



P. O. Box 66540
Albuquerque, NM 87193
505.890.6806
E-mail: irm@liferesource.org
Website: www.liferesource.org

Presentation Transcript
Healing Broken Hearts
By Bill Jacobs
November 8,2004

Turn with me to Luke 4, verse 16, and let's read something that He tells us.

Lk. 4:16-19 – *So He came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to heal the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.*

That's a festival scripture. That's a millennial scripture. It's all about what's going to happen in the millennium. But it says in verse 20:

V-20-21 – *Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing. It wasn't just about the millennium. It was about what He was going to do right then. And so He read them a scripture about what He would do in the millennium, and then He said He would begin to fulfill that scripture right then. And then He went around healing people – *immediately* – so that they would all know that He was the One to come.*

Now, when we are with Christ at the beginning of that thousand years of Christ's rule on the earth, we will be with Him as kings and priests. And we will be helping Him to fulfill that scripture. When we do that, we will encounter many traumatized people. What will they need? Will they need to be healed in body and mind? They will.

Now, we know what it is to heal someone who is lame or to heal someone who is blind. And everyone here can turn to scriptures that point to that and show that Jesus healed people who were lame and people who were blind. But where is it that "heals the brokenhearted?" What does it mean to be brokenhearted?

Well, because of Satan, and because of just the physical nature of the life that we live, nobody gets through this life without suffering huge losses. We lose our loved ones. We lose our friends. We lose our strength eventually, our vision, our hearing, our mobility. Sometimes we lose the respect or the love of others. Sometimes we lose income. Sometimes we lose influence or control. Sometimes we even lose self-respect because of our own bad behavior. And sometimes the losses that we experience in life exceed our ability to meet them. Remember when Job suffered all those losses all at one time? It stretched his resources “to the max.” Well, when that happens, when more losses are incurred than we have resources to meet them, we become brokenhearted. That’s a Bible terminology for a breakdown – a time of depression. So Jesus, in His lifetime on the earth, spent His time with His disciples. He spent His time with publicans, with people who were known sinners, with beggars, with disabled people, with people who had suffered great losses. He spent his time with the brokenhearted. He took time to bless little children – the tender ones, who are most vulnerable to life’s trauma. And when He comes back, He is going to do the same thing. And so will we. Are we ready for that? I wonder sometimes if we really are? Sometimes I think our lives today are so disconnected from what’s going to happen later that we don’t think about those things. Do we know how to heal the broken hearts that we’re going to encounter when we possess the Kingdom with Jesus Christ?

Well, in the interest of preparation for our work with Christ – both now and later – I’d like to explain today how to heal a broken heart. Now, often when I give sermons on issues of the heart and the spirit, people come up to me after the sermon, and say, “I program.” “I analyze.” “I sell all day long.” “I work in a cubicle all by myself.” “And I don’t get a chance to help people with personal problems. So what good is a sermon like that to me?” How, in your lifetime, are you going to learn how to heal the broken hearts of others if you’re isolated in your work? Or in your life? Well, I would like to recall to your mind the promises that God makes to the people in the millennium. That millennial scripture we read is a New Covenant promise. And those promises have already been made available to us. So, the millennial promise that we saw – to heal people who are lame and blind and brokenhearted – is a present-day promise to heal us of our sicknesses, and of the hurts and the traumas that this life inflicts upon us – and sometimes that we inflict upon ourselves.

Now, I want to make a point about this. In Albuquerque, where I live, we have a children’s grief center. And we work there with children who have lost parents, or other loved ones, and we work with them in groups. Because we know that one of the most healing things a child can experience is interaction with others who have suffered similar losses. The last day of the last group that I was involved in, there was a group of 16-year-old boys. And, you know, boys never like to talk about their feelings. We like to suck it up and go on. It’s okay to get angry, but we’re not going to talk about being hurt or suffering loss. And so, the facilitator and I, all through this group for six weeks, had tried to help them verbalize their feelings. And we asked them, when it was all over at the end, to fill out a little survey to try to find out what helped and what didn’t. Well, they all checked the area of talking about feelings as the least helpful! One boy, though, on his questionnaire, wrote at the bottom, “having fun with others who have suffered the loss of a loved one helped me a lot. I learned that I can still have fun. And I learned that others know what I’m going through because it happened to them, too. I

learned that we can all go on together.” See, I didn’t do anything to help those boys, except provide the environment. They healed each other. Being with other people of the same situation helped them.

