

WOUNDED
Church Wounds
Matthew 5:23-24

Jimmy Don was a wounded warrior. He is a man that is deeply committed to his faith and that is fiercely loyal to his family and his friends. His church family has been at the CENTER of his life for more than 35 years. He has seen the church at its BEST, and at its WORST. He has been here at CHC through some of the most amazing experiences with God that you could ever imagine. He has seen countless homes restored and souls saved, and he has witnessed some of the most beautiful acts of love and service between brothers and sisters in the faith that you could ever hope to see. He has also been here through seasons of confusion, discord, failure, and relational heartbreak. He has seen leaders fail and brothers and sisters walk away from one another and even from church altogether. He has been wounded by the leaders that he loves. [I own a part of that myself, and it grieves me.](#) It has been far from easy, but Jimmy Don STAYED PUT and WORKED THROUGH his pain with the help of Jesus AND his broken fellow-followers. I watched him PURSUE those that had wounded him in order to forgive them and attempt to restore friendship with them. Jimmy Don is more on FIRE about the work of God at CHC than he has ever been, and I LOVE THAT! I thank God that he has not allowed his past wounds from church leaders to prevent him from properly following and trusting his current leadership. That is a work of God! But I know he still has scars.

Wounds happen everywhere. Everyone has relational scars from turmoil that arises between broken people. Never forget this: The worst wounds happen in the closest of all relationships. **The SEVERITY of a wound is directly connected to the DEPTH of the relationship in which it occurs.** This is why FAMILY wounds are so hard. It is the same for wounds that we receive at the hands of those that we worship and serve with in church. [Personally, I have experienced my deepest wounds in the context of the church.](#) Some of you have too. But many of us do not know what to DO when we have been wounded. As a result, we either just keep on WALKING WOUNDED, or the hurt gets too bad and we simply WALK AWAY.

Over the past 3 weeks, we have been learning principles about how to find healing in Christ for the wounds that we have had inflicted on us. We have talked about the importance of looking at our hearts to see how those wounds have led us to believe LIES about ourselves and about God, and we have learned how to WRITE GOD'S TRUTH on our hearts to replace those lies. We have learned how to FIND SHELTER in our Father's love so that we can process our grief with him and then experience his COMFORT - enough to even share his comfort with others! But today, we need to learn how to DEAL WITH THE OFFENDER that has wounded us. There is no better place to learn this than in the context of CHURCH RELATIONSHIPS. It is worth it!

Jesus called us to a HIGH IDEAL. [He said that our love for one another as Christians would be our GREATEST TESTIMONY to the lost world about the REALITY of HIS LOVE.](#) He COMMANDED us to work through our differences, to give GRACE to one

another, and to FORGIVE each other. This will NOT be easy! If you are willing to RECONCILE your RELATIONSHIP with your Christian Brother or Sister (And Jesus COMMANDED us to keep our relationships in good order!), then you must learn how to deal with the wounds that are INEVITABLE in close community. **In this message, I want to give you 3 TYPES of self-examinations that we all need to take when dealing with an offense.** I pray that they serve you and our church body well!

Examine the WOUND: Do I KNOW the TRUE NATURE of the offense?

[ALL wounds can help us grow! Some wounds: "Just rub some dirt in it!"]

***What kind of wound is this:** Blatant sin (Betrayal, Lying, Cheating, Stealing, or Gossip), Disrespect (Failure to acknowledge or appreciate you, or False Accusation), Disillusionment (Personal or Church Wide), or Simple Disagreement?

***How did this wound affect me:** Grief, Hurt feelings, Physical pain or loss, Shame, or Sorrow? [Remember: Bring those wounded emotions to Jesus FIRST!]

-Sometimes these wounds hurt worse because we were genuinely serving God.

-Did this wound YOU or just your PRIDE? [Church Business: Being told NO]

~Is this wound too big for me to bear without proper confrontation?

Ephesians 4:2 NLT

2 Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love.

