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## HEALING BATTLE WOUNDS

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### **INTRODUCTION:**

When we talk about wounds, usually several kinds come to mind. We may think of being physically hurt, and needing some kind of medical treatment to help us heal. We may think of emotional hurt, which we may suffer at the hands of other, or possibly our own. We may also think of spiritual hurt, which we suffer because of sin. No matter which kind of wound we may be suffering from, or what may have caused our wound, Satan wants to use these painful events to get us to stop serving and worshipping God! He does this by influencing how we think about our pain. As warriors, we will suffer battle wounds. It is inevitable! But how we come to think about our wounds is up to us. Paul tells us to “renew our minds” (Rom. 12:1-2), and tells the Corinthians that “we have the mind of Christ” (1 Cor. 2:16). As Christians we can learn to think about being hurt the way Christ would.

### **CAIN**

Think about Cain and Abel (Gen. 4:1-5). After both of them offer their sacrifices, God disregarded Cain’s. Now some have speculated that the reason God disregarded Cain’s sacrifice was because it was an offering of herbs and plants instead of animals. But in the Levitical law God required grain offerings (Lev. 2). So it was not simply because Cain offered of the “fruit of the ground.” I believe Heb. 11:4 explains that the reason God did not accept Cain’s sacrifice is because it was not offered in faith!

Now we understand God disregarded the sacrifice, and we understand why God disregarded the sacrifice. Cain became upset. He had suffered a blow from God, a wound. His pride was hurt. God explained that he had to be careful because he had a choice to make:

- 1) “Do well.” Repent, do it correctly, and be accepted by God.
- 2) “Do not do well.” Stubbornly refuse to repent. Dwell on his anger, become bitter, and commit sin.

We are faced with the same two choices when we are wounded. We can either learn to think through the wound the way God would want us to, or we can angrily and bitterly focus on the wound or the one who wounded us, and allow sin to destroy our relationship and usefulness for God.

Jesus is, of course, the perfect example of someone who suffered all kinds of wounds, and thought about it the way God would. But for our study we will look at Paul, the imitator of Jesus (1 Cor. 11:1), and how he came to think about being wounded.

**PAUL**

Before Paul even became an apostle, God knew that in his service to Christ, he would encounter great pain (Acts 9:15-16). We could look at various events through the history of Acts as examples of this, but Paul provides us with his own list of the things he suffered for his Savior (2 Cor. 11:22-29).

One of the most trying events Paul suffered was being falsely arrested in Jerusalem and eventually finding his way to Rome, a prisoner of the empire (Acts 21:27-36). During this Roman imprisonment Paul wrote four of the epistles we have today: 1) Ephesians, 2) Philippians, 3) Colossians and 4) Philemon. Of these four, Paul probably best describes what he thought about his “painful” experience his letter to the Philippians.

**DISCUSSION:****I. HOW WE THINK ABOUT THE WOUNDS****A. Paul’s Wounds**

1. Phil. 1:19-24 – Paul is enduring physical wounds.
2. Phil. 1:15-17 – Paul is enduring emotional wounds.
3. Phil. 1:15-17 – Paul is enduring spiritual wounds.

**B. Paul’s Focus**

1. His focus is on God
  - i. Phil. 1:2 – God’s peace
  - ii. Phil. 1:11 – God’s glory
  - iii. Phil. 1:28 – God’s salvation
  - iv. Phil. 2:11 – God’s glory
  - v. Phil. 2:13 – God’s effort
  - vi. Phil. 2:15 – God’s ownership
  - vii. Phil. 2:27 – God’s mercy
  - viii. Phil. 4:19 – God’s provision
  - ix. Phil. 4:20 – God’s glory
2. His focus is on Christ
  - i. Christ is named 35 times in 4 chapters. 18 times in the first chapter alone!
  - ii. Phil. 1:6 – The return of Christ
  - iii. Phil. 1:10 – The return of Christ
  - iv. Phil. 1:12, 15 – The gospel of Christ
  - v. Phil. 2:5 – The humility of Christ
  - vi. Phil. 2:8 – The obedience of Christ
  - vii. Phil. 2:16 – The return of Christ
  - viii. Phil. 2:21 – The interests of Christ
  - ix. Phil. 3:9 – Faith in Christ
  - x. Phil. 3:10 – Knowing Christ
  - xi. Phil. 3:10 – The power of Christ’s resurrection
  - xii. Phil. 3:10 – The sufferings of Christ
  - xiii. Phil. 3:10 – The death of Christ
  - xiv. Phil. 3:12 – The ownership of Christ
  - xv. Phil. 4:23 – The grace of Christ

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3. His focus is on others
    - i. The Philippians
      - a. Phil. 1:2 – He wrote to them while imprisoned
      - b. Phil. 1:3 – He was thankful for them
      - c. Phil. 1:3 – He remembered them
      - d. Phil. 1:7 – He held them in his heart
      - e. Phil. 1:8 – He longed to return to them
      - f. Phil. 1:24-26 – (God willing) he would remain alive to serve them
      - g. Phil. 1:27 – He wanted them to be united
      - h. Phil. 1:28 – He wanted them to feel courageous
      - i. Phil. 1:29 – He knew they suffered
    - ii. Timothy
      - a. Phil. 1:1 – He called Timothy his equal worker
      - b. Phil. 2:20-22 – He praised Timothy
      - c. Phil. 2:23 – He planned to send him to Philippi
    - iii. Epaphroditus
      - a. Phil. 2:25 – He praised Epaphroditus
      - b. Phil. 2:25, 28 – He planned to send him home

