

The Inner Healing Ministry of Jesus
1 Cor 12:4-11, Matt 18:21-35

Friends last week we talked about how life is difficult and challenging enough without having to get sick- because getting sick, struggling with disease keeps us from fully functioning in our capacity and calling as stewards of God's creation.

And we looked at how the bible reveals that sickness and disease and death is result of the curse on creation, the consequence of Adam and Eve's sin of rebellion against God, and that we are all born under and into this curse – as we all experience sickness, and disease and death.

Now we also noted that biological insight helps to explain some of the “how” sickness results from the antagonistic relationship between the world and humanity – and this allows us to better co-operate with God's gracious gift of healing, with the preserving nature of His Word as it sustains the creation – but biology is not the “why.”

And there is a danger to insisting that biology is the “why” to sickness and disease because it limits what we are able to know and understand about who we are as human beings, from realizing how being born and living under the curse also affects those parts of us that are beyond being biologically observed and explained.

Friends the bible reveals that the curse affects these unseen parts of us as well. Proverbs 12:13 says *“Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life.”* and Proverbs 18:14 says *“The human spirit can endure in sickness, but a crushed spirit who can bear?”*

You see, emotionally, mentally, and psychologically the curse affects our inner person as well.

And just as we can be born with a physical sickness, disease or deformity, so to we can be born with some degree of mental or emotional or psychological sickness... *(which may not become apparent for any number of years)*

Furthermore it is inevitable that life in a fallen antagonistic world will inevitably wound us, to one degree or another – with scrapes and bruises to our knees, but also to our hearts and minds.

And brothers and sisters in Christ, I'm sure that you will agree that wounds and injuries and sicknesses of the spirit are often far more debilitating than physical ones, and they are more difficult to understand, identify and treat.

We see soldiers coming back from fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq – physically healthy and whole - but struggling with the disruptive and debilitating effects of Post-traumatic stress disorder.

We have stereo-types about First Nations people, their families, their communities and how they are so often dysfunctional and disproportionately involved in social problems – and we can't seem to figure out how to identify and address what is contributing to this for them.

Acknowledging the trauma their communities experienced in the residential schools project is a start – but that simply identifies the source it doesn't resolve the injuries that have developed from that.

Or we might know persons who are engaged in self-destructive behaviors, substance abuse, and who struggle with thoughts and desires and identities which do not line up with God's intentions and calling for us...

Perhaps we've personally experienced some of this...

Or maybe you are aware of those inner parts of yourself where you have put up walls, hardened your heart so to speak, to protect those places where there is an old injury which has not healed properly, to block the memory of a traumatic experience, or even hold on to something like anger about an injustice that occurred in your life.

And just like being physically sick affects our ability to function normally, these inner wounds and sicknesses do as well, and we all have them.

Sometimes the way they impair us from functioning normally is obvious – especially to those around us, other times we have become very good at hiding and coping with them and no one would know – unless they make the mistake of poking at one of those injuries...

Now, many people don't like to hear about how living in a fallen world and born under and into the curse affects us in this way – physical sickness ok maybe... but this, it's too personal!

It brings the issues to close to home; no one wants to hear there is something wrong with what we consider to be the center of who we are and which forms our identity.

In fact you can hear this fear reflected in the modern definition of what it means to feel 'shame' which says *"I haven't just done something wrong – I am wrong"*

For many people the realization that something is wrong, or sick, or deformed so close to the center of their identity is just too much to bear - and eventually they seek freedom from that shame through death, ending their own life.

Which is why our society now seeks to end this experience of shame for some people by saying *"there is nothing wrong with you! Don't be ashamed of what you experience as being "wrong" with you – it's not wrong, celebrate it, take pride in it!"*

And friends if our only choice was between bearing the shame of being broken – which leads us to dark places and self-destructive behavior and eventually death, or... celebrating our brokenness and taking pride in it so we can feel good about it – then it seems to be a simple choice doesn't it.

But brothers and sisters in Christ - the good news is that this is not our only choice! There is another way!

As we learned last week Jesus Christ came to reverse the curse, which we are born into and under, and all of the examples of His healing ministry flow out of that – that’s why Paul writes in Romans 5:17;

“For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those - who receive God’s abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness - reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ!”

