

## HOW GOD MEETS MY DEEPEST NEEDS: GOD HEALS MY PAIN – Psalm 147:3

At the end of World War II, an American sub came back to Newport News, Virginia to dock. As it came into port something terrible went wrong with the mechanism and it began to sink in the harbor. They immediately dispatched coast guard to go out because obviously it was full of crew and they were trying to save the crew. They dispatched divers that would dive down to the hull of the submarine and find out what went wrong. As the divers swam around the sub you could hear that one inventive sailor had a hammer and was knocking on the hull from the inside in Morse code, “Is there hope?”

Is there hope? That’s one of the fundamental questions of life. Is life worth living? Is there hope? Can I count on anything in life? Is there hope? It’s asked everyday by thousands of people in thousands of different ways. When you’re setting in the doctor’s office awaiting tests, you hear the question, “Is there hope?” When you’re standing by the bedside at the hospital, you hear the question, “Is there hope?” When a couple who’ve put months and months into marriage counselors sitting there and getting nowhere, they’re thinking in their minds, “Is there hope?” When you’re dealing with a tax accountant in a bankruptcy court and you ask, “Is there hope?” When a couple or a family hears that their child is missing, they ask the police, “Is there hope?” Governmental and political leaders ask the question about places like Iraq, “Is there hope?”

You can go forty days without food and three days without water and you can go eight minutes without air. But you can’t go a single second without hope. Hope is one of the essentials of life. When hope is gone, life is over. You need hope to cope.

Today we’re beginning a new series – “How God Meets Your Deepest Needs.” We’re going to begin by looking at how God can heal your deepest pain. How He can bring hope to a situation that seems hopeless. We are going to look at what you can do to work along side God as He leads in the healing process.

How many of you have ever had a broken bone? More than one broken bone at one time? How many of you have ever had stitches? More than thirty stitches? How many of you have ever had a surgery of any kind? How many of you have ever had a knife wound? In the kitchen or a dark alley? How many of you have ever had a gunshot wound? How many of you have ever been wounded in a war?

God wants to heal your wounds. I am not just talking about the physical hurts that have happened, but the hidden wounds. Hidden wounds are the memories that still hurt, those recollections from your past that when you think about those things they still cause pain in your life. Memories of abandonment. Some of you have memories of abuse. Some of you have memories of things you have done that you can’t let go.

Some of you have memories of ridicule, severe criticism or hatred or prejudice or criticism that just tore you down – physical abuse, spiritual, sexual abuse, emotional abuse.

There are two truths about people: one is everybody needs Jesus. You may be masking your need for Him, but everybody has a hidden wound that needs His touch. At least one. An emotional scar from somebody in the past who hurt you in some serious way and you need the power of Jesus to help you through it.

The other thing I've learned is that emotional scars take longer to heal than physical wounds. People have gone to Vietnam and other wars and come back. Their bodies would heal but sometimes it would take years and years to get over the emotional scars.

The good news is this: Jesus Christ wants to heal your hidden wounds. You can start on that process this morning.

The Bible tells us that you find hope and healing in God. God is the source – the source of hope, the source of healing.

*Romans 15:13 - May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

*Psalm 52:9 - I will praise you forever for what you have done; IN YOUR NAME I WILL HOPE, for your name is good. I will praise you in the presence of your saints.*

What does the phrase “in your name I will hope” mean? How do you put hope in a name? What's the big deal?

You need to understand that names meant a lot more back in the past than they do today. Today, we choose names for the way that they sound. Jesek, Emily, Camille – kind of sophisticated sounding names. You just like the way it falls off your tongue.

But in ancient cultures, they would choose a name because of what it meant, because of what it described. In fact, your name was usually the definition of your character. You were given a name that matched who you were.

When God chose to reveal Himself to the Hebrew nation, He used Hebrew terms to describe Himself. Did you know that God has a lot of different names? In the Bible, God calls Himself by many different Hebrew names. Each one of those names is a description of Who He is. Each one of those names is a promise to you. Each one of those names is a benefit that God provides to us humans.

- Yahweh-Rohi (Psalm 23:1) = God is My Shepherd. God gives us this name to show us that He will lead us, protect us, love us, know us, and feed us.
- Yahweh-Jireh (Genesis 22:14) = God is My Vision or God is My Provider. God told us this name to show that He will show us where to go in life that He will provide the path and the resources to stay on that path, if we trust Him.
- Yahweh-Shalom (Judges 6:24) = God is My Peace. God tells us that His name is “peace giver”! This means that we can find the ultimate peace in God.
- Yahweh-Tsadaq (Jeremiah 23:6) = God is My Righteousness. When we see this name, we should realize that we are not good enough, and so God is good enough for us. When we look at this name, we realize that we find wholeness in God!
- There are plenty of others!!!