The same thing works with people who have had cancer surgery, or people who are in the process of overcoming alcohol, or other substances, or for those who have lost a child, or for any major loss. Being with others who are working through, or have worked through the pain is helpful. Now here’s the point that I want to make: The most healing thing that we can bring to someone with a broken heart is the experience of having our own broken hearts healed. And that’s a promise that God offers to us. Until we’ve been there, we don’t know what it’s like. And living this life in this world gives us an intimate knowledge of the pain of life and the process of healing and the confidence that healing can happen to others because it can happen to us.

A peer of mine in the ministry, a few years ago, died. He was the first person from my class at college to die. And my wife began talking to his wife after this had happened, and she was telling my wife, “You know, all these people come up to me, and they say, ‘You know, you’re going to see your husband in the resurrection.’” And she told my wife, “Well, that just doesn’t help at all. I miss him now!” Now, all those folks that told her she’s going to see her husband in the resurrection had nothing but good will in mind for her. But they’d never been there. Who would understand what would be helpful to her? Another widow. Someone else who had lost a husband. That’s how it works.

So, learning how to heal a broken heart is when you break down the work of learning to accept God’s healing for our own deep hurts that inevitably come to all of us in this life. And when we have accomplished that process, then we can empathize with others, and so become healing instruments of God. God really does all the healing. It’s just like evangelism. God gives the growth, but we have to plant and water. And God heals the hearts, but we also have a part to play in it. And healing others, and if we want to be healed ourselves, there are certain things we also have to do – we have to participate in.

God has given us a human life. He promises to bless us. But He doesn’t shield us from all the pain. We all suffer losses in life. And in learning how to let God heal us through those losses, we’re going to learn how to help others heal, also. So, let’s think about how that all works.

I have a point here that I want to make here for you. One of the most destructive ways that people deal with hurt is to deny it. When we distract ourselves – you know, that guy that starts working 80 hours a week after the funeral – when we distract ourselves from feeling the real feelings, when we anesthetize ourselves with alcohol or other substances, when we withdraw from the hurt, when we cover it over, when we compartmentalize it, when we build a shell around it, when we go on the attack, it’s all still there, but unresolved. When we pretend everything is okay, the process of healing stops. And we become stuck.

The human mind is incredibly self-deceiving. When we deal with our losses, and our negative emotions in this way, we’re really not dealing with them at all. We’re still hurt, still

discouraged, still angry, but it feels like the pain is subsiding. But actually, it's just going deep into us where it poisons our whole being.

A friend of mine told me about a man that he encountered in his professional life as a psychotherapist. This man, who was in his 60s, was caught in the basement by his wife – or in the attic, I guess it was – wearing women's clothing. He was a cross-dresser. And she told him if she was going to stay married to him, he was going to have to figure out what the problem was and get it fixed. So he went into psychotherapy, and it came out in the course of his counseling that when he was a small child, he and his little sister used to like to play dress up. He would put on a suit and tie, and shine his shoes and put them on. And she would put on a fancy formal gown and those long gloves and high-heeled shoes. They loved to play that together. And one day, like children do, they decided they were tired of playing dress up, and they wanted to go across the street and pick some walnuts – a walnut orchard was there. So they did. But they didn't take off their fancy clothes. They just went like they were. And she used her gown as a sort of bucket to hold the nuts, and he dropped them in. And they gathered up a big batch of them, and when they got enough, they decided to go back home. And while they were crossing the street to their house – just right across the street from the orchard – she was struck and killed by a truck. She had high heels on, and she had all this stuff. I don't know all the details of how it happened. And the way the boy's family dealt with the terrible loss of their beloved daughter was to take everything out of the house that reminded them of that child. They did that within several days. He was not allowed to go to the funeral. They thought it would just be upsetting to him. When people asked them, "How many children do you have?" They said, "One." Her name was never mentioned again. And so all that loss that he experienced, all the grief that he had in his heart for his beloved, little sister just stayed there – in a sort of twisted and sick way. The way that he found to grieve and memorialize his sister was to put on the same kind of clothes that she was wearing when she died. It didn't start for years. But eventually, it came out in him. And he didn't know why he was doing that. It wasn't a conscious connection. But over the course of this counseling – as he talked more about it – and he learned how to properly grieve for his little sister, and to let those feelings out – the hurt and pain that he'd suffered – the desire to wear women's clothing just gradually left him. And he was healed of it.