#### **C. Paul's Temptation**

1. Phil. 2:3 – The temptation would have been to focus on himself, his desires, his wants and his comfort. “Paul” was not the center of Paul’s life. This is exactly what he warns the Philippians against.
2. Phil. 1:12 – He saw his wounds as a help to the gospel.
3. Phil. 1:14 – He saw his wounds provide courage to others.
4. Phil. 3:8 – He would go through anything, and give up everything for Jesus.

#### **D. Paul's Attitude**

1. Philippians is commonly referred to as Paul’s “joy letter.” The word “joy” or “rejoice” is found 14 times in the book!
2. How was Paul able to rejoice when others were so intent on hurting him in so many ways?
3. Because of everything we have already covered. If Paul’s attitude was contingent on having everyone like him, and getting to sleep in a warm bed with a full belly every night he would never be content.
4. Paul knew that no matter what may happen to him, he was secure in Christ! And if that is the case, why shouldn’t he be joyful?
  - i. Phil. 1:3-5 – “Making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel...”
  - ii. Phil. 1:18 – “whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice.”
  - iii. Phil. 1:19 – “Yes, and I will rejoice, for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance.”

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- iv. Phil. 1:25 – “Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith...”
  - v. Phil. 2:1-2 – “Since there is encouragement in Christ...complete my joy...”
  - vi. Phil. 2:17 – “Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice.”
  - vii. Phil. 2:19 – “I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I too may be cheered...”
  - viii. Phil. 2:29 – “So receive him in the Lord with al joy...”
5. Jas. 1:2-4 – James explains that the Christian understands that spiritual battle wounds can be productive tools that can help us grow if we allow them to.

## II. HOW WE THINK ABOUT THE ONES WHO WOUND

### A. Thinking Like Cain

1. When God wounded Cain’s pride, Cain chose to react by getting angry. He was not honest about what had happened, and instead of being happy for his brother, he became jealous, and bitter that God had rejected him but accepted Able.
2. Lk. 16:25-30 – When we choose to focus on our pain and focus on ourselves, we allow anger and bitterness to rule our lives.
3. Mt. 5:21-22 – We might begin to have thoughts or behave in ways that we formerly thought ourselves incapable of.
4. Mt. 5:23-24 – Most important, if we choose to think about our wounds like Cain, we allow our relationship with someone else to come between us and God!

### B. Thinking Like Paul (or Jesus)

1. When the Jews wounded Paul by arresting him, and the Romans wounded him by imprisoning him, he did not react with anger.
2. Since he was an “imitator of Jesus” (1 Cor. 11:1), we can be confident that he responded the way Christ responded when wounded.
  - i. Mt. 6:14-15 – He demonstrated forgiveness.
  - ii. Mt. 5:44-45 – He prayed for those who wounded him.
  - iii. Rom. 8:28 – He tried to see how God would use his situation
  - iv. Phil. 1:28 – He saw his suffering as evidence of his salvation

## CONCLUSION:

As a Christian, the only battle wound you need to fear, is the one you choose to think about sinfully. The wound you refuse to forgive. The wound you refuse to pray for. The wound you try to use for God’s glory. The wound you allow to come between yourself and your God!

In Christ, no wound is mortal! God is the source of ultimate healing (Ezek. 34:16)! If God's Son could make "the blind receive their sight...the lame walk...cleanse lepers...make the deaf hear...and raise the dead to life", which were all physical maladies with no known cures (Mt. 11:2-6), then can't he "bind up the brokenhearted, proclaim liberty to the captives, and open the prison doors to those who are bound" (Is. 61:1)? Praise God, our Lord can heal our spiritual and emotional wounds if we let him, and he promises us a peace of mind that will keep us from fearing any more physical wounds (Matt. 10:28). Are you willing to be healed from your war wounds and reenter the fight? The choice, as always, is yours.

*Pre-Study Questions*

1. What are the 3 different kinds of wounds that we can suffer in life?
2. How have you felt after being wounded?
3. How have you thought about the person who wounded you?
4. How were your other relationships affected after you were wounded?
5. What did you think about God after being wounded?
6. How long ago was the event that you are remembering?
7. Think of some Bible verses that might relate to this event?
8. How did being wounded affect your worship to God?

*Post-Study Questions*

9. What are the 3 different kinds of wounds that we can suffer in life?
  
10. How have you felt after being wounded?
  
11. How does God want you to think about the person who wounded you?
  
12. How should your other relationships be affected after you were wounded?
  
13. What did you think about God after being wounded?
  
14. How long ago was the event that you are remembering?
  
15. Think of some Bible verses that might relate to this event?
  
16. How should being wounded affect your worship to God?