There are two names, though, that I want to look at specifically today:

At the end of the book of Ezekiel, God gives one of His names. He says “I am Yahweh-Shammah.” In Hebrew that means, “I am the God who is always there.” There is no place that God is not. There is no place you will go that God isn’t. God has been in your past. He’s in your present. He’s going to be in your future. He’s in the good times and the bad times. He’s in the good places. He’s in the evil places. He is everywhere.

This has profound implications on where you find hope. If God is truly with me all the time, whether I feel it or not, if He’s truly with me, then that means there are three sources of hope that I can count on. There are a lot of things in life that I can’t count on, a lot of things in life that are uncertain. Hope, however, is the anchor of the soul – things that I can count on so that no matter what happens, I know that life is not hopeless.

The other name comes from Exodus 15:26. Israel was scared that the diseases that devastated Egypt would inflict them. God told them that His name was Yahweh-Rapha = “God is My Healing.” God told the people that He is the one who can heal anything. He can heal their fears, their brokenness, and their wounds. He is the one who can bandage, anoint, cure, restore, nurse, and heal the very thing that afflicts them.

*Psalm 147:3 – He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.*

When the Israelites heard this name, they had a part in the process of God’s healing. They had to decide to trust God for who He is and had to trust God that He is the one who can heal even their deepest wounds.

Today, knowing that God is Yahweh-Rapha, the God who Heals, I want to look at what we can do to follow God in the healing process. Without allowing God to heal us, we

have no hope. It is hope that spurs us on. It is hope that says, if I take the steps to trust God, He can heal me. Walk with me on this path of hope.

## THE PATH OF HOPE THAT LEADS TO GOD'S HEALING:

The first thing that I believe that God wants me to do is:

### 1. REVEAL MY HURT

You're never going to get well until you face your feelings straight on. The Bible talks about the problem of stuffing it down inside and not talking about it.

Psalm 39:2-3 - *But when I was silent and still,... my anguish increased. My heart grew hot within me, and as I meditated, the fire burned...*

God is saying holding on to hurts is like carrying hot coals in your heart – you're the one who's going to get burned. Hidden wounds, when you try to stuff them down, don't heal. They fester. And pushing a hurt aside doesn't get rid of it. It just makes it worse.

God also says that holding on to hurts is emotionally draining.

Psalm 32:2 - *When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.*

Because we live in a sinful world, people abuse other people. I have no doubt that some of you here today have been abused in some fashion by someone else. It's amazing how people respond to abuse in different ways.

- Some people try to respond to abuse by just forgetting it. "I'll just put it out of sight, out of mind, and stuff it."
- Some people try to run from it. There are many ways to escape – get drunk, do drugs, go to bed with people you don't even know, get involved in work.
- Some people try to just ignore it.
- Some people try to pass it off on somebody else, blame others.
- Some people try to cover up their abuse. For some reasons we feel guilty. We think it's our own fault. We don't want anybody to know so we push it down. It's like a coke bottle that you've shaken up. It's about ready to explode. One day the top's going to come off.

None of those ways work. Step one is to be honest about your pain, about your fear, about your anger, about your resentment and bitterness over what people did to you, about the way you felt when you were abandoned or abused, ridiculed, the shame that maybe you felt. You've got to start by revealing your hurts. You've got to be honest.

Honest with who? Three different people:

1. First, you have to be honest with yourself. You have to own up to “This hurts! I’m ashamed of this or I still hurt over this.”
2. Second, you’ve got to be honest to God. You say, “God, this is how I feel!” and you vent, let it all out. God can handle that. God already knows how you hurt because He saw it when you were hurt. And He hurt with you and He grieved with you. It’s not going to surprise God when you’re honest to God about the pain in your life and the shame in your life. You’re not going to surprise Him. He already knows. He already cares. He already loves you. He just wants you to be honest with Him. It’s for your own benefit – the best kind of therapy is where we talk to God.
3. The third thing you’ve got to do is be honest with at least one person you trust. Tell somebody with skin and bones. There’s something healing about revealing your feeling to one other person.

When you stuff it down, you’re only hurting yourself. If you don’t have anybody you trust, we have lay counselors where you can share in a trusted situation. You need to start getting this out and getting it off your chest. You’re never going to get well until you reveal your hurts.