Now, you might think, "Boy, that's an extreme example. Talk about fear religion. He's putting the fear of God in us now! We don't want to be cross-dressers!" But you know, there are even more extreme examples than that in the Bible. Think about King Saul. He never was able to find the poverty in spirit he needed to have a good relationship with God. He lost his kingdom because of it. He never acknowledged the problem that he had – and the guilt that he experienced – from having that forehead of flint. He was never able to get to that place. He became bitter and depressed because of it. And then it began to affect his behavior. He became explosive and homicidal. One minute he was saying David was the greatest supporter he had, and the next minute he was trying to stick him to the wall with a spear. Very unstable. Finally, he began to be bothered by demons. So that's a witness for us – so that we know we ought not to deal with our feelings the way he did.

There's a serious warning for us in God's word. It's in Psalms 32, verse 1.

Psa. 32:1-2 – David says to us, *Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven. Whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.* Hiding our feelings, hiding the hurts we suffer is deceitful. It's not who we really are.

V-3-5 – David said, *When I kept silent my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long – when I held it in. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me. My vitality was turned into the drought of summer. I acknowledged my sin to you – finally – and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, I will confess my transgressions to the LORD, and you forgave the iniquity of my sin.* David's here talking about sealing off his feelings of guilt and conscience – the pangs of conscience – that he suffered when he killed Uriah the Hittite and took Uriah's wife to be his own.

The other side of that coin is the great examples in the Bible of how to deal with loss in a Godly way. David himself is one of our prime examples. He wept and he mourned when his son, Absalom, died. Job's an example when his ten children were all killed in one day. Jesus, of course, is an example when He looked at the terrible plight of Jerusalem and was just overcome to the point that He wept publicly. He allowed Himself to feel His feelings. Ruth, who grieved the death of her husband and sought solace in relationships with Naomi and God. Or the adulteress who washed Christ's feet with her tear-soaked hair as she sought forgiveness.

The work of feeling our feelings is painful. It's difficult! It's hard to do! But the alternative to that is even worse. Cain's failure to resolve his jealousy that he had toward Abel led to an explosive rage where he murdered his brother. And when we hold in our feelings, it feels like we're controlling a wrong spirit, but what's really happening is these feelings just go underground, and then they're likely to erupt later in a total loss of control. You watch the news, and you see all these murders, and drunkenness, and road rage, and child abuse. That's what causes that – not dealing with our feelings in an honest way.

But there's something that's even worse than that. When we desensitize ourselves, instead of facing the pain that we have, we also become desensitized to the pain and the needs of other people. We become hard. So, now, I'm going to say something really important to all of you who are going to come with Christ and help heal the brokenhearted. Our own unresolved losses become our greatest impediment to effective service. It's impossible to have the bowels of compassion, that Paul told us we should have toward others, if we're not able to acknowledge our own feelings.