Friends this is possible because Jesus was not born in and under the curse of Adam – He is the Word of God made flesh, born of the virgin, fully God, fully human – fully able to be the perfect covenant partner with Yahweh.

Believe this! Put your faith and trust in this!

Because brothers and sisters in Christ, every aspect of our humanity in Christ is restored and no longer under the effects of the curse, and our heavenly Father gives this restored humanity to us as a free gift.

No longer is it a false choice between the shame of being broken or the celebration of being broken.

God has stepped in and made a new humanity – unbroken and unblemished, not wounded or hardened in any way – in the person of Jesus Christ, who was able to say – while suffering incredible physical pain and rejection on the cross - *“Father forgive them they know not what they do!” (Luke 23:34)*

And brothers and sisters this new humanity is ours through faith, and the working of the Holy Spirit – who produces that faith in us.

Now remember that Hebrews 11:1 defines faith as *“confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.”*

So what this means is that the Holy Spirit enables us to believe that Jesus Christ is this substitutionary new humanity for us – even though for all intents and purposes He may look quite ordinary and very much like the rest of us.

To be sure there are indicators and signs that He is not – but they are not conclusive proofs – they must be accepted by faith – not blind faith, because we see the signs - but confessional faith which says I will accept these signs as indicators of who the scriptures proclaim Jesus to be.

Furthermore we live our lives vicariously in His new humanity by confessional faith as well – remember Hebrews 11:6 says *“without faith it is impossible to please God”*

Which means that, starting with producing the faith which allows us to believe in Jesus as our redeemed humanity in full covenant relationship with God, the Holy Spirit will continue to apply more and more of Jesus’ restoration of humanity through our whole person.

So living in Christ by faith means that you refuse to let those instances where your sinful nature resurfaces, where your brokenness is still evident, where you still experience desires contrary to God’s will, cause you to doubt that you are fully restored... in Christ.

This is what Paul is speaking about in Romans 7:18-19;

“For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. [Because the good itself is located physically in Jesus] For I have the desire to do what is good, [the gradual transforming work of the Holy Spirit] but I cannot carry it out. [the lingering effects and consequences of the curse] For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.”

So does Paul say – “well forget it then, I’d like to believe in Jesus and in His power to make me over in His image but obviously it’s not working because I still struggle with sin!”

No – Paul’s response is one of faith and he writes in vs.25
“Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!”

So living by faith means we are always going back to Jesus – not only as the source for the forgiveness of our sins – but every time we see our sinfulness, sickness, or brokenness surface in some way we go to Him believing and trusting that the core of our identity and humanity is there in Him, fully restored and unaffected by sin, sickness, disease or any sort of brokenness.

This is why Paul writes in Colossians 3:3-4 *“For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.”*

Does that make sense?

Good – because we need to have this background understanding in place in order to help us understand that to continue moving on towards maturity as members of the Body

of Christ we need to learn to co-operate with Holy Spirit’s desire to bring more and more of Christ’s restored humanity into our very being.

And the first way we begin to co-operate with the Holy Spirit in this is to understand and realize that our salvation involves much more than simply having some sins forgiven and then it’s done and over with.

All of us have areas in our internal persons which need to experience the healing of Jesus through the work of the Holy Spirit - we may need emotional healing, psychological healing, mental healing... or some combination of all three!

And friends we remember back to last week’s message where we learned that those who believe in Jesus – will continue to do the works which He did, and do even great works because Jesus ascended to His Heavenly Father, and poured out the Holy Spirit to empower his church for these greater works.

Not miracles... but works, just part of the regular everyday activity that Christ's Body is supposed to be doing as we go and make disciples of all nations... the healing ministry of Jesus – both physical and inner is just a normal part of our experience – but a very important one!

Because as we read in Hebrews 12:14-15 we need to *“Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.”*

Brothers and sisters in Christ, without the inner healing ministry of Jesus in the church - the danger is that many among us will fall short of the grace of God – or miss out on the grace of God being applied to whatever “bitter roots” internal hurts, brokenness or emotional disabilities – we have.

And those effects of the curse will gradually take deeper and deeper root in our persons – in how we view ourselves and our identity and eventually will bear its fruit in our lives that

will harm the body of Christ and destroy its credibility for making disciples.

