

Christian Healing

1 Peter 4:1-11

Have you ever had a broken bone? Have you ever had stitches? Have you ever had more than 30 stitches? Have you ever had surgery? Have any of you ever had a knife wound? Have you ever gotten a gun shot wound? Has anyone been wounded in a war?

I remember one of the worse wounds I ever got when I cut meat. Someone ran into me and I managed to stab myself in the hip putting about 6 inches of steel into me.

We are going to look at "Healing your Hidden Wounds".

Not the external ones that everyone can see when you've got the cast or the stitches or the band-aide, but the internal hidden wounds.

What are the hidden wounds of life?

Peter talks to us about this in I Peter 4 when he says when you undergo suffering here's how you find healing.

Hidden wounds are hurtful memories, recollections that you keep secret but cause you pain. The hidden wounds of rejection. The hidden wounds of abandonment, of unfaithfulness.

The hidden wounds of feeling like you didn't matter, that somebody ridiculed you, that you were insecure.

Those are the hidden wounds that you don't see on the outside of people's lives. They have a beautiful face but inside they're hurting.

Where do we get the hidden wounds of life? From everywhere. You can be wounded by your family and those are probably the wounds that hurt the most. You can be wounded by a friend who betrayed you. You can be wounded in your workplace.

As a pastor and having talked with thousands of people, I've discovered that everyone has a hidden wound.

It may be different but everyone has a hidden wound.

In this passage Peter gives us five principle for healing those hidden wounds regardless of how you've been hurt.

If you'd like to handle your hurts he tells you how.

First: **FORGIVE** the offender.

I Peter 4:1 (NIV) “Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourself also with the same attitude.”

“Arm yourself with the same mind.”

(Msg) “Since Jesus went through everything you’re going through and more, learn to think like him.”

Jesus understands what it means to be hurt. It says, "He suffered".

How many wounds did Jesus have? Seven physical wounds -- nail prints in his hands and feet, stripes on his back, spear pierced his side, crown of thorns on his head.

But He also had hidden wounds. Those hurt even more. The wounds of betrayal, rejection, hatred.

He understands every hidden wound you carry in your life. It takes longer to get over an emotional hurt than it does a physical one.

When you hurt Jesus understands your hurt. He says "I've been there. I can relate. I can sympathize".

He knows what it's like to be maligned, to be mistreated, to be rejected.

Peter says when you go through a hurt you need to have the same attitude that Jesus had, you need to learn to think like Him about it.

What was Jesus' way of thinking when he suffered.

Verse 2 says that Jesus “lived for the will of God.”

How did He demonstrate that will. Well what was His first words from the cross?

“Father forgiven them for they do not know what they're doing.”

What were His options?

He could have blown them away. Jesus didn't have to hang there on the cross. He could have called 10,000 angels down. He could have stopped the whole thing.

But instead He hung on the cross and said, "Father, forgive them, they don't know what they're doing."

You must forgive the offender if you're ever going to be healed of your hurt.

You say, "I don't want to forgive those people who've hurt me. They don't deserve it." You're right. Forgiveness is never deserved.

Then why should you forgive those people who have hurt you?

1. **Because God's already forgiven you.** You'll never have to forgive anybody more than God's already forgiven you.

Forgiveness is perhaps the greatest treasure God has given you and me.

Colossians 2:13 (NASB) “When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions.”

1 John 2:12. (NASB) “I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven you for His name's sake.”

Ephesians 4:32 (NASB) “Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.”

It amazes me how much I want forgiveness but how reluctant I often am to give what I want so desperately.

2. **You're going to need forgiveness in the future.** He who won't forgive burns the bridge he has to walk across to get to heaven.

A man told John Wesley "I could never forgive that man." John Wesley said, "Then I hope you never sin."

When you pray the Lord's prayer "Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who've sinned against us" you're saying "Lord, forgive me as much as I've forgiven everybody else."

Mark 11:25-26 (NASB) ““Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you your transgressions. “But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your transgressions.”

What if all the forgiveness you desire from God completely hinged on the amount of forgiveness you were willing to extend to others?

3. **You're never going to stop hurting until you learn to forgive.** It's the only way to release the hurt. For your own sake, not for their sake, you need to forgive.

Hebrews 12:14-15 (NASB) “Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled.”

Resentment always hurts you more than it does the other person.

You may still be resentful over things that happened ten years ago and every time that thought comes up it still makes you upset.

That other person has probably totally forgotten it. They've gone on with life.