I was talking to some friends recently, who started a little house church, and they said on their first Sabbath some people came who had been abused by corporate religion some twenty years ago, and they were still so angry they couldn't talk about anything else. They ruined the day for everybody. That was twenty years ago! And that's what I mean when I talk about being stuck in your feeling. The work of healing has not happened. Something happened twenty years ago, and they're still upset by it. Now, you might say, "But they're doing what you said! They're feeling the feeling." No they're not! The point is to feel the real feeling. In this case, anger is *not* the real feeling. Below the anger they are deeply wounded by their

experience. And they have never acknowledged it. They've never examined how it felt to be devalued, to be constricted, to be disrespected, to be ignored. And to heal, they're going to have to go there and experience that.

Let's look at another aspect of healing a broken heart. I work at a school as a counselor at an elementary school. And a lady called me and told me that her six-year-old daughter has been having a tough time because her father left the family. So I made the connection with this child, and she was to come to my office at a particular time, and knock on the door. I went to the door and there's this little child smiling at me with her four front teeth missing. She said, "Hello Mr. Jacobths." So she came in and sat down, and I asked her to tell me about what's going on. So she started to explain that her father, as she put it, "run away from us. And he used to call me a lot, but now he doesn't so much anymore. And I heard my auntie and my mom talking, and my mom was telling my auntie that he was living under a bridge for a while, and another man attacked him. And now he's in jail." So I said, "Well, you're worried about your father – that he might get hurt – and you miss your father a lot." And she was acknowledging that. And I said, "And I think if that happened to me, I'd also probably be just a little bit angry with my daddy for leaving." She kind of hung her head and nodded. But she was willing already to acknowledge the feelings that she had – the real feelings that she was experiencing. So I said, "And what would help you?" Now, out of the mouth of babes, she said, "I think I just need to talk."

Once we acknowledge what the real feelings are, then we need to talk about them. We need to process those feelings. We need to write about them if we like to write. We need to talk about them if we need to talk. If we're artistic, we may need to draw about them.

One of the things we do with children who have been traumatized is to let them tell the story of it until they get tired of it. And in the telling of it, the trauma moves from right here in front of the face, to *way* out here to where it's just a part of life, and not the whole thing anymore. You can't ever erase those things from our memory, but we can put them in a place where they can't hinder us any longer. They can be put in perspective. And talking about it is what does that. When that happens, it's easier to let go the fear and the anger, and to go on. That's how it works.

Now, there's two things to realize about this step – this processing the feelings – once we've admitted what they are. Letting go of those things takes time. And nobody is on the same schedule. Nobody's on the same schedule. Healing from a broken heart is a *process*. It's *not* an event. Nobody can to boink you on the head with a magic wand and make everything all better right now. The work is process work. And the second thing to learn about this is that *God can help*. Let's go to Philippians 4, and verse 6.

Philp. 4:6-7 – *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.* When we're suffering, it helps to put things in perspective. And besides talking about it, one of the things we can do is to count our blessings, and to recall how God is preparing and shepherding us for a great purpose through this sea of life where we have to encounter all

these obstacles and pain. And when we do that, that is so helpful to us. There is an old saying: “The best revenge is living well.” And when we count our blessings, we know that God loves us – even if others don’t – we know that God loves us. And this kind of living and the love of God is living about as well as anybody can.

Jesus Christ suffered so that He could understand us, and He’s fixed it so that we suffer so that we can understand others. We’re not having to go through anything that He hasn’t already accomplished.

Col. 3:1-2 – *If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.* So what if somebody insulted you twenty years ago! What does that have to do with anything when it comes to being in the family of God and the Kingdom of God?

V-3-4 – *For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. Nobody can touch you now. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.* At some time in the future – if we can allow God to heal our hearts – we’re going to pass all those hurts and pains and losses. They’ll just become dim and harmless memories. They all seem so large to us now, but we’re not even going to think about them.

If you’re hurting now, hold on to God’s promises, and remind Him of them every day, so that *you* don’t forget.

Let’s look at another point. We have to be courageous enough to acknowledge and feel the feelings that are with us – authentic feelings we have. We have to open up enough to talk about them. That helps us put it in perspective. Once we’ve perspective-ized everything, then it’s possible to forgive those who we hold accountable. See, not only do we have to let go of the hurt, but we have to let go of the animosity toward those who may have caused hurt.