Proverbs 19:11 NIV

11 A person's wisdom yields patience; it is to one's glory to overlook an offense.

[Quote: P. 83 – The Peacemaker, by Ken Sande]

-Be careful: Even your memory of an offense is exaggerated by how it makes you FEEL! Therefore, feelings can change your memory. [Dr. James Richards]

***What will it COST my church, our testimony, and me if I continue to allow this wound to fester?** [Bitterness, Church Division, Broken Witness, etc.]

Examine my HEART: Am I WILLING and READY to DEAL with the offense?

Matthew 5:23-24 NIV

23 "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, 24 leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

***Do I know I need to GO to my offender?**

-Biblical RULE: Who goes? If YOU KNOW . . . YOU GO! [Before you give your gift!]

***Am I sitting in JUDGMENT on my offender? Matthew 7:1-2 NIV**

1 "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. 2 For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

Judge = To assume the office of judge; to give a sentence; to condemn
[QUOTE: P. 21 – How to Stop the Pain, Dr. James Richards]

“How I see it is NOT how it is; it is just how I see it!”

“I’m not who you think I am; I’m not who I think I am;

I am who I THINK you think I am!” [Quotes by Dr. James Richards]

-How can you KNOW that you are sitting in judgment on them?

*You assume that you already know WHY they did what they did.

*You give a verdict before you ever talk to them about the offense!

*Your GOAL is not RECONCILIATION but REVENGE! [Revenge is God’s role!]

*You are more concerned about being RIGHT than about being RECONCILED.

***Am I willing to release my anger?** [Refer to **Matthew 5:21-22**]

Barclay, commenting on the specific ancient Greek word translated **angry**: “So Jesus forbids for ever the anger which broods, the anger which will not forget, the anger which refuses to be pacified, the anger which seeks revenge.”

***Am I prepared to FORGIVE them . . . REPEATEDLY?** **Matthew 18:21-22 NIV**

21 Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?” 22 Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.

-Close relationships WILL HAVE repeated offenses!

-LOVE COVERS a MULTITUDE of sins: Another aspect of sharing Jesus’s suffering!

***TIM KELLER: All love is sacrificial and substitutionary at some level.**

-FORGIVENESS requires that I RELEASE the offender from owing me anything!

*I release them TO GOD to allow God to deal with them as HE sees fit!

[REFER TO “RELEASE” SERIES]

Examine my APPROACH: HOW am I MOVING TOWARD my offender?

***Can I go for the GOOD of my offender?** **Luke 17:3 NIV**

3 So watch yourselves. “If your brother or sister sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them.

-Express the VALUE of the person and the relationship

REBUKE = To place honor upon, to fix a price or value

-Look for REPENTANCE that leads to RECONCILIATION

*Reconciliation is not possible if repentance is absent when it is needed!

***Am I able to speak with CLARITY and GENTLENESS?**

-CLARITY: This is what you did (type of wound), and this is how it affected me.

*This is not about judgment or condemnation. It is simple fact.

***Am I willing to allow them an opportunity to give their perspective on this issue?**

***Am I willing to FORGIVE my offender even if he does not repent?**

- Reconciliation is not possible if repentance is NEEDED but not expressed.
- But forgiveness FREES YOU from the offense even if it does not restore the friendship!

If you are truly willing to process each offense that you experience biblically, you will not only be healthier; the ENTIRE CHURCH will be better off! Oh, how we need people who are willing to do the HARD WORK of SEEKING RECONCILIATION. I know that it is perhaps the hardest work of all to do. But it is also EXACTLY what Jesus Christ did by coming to this earth to LIVE, DIE, and RISE so that we could be saved!! Share his sufferings in this way!

I also know that it will take HIS POWER to accomplish this in our lives. We are not strong enough or secure enough in ourselves to make this happen. But we have all that we need IN HIM. I urge you to go back and ask the Spirit of God to give you insight on where YOU might be STUCK right now in a wound so that he can show you what must be done to move forward in healing. I also plead with you to get the RESOURCES that are available to you that can help you WORK THROUGH these offenses in a wise and godly manner.

The Peacemaker – Ken Sande

How to Stop the Pain – Dr. James Richards

I Should Forgive, but... – Dr. Chuck Lynch

May we all EMBRACE TODAY the FREE GRACE of God that is needed for our healing.

Let's pray.