

01 | People are Hurting

Reaching the Lost Series

Well, hello and welcome to this series, Reaching the Lost. Today's title is People Are Hurting. And boy, isn't that the truth? In fact, right now, more than ever, people are hurting and oftentimes desperate. In the last few years, things have become increasingly worse, with addiction, and bondage, and perversion, and suicide on the rise like never before. People need to know that Jesus is the answer. They need to know that Jesus is the answer to these things and, so much more. Jesus really is the answer to everything. And in a lost and hurting world that doesn't have relationship with Him, it's our privilege and duty as believers to proclaim that message, that gospel, that good news, that Jesus came to save them from all of these things.

Before we get started, I'd like to open in a word of prayer, and then we'll read some scriptures. Heavenly Father, I give these next few minutes over to You, and I invite Your Holy Spirit to speak to me, to speak through me, and to speak to the people that are hearing. May they hear what You have to say to them regarding their role in reaching the lost and touching the lives of hurting people. We thank You that this series has its intended effect, and it cuts people to the heart and it reacquaints them with Your compassion for the lost, for the hurting and the dying. In the name of Jesus, I ask You to speak through me and to the people, and we thank You for this opportunity to come together during this series. Amen.

You know, the Bible says that Jesus was despised and rejected by men. He was a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He understands living life in a broken and fallen world. He came to us as one of our own. In fact, in 2 Corinthians 1:3–4, it says this in the ESV version: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are also comforted by God." And Psalm 34:18 says, "The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit." Jesus Himself, being acquainted with grief and sorrow, knows how to comfort us.

And we who have experienced that comfort, according to the Bible, are able to comfort those who are also suffering. People are suffering from all kinds of things: sickness, mental disease, demons, unfortunately, are very real and they torment people. And we have the answer, and we have the Holy Spirit. I know personally for me, that's an area that I had to work on. I had to get along with the Holy Spirit and work on this because as much as I love God and I love His Word and I love the lost, I found over the years my heart had kind of become calloused and so used to seeing people living on the street—the homelessness, the addiction, the drugs, the abuse. You get used to it and it doesn't affect you the way that it should. And it's not that there's anything wrong with us; just over time, you see these things and it just becomes a normal part of life. But Jesus sees it, and He grieves. God looks down on His creation and His heart breaks and it aches for the lost, for the hurt.

And then there are people who aren't homeless. They're not addicted. They live in a home. They have a job. They have a family. But inside, something's missing, and they know it. They may have everything they ever thought they needed to live a happy life. And yet, inside, they're not content. They're

not happy. And this is the norm in a life apart from Jesus. Nobody is truly happy, apart from relationship with their creator, with their Father, and with the Lord Jesus, without the fellowship and communion of His Holy Spirit. We were created for Him, through Him, and by Him. And, without Him, we really have nothing. We can accumulate all the things this world says that we need to be happy, to live a good life, and yet, apart from the Lord Jesus Christ, we're hurting.

So, I want to encourage you as we go through this series, begin to look at your life in light of the fact that you have the answer. You have the truth of God's Word. You have the answer that people need. You know how to comfort them. I'm going to read to you from the Gospel of John 14:27: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Those were Jesus' words to His disciples. We have a peace that comes from Him that can't be taken, it won't be taken. And the world doesn't know that peace. Because Jesus is the Prince of Peace, He gives us the peace that we need, and it only can come from Him.

Part of the Great Commission was to preach the gospel to every creature, to make disciples of every nation. The gospel, the Word of God, is the power of salvation unto God for all who will believe. We have the truth; we have the only thing that can set people free from the heartache, from the trauma. There is some grief that we wish we would never know. When I was a young man, one of my best friends died at the age of 22. You don't see something like that coming. And that was not God's best for his life. But it happened because of some decisions that he made. But I now know the grief of losing somebody that's close, a loved one. I can relate to people. When they're hurting over the loss of a loved one, a family member, a friend, a relationship, a divorce, I can relate to them. But I need to do more than that; I need to point them to Jesus. I need to point them to what

the Word of God says. The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and He saves the crushed in spirit. He's right there when people are hurting, when their hearts are broken, and their spirits are devastated and crushed. He's right there, He's near. He's one word of surrender away from coming in and taking hold of that life, and the healing begins. The process of healing begins and the relationship that He desires with you. The door is open. He stands at the door and He knocks. And if you open it, it says He'll come in with you and dine with you as with a friend. He's offering a life of communion with Himself. And eternity is going to be wonderful, but we can have that relationship now. The world needs that relationship. We have it, and it's up to us to give it to them.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God." I want you to notice a couple of things here. He comforts us in all our afflictions. It doesn't matter what you're going through. His comfort is available; it's ready and available. Any affliction ... you can't say that about anything or anyone else. There is no other source that can meet every need, touch any and every hurt. There is nothing ... no medication, no counseling.

You can do it the world's way. I did it for many years. I drank, and I partied, and I did drugs, and I ran around with my friends having fun, but it didn't fix anything. And, in fact, so often the world turns to things that actually make it worse. The more you fill those that void with the things of the world, the more of that void grows. It's almost like you stretch it out and the emptiness grows, and it grows, and grows. And that costs you, and you open yourself up to all kinds of trouble. The Bible says to be sober and be vigilant because your adversary, the devil, walks around like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Notice "whom he may devour" ... it's

connected to those who aren't sober. You want to do things the world's way? Well, guess what? You open up your door to the prince of this world. The little "G" god, his name is Satan, and he hates you, and he wants to destroy your life. And so many people don't know Jesus, and they're running to these other things; they're running to alcohol, they're running to drugs, and it's destroying their life. It makes things worse. It doesn't make things better. And they're desperate for the answer, and we have it: the answer is only found in Jesus. The answer is only found in His Word. The answer is only found in the complete surrender to His Lordship. And people don't know that.