There’s a story in Genesis about Jacob who encountered his brother Esau. They’d been separated for twenty years. The separation was caused by Jacob cheating his brother out of his birthright. You probably remember the story. And it says, “He saw Esau coming a long way off with four hundred armed men.” So he kind of staggered his concubines and wives out there, because he didn’t know what was going to happen. He was afraid that Esau would be angry with him. But it says in verse 4 of Genesis 33....

Gen. 33:4 – *Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept.* Somehow, in the intervening twenty years, Esau had been able to let go of the insult and the abuse – put some perspective in his mind. Maybe he realized that family was more important than getting his way or being rich.

So we have to forgive people that have done us wrong. That’s very much a part of the healing process. But that really can’t happen until we put everything in perspective.

Let's look at another one. Once we acknowledge that we have been hurt, or have suffered a loss, and once we put things in perspective over time, and let go of the pain and the anger, and once we forgive others involved in our hurts and losses, then it's time to move forward.

Philp 3:13 – Now Paul was a man who suffered a lot of losses. He was a man who greatly abused. He said, *Brethren, I don't count myself to have apprehended. But one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God and Christ Jesus.* One of the things that happens to us when we're stuck in this loss process is we stop. We stop growing. We stop producing. And once we pass through the three steps that we've already covered so far, then it's time to start making progress again – to go forward.

David said he was drying up inside while he was holding his anger and rebelliousness, but when he let go of all of that, then his spirit was restored. It was replenished. And he was ready to go forward again. Now, sometimes that just happens automatically. You know, you just feel better, so you start doing what you normally do. But sometimes, you have to make an effort to get started again. When somebody's severely depressed, which is just the flip side of the anger coin, it often causes us to kind of get out of what we're normally used to doing. And when that happens, we ask people, "What would you do if you weren't depressed?" And then we tell them to go *do* it. It's like getting back on the horse after you've been bucked off. The longer you wait, the less chance it'll happen.

Now, those folks who were still angry after twenty years may need to admit how really hurt they still are. They may need to start counting their blessings. They may need to repent of anger and stubborn pride. And they may need to beg God for a clean heart and forgiveness. And then they need to go make some disciples. They need to get with the mission of God's Church – for the reason they were called. They need to get back on the horse again.

Now, I've covered these four points in a linear fashion. But in the real world it often doesn't work that way. There's another point. We're going to call it revisiting. It's kind of like looping back. I was at the Feast last year, and I ran into a couple that had been with us on a cruise Feast a few years before that was just outrageous. Our beliefs were being dismantled at the time. And we met each other and we both told one war story about that cruise – took us about ten minutes – and then we went on. We didn't talk about it for ten hours or ten days. We didn't sit and wallow in it for a week, but we kind of went back in our mind as to how we felt at that time, and we each kind of revisited that, and then we moved on ahead. And that's all a part of the process too. All human beings will have times when they'll go back in their mind to the way it was, and they'll feel those old feelings again. You acknowledge those feelings, you talk about them a little bit, and you get back on the horse, and you ride forward. Revisiting.

So, if we continue to acknowledge the feelings as they come up, and we let go of that anger and that resentment, and we count our blessings, and we pray and we move forward, eventually the hurts become more and more manageable. And our hearts are just gradually healed. It's not an event. It's a process.

So feeling the real feeling, letting go of the pain through the process of talking or expressing, forgiving, moving on and revisiting. It's in that process that the human heart is healed and the spirit is restored.

Let's turn to one last scripture in II Corinthians 1, verse 3:

II Cor. 1:3 – *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.*

It is by successfully experiencing this process of healing that we become healers of other people. If we don't experience that process, we can't be of much help to others. But if we do – if we're willing to have the courage to do those things that God lays out for us – then we can be incredibly helpful to others. We've been called here to picture and to prepare for our roles in the Kingdom of God. The time is *now* to accept God's offered healing in our own hearts so that we can be well prepared to participate in the restoration of God's way on the earth, when we all come with Christ to heal the brokenhearted.