How do I know? Well, here is the thing. I know that this first step is important, because I had to do it. When I needed healing, I had to get real with myself, real with God, and I had to find someone I trusted. When I did, I realized that Isaiah 41:10 was true. It says:

*Isaiah 41:10 - So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*

Knowing that God is the healer means:

1. I need to REVEAL my hurt, and second, I need to...

## **2. RELEASE THOSE WHO HAVE HURT ME**

One of the most difficult decisions you’ve got to decide in life is “Do I want to get well or do I want to get even?” You can’t do both. You’re going to have to decide that. Do you want to get well? Or do you want to get even? You don’t have enough emotional energy to do both.

Here is the lie that the world tells you: Getting even will take away your pain. Getting even doesn’t take from your pain, it adds to it. After you get even, you might feel good for a while, but then you have the guilt of what you did. I know that some of you have understood that God wants you to forgive. God wants to heal you through forgiveness.

You might say, “But they don’t deserve to be forgiven!” You’re probably right. They don’t. Neither do you deserve to be forgiven, but God’s forgiven you. I’m not saying

forgive them because they deserve it. I'm saying forgive them for your own sake. You can't get on with your life as long as you're stuck in the past. As long as you hold onto resentment, you are stuck. That person is still controlling your life in the present even though they may have been out of your life for many years.

Romans 12:17-19 - *Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.*

The reason why we get in such a mess is we forget this. We forget that God saw all the hurt that was done to us. When we forget that God saw that hurt, then we think that we have to take matters into our own hands and it's our duty to settle the score. It's not. It's not your duty to settle the score. God says, "I will settle the score." Let Jesus settle the score. Trust God to balance the books. He saw what was happening. He saw the hurt. He's going to justify and mete out justice at the appropriate time. Either you can spend the rest of your life trying to do it or you can let God do it.

Psalm 56:8 (NLT) - *You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book.*

Did you know that God has kept a record of every one of your tears, the times that you have been abused, the times that you have felt injustice, or if you've experienced prejudice or you've experienced hurt or rejection? God has kept a record of your tears. He is going to settle the score one day because He is a God of justice. Nothing has ever slipped His watchful eye. No hurt at all.

I have personally experienced the fact that true healing comes when you forgive. It is a burden that is lifted from your heart.

Knowing that God is the healer means:

1. I need to REVEAL MY HURT,
2. I need to RELEASE THOSE WHO HAVE HURT ME, and third,...

### **3. REPLACE OLD MEMORIES WITH GOD'S TRUTHS**

Your brain is like a tape recorder. It has recorded every single experience your five senses have experienced – everything you've smelled, everything you've seen, heard, touched, tasted – it's all in there. Everything people have said. Your brain is an amazing recorder. It's recorded it all down – good and bad, right and wrong, true and false.

Here's the problem: Your brain doesn't distinguish between things that are true and things that are false. Particularly when you were a little kid, there were some things

that were said to you that were flat-out lies. Sometimes we believed these lies. If you believe them, then you act on them.

Some of you are still operating on faulty data. When you base your life on faulty data, then what happens is you build a self-defeating life style. You set yourself up for failure and pain and hurt. Some of you, when you were kids, had adults or authority figures in your life say things like “You’re stupid... You’re ugly ... You’re never going to amount to anything ... I’m embarrassed to call you my child ... You’re uncoordinated ... You’re dumb ... Why can’t you be smart like your sister/brother...” on and on. They said things to you – “You’re worthless” – and that went into that recorder and some of you are 30, 40, 50, 60 years old – and you’re still acting on old tapes. Keeping these recordings in your head means that you act on faulty data. This leads to self defeating actions and habits. You’ve got to replace these memories with God’s truths.

*Romans 12:2 - Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed BY THE RENEWING OF YOUR MIND. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

First, you have to pray and say, “God, would You heal my memories? Those things that hurt, those open wounds in my heart. They still hurt. Would You heal my memories and begin that process?”

Second, you need to fill your mind with God’s word, the Bible. The more you fill your mind with this book, the more it will start erasing old memories and putting God’s truth in your mind. You need to get into this book. That’s why we say come to mid week Bible study, get involved in a Sunday School class, start a small group, have a daily quiet time. The more you get in this book, the more you build your life on truth and the more you replace all the lies. You fill your mind with this book by memorizing and studying and reading.

This leads to something: a new understanding of who you are. You start believing what God says about you. What is the truth about you anyway?

*Ephesians 1:4 - For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.*

God says that YOU are chosen. God says that YOU are holy. God says that YOU are blameless. And this is just from one verse! Imagine what we would discover about ourselves if we picked up this book and read the rest of them.

Psychologists have proven over and over again that the way you see yourself – your self-esteem, your self worth, your self-concept – is largely determined by what you think the most important person in your life thinks about you. The way you see

yourself tends to be based on what you think the most important person in your life thinks about you.