Unfortunately, they know a lot about where, as Christians, we stand on certain issues and what we're against, but they oftentimes don't know the genuine love of Jesus Christ, their Savior, and the love of their Father. And I would just encourage you, as we go through this series, begin to pray and ask God if this isn't something that is on your heart, if you're not constantly thinking about other people, their situations, their pains, their hurts. And maybe some of you yourselves are even hurting, and that's okay. I've gone through seasons where I shampooed the carpet with my tears. I couldn't stop crying on my face before the Lord. I've been there, and it's okay if you're there. But you have the comfort of the scriptures. You have the truth of God's Word. You have the presence of His Holy Spirit. You have a relationship with Jesus Christ. And He will see you through that valley of darkness. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers us out of them all. And it's okay if you're there, and I'm going to pray for you before we end this teaching. But if you're just living this life of Christianity, and you love Jesus and you have His Word, and you have the peace that it provides, praise God for that. But share it! Share it with this lost, hurting world.

The world is dying; they're on their way to hell. They're suffering, and they're going to wake up to a horrible eternity, and now is the time to reach them. People are vulnerable, they're hurting. Sometimes they'll have a wall; their heart is hard, but one word from God can change that. One Holy Spirit-anointed word from God's truth can break down those barriers, can break down those walls. So, I would urge you.

Darkness covered the earth. It has for many, many years now. But in 2020, darkness covered the earth, and COVID changed things for a lot of people. A new level of darkness came over the earth, and people came out of that season, and there's fear. There is anger. There's confusion. There's desperation. Addictions were formed during that season. People were locked away and left with themselves, left to their own desires, left to the dictates of their own heart. They were isolated. The Bible says that a man who isolates himself rages against all wise judgment. Some of us were forced into a season of isolation and pressed into the Lord and came out on top. But for many people, that is not the case, and Jesus sees them, and He sees their hurt. And He has a church full of people that have His Holy Spirit and have His Word, and He wants to meet their needs. He wants to be the one that they turn to. He wants to be the one that they surrender their lives to. And people know the things that they continually run to—to numb the pain, to fill the void, to ease the stress—they know that it doesn't work, and they know that it's temporary. And, if they're honest with themselves, they know it doesn't really satisfy. But what they don't know is that Jesus can set them free from all of that. It takes somebody to go and tell them. It takes somebody who cares to at least offer a prayer. I can't tell you how many times I've met somebody, and a lot of times at work, I would just offer a simple prayer. I wouldn't try to invite them to church necessarily. I would always offer, "I have a house church if you want to come." I would just give them a Bible

and I would pray. I would say, "Do you mind if I pray for you?" And I said, "Do you mind if I put my hand on you?" And I would just pray, and all of a sudden, I'm telling you, the tears would come. Sometimes the floodgates would open and sobbing and heaving people that I had never known were in my arms, weeping on my chest. They're that desperate, they're that broken. All of a sudden, a hurting stranger who you didn't know 3 minutes ago is crying in your arms. That's the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, His Holy Spirit, and His Word. And that is His desire to reach these people, to reach these people with His love, to be the answer to their pain and their sorrow.

And let me tell you, unfortunately, not everybody that has that experience, and that encounter will turn their life over to Jesus, at least not immediately. But you did your part. You reached them. You reached them and, like the Bible said, the gospel, the kingdom, has come near to them. They now have a decision to make, they know, but you did your part. You did your part to introduce them to the Holy Spirit and to the Lord Jesus Christ. And if the Lord leads you, extend an invite to a house church (either that you have or that you attend) or to the church that you attend, and you at least offer to start the process of discipleship. And let's see how many people we can win. Let's see how many hurting people we can touch.

I'm going to close in a word of prayer and pray that the Lord would use this series, and that He would use us as people, His body. He left his ministry to us. He left the responsibility of reaching the lost to us. When He left this earth to go sit down next to the Father, He sent us His Holy Spirit to help us complete the job. Jesus is still interceding for us. Even now, He's seated at the right hand of the Father, ever making intercession for us. We're not in this alone, we're not after the lost alone. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, I thank You that You have us and counted as faithful to run this race, to take this gospel to the nations, to be ambassadors for You, to reconcile the lost, the dying, the hurt. Those bound up with sin and iniquity, need and addiction, that You have called us to be those who reconcile them to You, to the Father, and to the Lord Jesus. May You use us to bring Your kingdom to them—Your Holy Spirit, a word, a word of knowledge, a word of wisdom, a simple scripture, a psalm, something that speaks to their situation—that You use us. What a wonderful privilege that is! And, oh, how we have not taken this seriously! We've taken so lightly the commission that You left us with. So, as we take time to recognize that this commission has been on Your heart from the time that You left it to us until now, You are still about the commission. You are still about the people. You see their pain, and their hurt, and their sorrow, and You have left it up to us to do something about it. I pray that You would empower us by Your Holy Spirit, that You would encourage us and strengthen us. That the joy of the Lord would be our strength. It's not by might nor by power, but by Your Spirit, Lord, that we do this, that we accomplish this task. And if there's anybody who's listening and you were like me, and your heart had kind of grown calloused to the things that you see around you, the darkness that covers the people and the way the world has gone, and you just became used to it, pray that the Lord would stir up that conviction and that compassion, and He will. He'll stir up that compassion once again for the lost. And you can feel it, you can feel His heart. And when you feel His heart and His love for the lost, it does something to you, and you can't help but reach out and do your part. Lord, people are hurting, and we need You to help us show them that they need You as well. So, in the name of Jesus, we receive this word from You, and we ask that You help us to complete this mission that You have left us, in the

name of Jesus. We love You. You are everything to us.
Amen.