly Father's absolute love. He misses his children; he wants them back. He wants us to be restored. If he'd been in the temple maybe he would have heard them reading the prophets' words in which God says,

- **Ezekiel 34:16**
I myself will tend my sheep...I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak.
- **Exodus 15:26**
God says, I am the Lord, who heals you
- **Psalms 103:3**
(The Lord) forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases
- **Jeremiah 17:14**
Heal me, Lord, and I will be healed; save me and I will be saved
- **Isaiah 53:5**
the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed

He didn't know that Jesus is a good shepherd. He only knew that he was another powerful preacher. The good shepherd who tracks down one lost sheep, who wants to restore every part of you to life in him: vibrant, satisfying life of communion with God.

This is a dramatic moment. After he has made his plea, his fate is hanging in the silence.

v.13 Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man.

Jesus reaches across the chasm, across the black empty bridge of loneliness, across the social fear, and he gave him his humanity back.

v.13 "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" And immediately the leprosy left him.

It turns out that the life in Jesus is more contagious than disease. There's only one thing God wants you to be overwhelmed by life and not overwhelmed by death.

v.14 Then Jesus ordered him, "Don't tell anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them."

- Jesus is giving him practical instructions. Go get your certificate of proof. Then offer your worship to God and you'll be restored to community.

I wonder how many people are longing to be touched. You feel empty inside. Maybe life has locked you out. I know there is a God, he's powerful, he's loving. But he always feels like he's in the other room, on the other side of that door.

The shepherding Father who cares about every part of you wants your body to be healed, wants your soul to be alive, and wants your spirit to live in communion with him.

Story #2

Luke 5:17-24

One day as he was teaching...the power of the Lord was present for him to heal the sick. Some men came carrying a paralytic on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus. When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus.

When Jesus saw their faith, he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven."

- In this story the protagonist is not locked out of community. He has people looking out for him. He's locked out of something completely different.
- This time it would seem that he has locked himself out. It's his own fault, his error, his sin.
- *Ill: I had a friend who was house sitting and got locked out...*

- Some people would say, “He deserved it.” He had it com’n. He brought it on himself. He needs to experience the consequences of his own choices.”
- At first the second half of this story feels disconnected. It’s a fight about the theology of forgiveness.

v.21 The Pharisees and the teachers of the law began thinking to themselves, "Who is this fellow (punk) who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

- They believe sin was between person and God, the righteous standard, you deserve what you get when you measure off the standard.

v.22 Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked, "Why are you thinking these things in your hearts? Which is easier: (it’s a rhetorical question with an obvious answer) to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'?"

- Jesus is saying, is it easier to restore people through forgiveness or through the intervention of miraculous power?

v.24 But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins...." He said to the paralyzed man, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home."

- This verse is crucial to my interpretation of the two halves of this story.
- People have the power to lock others up or set others free.
- Your actions have the power to lock people up in shame, to shut people down, to cripple them. Or handicap them.
- Jesus is rebuking them you’re telling people, “It serves you right, you should know better. You’re getting what you deserve.”
- It’s like a doctor telling someone, “How could you be so sick?”
- The author Luke is showing us a comparison between a judging community that says, “he got what he deserved,” and a nameless group of friends who look past what we deserve and carry each other to the healer.

v.20 When Jesus saw their faith, -- their willingness to forgive his sins-- he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven." he called him back into inclusion.

- Our goal at Petra is to be a healing culture where you don’t have to be perfect. We can take off the mask. We can extend grace for our bad days and our relapses. Bad habits take time to deconstruct. And fruit trees take time to grow. Which direction is your life pointed to? We are all working out our faith. We just want to help others experience the life that’s in Jesus that is like no other life.

From Marci:

The Lifespring ministries are a culmination of our values of the Holy Spirit, prayer, and scripture.

Slide: Upcoming Events from our Healing Ministries

Sanctity of Human Life Sunday

FOUNDER OF DEEPER STILL

Jan. 23 | Guest Speaker

WINTER GROUPS START JAN. 30

- **Conquer Series**
- **Freedom**

Restoring the Foundations

HOPE, HEALING & FREEDOM CONFERENCE

MARCH 19

Deeper Still

SPRING RETREAT: APRIL 29-MAY 1

Celebrate Recovery

ONGOING | YEAR-ROUND

Short List of

The Truth About Healing!

Jesus never minimized this man's sin.

- 1. We don't heal by hiding from the truth, but by embracing the truth.**
 - The truth is what sets us free, even when it's painful.
- 2. Sometimes healing can hurt before it heals.**
 - You have to face memories, insecurities, uncomfortable realities that we're not used to facing.
- 3. Healing usually requires sudden events and gradual processes.**
 - A surgeon has to reset a bone, but then give the bone time to fuse.
- 4. Just because you're not aware of it doesn't mean it's not a problem.**
 - Malignancies can go undetected in the body for years before the problem becomes apparent.
- 5. Just because you've been that way a long time doesn't mean it's normal or healthy.**
 - I've had a 40% hearing loss my entire life. That doesn't make it normal or healthy.
 - Cynical attitudes or the inability to express emotions is not healthy.
- 6. Just because you aren't healed yet doesn't mean God doesn't care about it.**

- Keep asking him. Keep seeking wholeness.

7. Only Jesus, the Healer, can heal your soul and spirit.

- Don't look for a boyfriend to do what only a savior can do. Don't think that having a child or the right job is going to fix the hole in your heart.

What does it look like for every part of me to be totally saturated with perfect love?

Ministry Prayer [5 min]

Hold up an area of your life that you feel stranded. Alone. Dry. Confused. Broken.

Declaring Scriptures through God's voice!

- I am the God who heals you!
- I was pierced for your transgressions, I was crushed for your iniquities; the punishment that brought you peace was on me, and by my wounds you are healed.
- I forgive all your sins and heal all your diseases.

3 John 1:2 Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well.

Ill: Ariana's skinned knee

Father's compassion. "Oh darling, I'm so sorry. Let's go get you fixed up."