I want to suggest to you that you make Jesus Christ the most important person in your life. He's going to tell you the truth and you'll realize that those negative memories are just lies. You have to decide. Are you going to listen to liars (You're worthless! You're nothing!) Or am I going to listen to what Jesus Christ said? What has Jesus Christ said? The Bible says when you are in Christ you are valuable, you are acceptable, you are lovable, you are forgivable, you are capable, you are usable by God. That's what God says about you.

So the question is: Who are you going to believe? What somebody lied to you about? What somebody told you on the school ground? What some imperfect, sinful, authority figure said to you?

Or what God says about you?

It's your choice. You have to replace old memories with God's truth. That takes a process but you need to start on it.

#### **4. REFOCUS ON THE FUTURE**

*Job 11:13-16 (GN) - Put your heart right, reach out to God... then face the world again, firm and courageous. Then all your troubles will fade from your memory, like floods that are past and remembered no more.*

First this says, "Put your heart right." That means give up your right to get even, release those who've hurt you. Forgive them whether they deserve it or not. You do the right thing whether they did the right thing or not. If you like me, you are going to say, "I don't feel like doing that." You're going to have to force yourself to do it anyway! Because it's the right thing to do and it's the only way you're going to get well. Do it anyway. Put your heart right. You do the right thing which is forgiveness.

Second it says, "reach out to God." You need to ask Jesus Christ to come into your life and you need to ask Him to begin healing your hidden wounds and you need to ask Him to start bringing good out of the evil that has happened to you. Here's the real issue: Do you really want to get well? If you do, you stop focusing on your hurt and you start focusing on your Healer. Stop focusing and getting obsessed with your hurt and the people who hurt you and start focusing and getting obsessed on your Healer, Jesus Christ. Jehovah Rapha – "I am the God who heals you." He is the answer. Nobody else is.

Then the third thing it says “Face the world again.” Don’t withdraw. Don’t pull yourself back into a shell. Resume living. Stop saying, “I’m a victim!” Start saying, “I’m not a victim any more.” Start looking ahead.

If you do these steps, notice what happens “Then all your troubles will fade from your memory. Like floods that are past and remembered no more.” Wouldn’t you like that? Wouldn’t you like to have your troubles fade from your memory? Then take these steps. The principle is: Forgetting is caused by refocusing. You don’t forget the past by saying, “I’m going to forget it! I’m going to forget it!” What are you doing? You’re thinking about it the whole time. It doesn’t work that way. You refocus on Jesus Christ and His plan and purpose for your life and you become so consumed and committed to that you don’t have time to think about the past. It’s refocusing.

My past is not my future. That was then and this is now. I’m not stuck in the past and I don’t have to stay stuck in the past because I have the power of God in me through Christ. That’s the old me, this is the new me. Maybe that’s what I used to be but that’s not what I am now and it’s certainly not what I’m going to be. My past is not my future.

*Romans 8:28 – We know that God causes all things to work together for good for those who love God and are called according to His purpose.*

God can work it out!

Knowing that God is the healer means:

1. I need to REVEAL MY HURT,
2. I need to RELEASE THOSE WHO HAVE HURT ME,
3. I need to REPLACE OLD MEMORIES WITH GOD'S TRUTHS, and
4. I need to REFOCUS ON THE FUTURE

The final step is the one that brings redemption. God uses your wounds when you take this final step.

Knowing that God is the healer, means that I need to...

## **5. REACH OUT TO HELP OTHERS**

*2 Corinthians 1:4 - God comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.*

If you’re not there, you’re not healed yet. Because that’s the fifth step of God’s healing process. You’ve got to redeem your pain. You’ve got to use your experiences to help other people. That’s called ministry. God meant for us to help each other. He can use your pain for good.

2 Corinthians 5:17 - *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*

It doesn't matter who you are.  
It doesn't matter where you've been.  
It doesn't matter what the scar.  
It doesn't matter what the sin.  
It doesn't matter how you fell.  
Somewhere along the way.  
There's healing for your life ... Today.

Is there hope? There is if you believe in the name of God: Yahweh-Shammah = "I am the God who is always there."

Is there healing? There is if you believe in the name of God: Yahweh-Rapha = "God is My Healing."

This is where we need to trust God – we need to trust in His name. Trusting in His name leads us to praise.

Psalm 52:9, again, says - *I will praise you forever for what you have done; IN YOUR NAME I WILL HOPE, for your name is good. I will praise you in the presence of your saints.*

This means that because of who God is, because of His name, we can praise God. We are going to sing a song that praises God for who He is.

Let's stand and sing: Oh For a Thousand Tongues to Sing – Hymnal # 110