So, with this in mind, what does our Lord have to say to us from 1 Corinthians 12 to encourage and instruct us as Valleyview to pursue His work to regarding inner healing ministry?

Well, it seems a bit obvious to start with but in vs. 6 we read *“there are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God as work”*

So, he who believes in me will do the works I have been doing and even greater...

Then we read in vs. 7 that *“the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good”*

Brothers and sisters... how does the Holy Spirit manifest himself in us according to this passage? Well the scripture continues to explain this – someone in the body will receive a

message of wisdom, another a message of knowledge, another with have motivating faith to pursue action, and others will have gifts of healing.

But, the scripture tells us these are just different manifestations of the same Spirit that in working in us and through us for our common good – and what is good is that we apply the grace of God to each other's' lives so that no root of bitterness can grow up in us.

So there are people in the Body of Christ who have been gifted to bring about inner healing in other's lives, by cooperating with the Holy Spirit through prayer ministry.

But as we acknowledged earlier on, inner wounds and hurts can be tricky.

It might be very obvious to us that someone needs inner healing for some issues – but they don't see it yet, and they are not ready to deal with it yet.

The Holy Spirit can help by manifesting through another person with a message of wisdom on how the Body is to deal with this person, and cooperate with how the Holy Spirit is leading them to the time and place for their healing...

Or perhaps someone has issues that neither they nor anyone else is aware of – but the Holy Spirit is, and so He manifests through another member of the Body with a message of knowledge...

And through that message the person is made aware that there is something, which they may have forgotten, hidden and or ignored, that God now wants to bring up and deal with it and bring His healing and restoration to it.

And how does that healing come about – well in different ways, complimentary ways – manifested in members of the Body of Christ by the one Holy Spirit – working us together for the common good.

So sometimes the healing, of whatever form physical or internal comes about through what is better translated in vs. 10 as the operation of powers (dunamis).

Sometimes it is prophecy – the proclamation of specific truth that will counteract a lie which is keeping someone from healing.

Sometimes it is through prayer – and specifically here we see it is praying in tongues, and if there is a message from the Lord in those tongues to pass that along to the person who is being prayed for.

Now – remember what we've just looked at here, is how the Holy Spirit manifests Himself for our common good.

And its set within the understanding of how the Holy Spirit is the one responsible for taking that restored humanity of Jesus and getting it into our humanity – saving and healing us, in every aspect of who we are.

And that comes from God sending Jesus specifically to reverse the curse on creation and bring Adam's descendants into the glory and blessings which Adam failed to bring us into.

So – when we experience the Holy Spirit manifesting himself among us – there is no need to freak out, or be concerned or get worried.

In fact the Holy Spirit also helps us to distinguish when He is manifesting, versus when it is our own spirit or an evil spirit.

And part of that discernment is receiving and learning to think about healing and the Holy Spirit in this way, and also debriefing with each other about any experience so that we can determine what the fruit of it was...

Because in the passage we learn the Holy Spirit manifests in this way for the common good – which doesn't mean that everyone feels comfortable when it happens.

The common good is that one among us does not miss out on the grace of God – because if they do, bitterness will take root and grow up to cause trouble for them and for the Body. *(Do you see the difference?)*

So, a final word about how we individually cooperate with the Manifestation of the Spirit for our common good here, and it is a word about forgiveness.

You see, in vs. 4 the scripture says there are different kinds of gifts – and a fuller translation of that greek word “charismata” would be the “things of grace” – grace gifts if you will.

And this ties all of this inner healing work back to the initial work of the Holy Spirit freely and graciously applying the forgiveness of Jesus Christ to our lives - that is what has started it all.

And these grace-gifts which come out of that forgiveness are what are currently being used to identify, address, diagnose and apply healing to our brokenness...

And brothers and sisters in Christ - our response to this working of the Holy Spirit in us to offer forgiveness to whomever is responsible for those hurts or for that trauma...

To whoever has shamed us for our brokenness, to whomever has made us feel unworthy or unlovable and rejected us because of how we experience being born into and under the curse.

Forgiveness is the key brothers and sisters - and since it is by grace that we have been forgiven, and are receiving healing – we are set free when we forgive others as Christ did – as He did for us.

Friends – Our Lord is the great physician, He has come to Heal us, and he has poured out His Spirit upon us, let us be His Body and administer His healing – Amen.