Resentment never hurts the other person, it hurts you.

It's like taking hot coals in your hand, you get burned.

Proverbs asks the question, **“Can a man take fire to his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?”**

Well neither can you hold on to your anger, hurts and resentments without them twisting you inside out.

Job says "You're only hurting yourself with your anger."

Don't allow people who've hurt you in the past to continue to hurt you today, by holding a grudge against them.

STEP ONE -- FORGIVE THE OFFENDER.

Why? You'll never stop hurting until you do.

Second: FOCUS on God.

I Peter 4:2 (Phillips) "From now on, live the rest of your lives controlled by God's will, not by human desires."

He says get your attention off yourself, off your hurts and get it on to God.

What happened to you in the past is not nearly as important as what direction your feet are headed right now. **From now on focus on God's will.**

This requires a mental shift. It's a choice that you've got to make.

I'm not telling you to ignore your past because that's impossible. **I am saying don't let your past define your future.**

It's OK to feel sadness over things that have happened to you that have hurt you. The Bible calls that mourning.

It's OK to mourn, but there's a big difference between mourning and moaning.

Mourning says I'm sad about that incident that hurt me. **Moaning says**, I'll never get over it. That's not true. That's a choice. Whether you choose to get over a hurt or not.

We get stuck in our pain and we can't get on with the present or the future.
How do you get unstuck?

You focus on the Healer not your hurt. Focus on God Who wants to heal you. God can bring a positive purpose out of your pain.

He can take even bad things that happen to us and bring good out of it. That's just the way God is.

What's the secret? How does God turn a negative into a positive?

How do you take a minus sign and turn it into a plus sign? You make a cross out of it.

This "T" -- a cross -- stands for trust, also. You trust God.

The way you get over hurt you first, forgive the offender, second, you focus on God and say "God, I'm going to let you settle that score. I've got to get on with my life. So I'm going to trust You to balance the books instead of me trying to get even.

That's called Trust. That's what Jesus did.

I Peter 2:23 (NIV) "When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly."

The problem with us is that we forget that God sees everything we go through. We forget that God knows about all those hurts that we've had.

Subconsciously we hold on to a hurt because we think somebody's got to remember how bad this was. We think if we forget it the other guy will get off scott free.

No they don't. God remembers.

Psalm 56:8 (NASB) "You have taken account of my wanderings; Put my tears in Your bottle. Are they not in Your book?"

Do you know that God has kept a record of every tear you've ever cried? He's even kept a record of the tears you couldn't cry because you were so pained inside, they were internal tears.

God has kept a record. Your pain matters to Him. He feels it and wants to help you.

You can stop rehearsing the pain because God is going to remember it for you.

Let Him settle the score. Let Him balance the books. Nothing has ever slipped by God's watchful eye.

God tells us to leave it all up to Him so that we don't enter into evil ourselves.

Walk through the next verses with me.

Romans 12:17-21 (NASB) “Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, “VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY,” says the Lord. “BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD.” Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

Now what is the result of giving my hidden wounds to God? To committing my life to Christ?

Romans 15:13 (NKJV) “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him so that you may overflow with the hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

There are three benefits of giving your hidden wounds to Christ: **Hope, Joy, Peace.**

Would you rather be filled with Hope, Joy and Peace or Misery, Depression, and Resentment? It's your choice.

So forgive the offender and focus on God. Then:

Third: FACE the future.

1 Peter 4:3a (NKJV) “For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles.”

Then look at how he ends this section in the last part of verse 6.

“But live according to God in the Spirit.”

Here's the question. “Are you going to live in the past or face the future?”

What is Paul's testimony?

Philippians 3:13-14 (NASB) “Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

Job says the same thing.

Job 11:13-16 (Phillips) “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.”

Would you like all those painful memories to fade from your memory.

He says, Put your heart right -- forgive the offender. Then Reach out to God -- focus on God. Then Face the world again -- face your future, firm and courageous.

Get on with your life. Face reality. Move forward.

It says, "They will fade away". How is it that when I focus on the future, my hurts from the past fade away?

Because there is a universal law that goes into operation: When you focus on one thing it tends to cause you to forget something else.

The key to forgetting is refocusing. If you want to get rid of those memories, to let them fade, he says focus on the future.

Peter says, don't mask your pain with a quick fix; that's a waste of time.

Verse 3 says, "In the past you wasted too much time doing what nonbelievers enjoy: sexual sins, evil desires, drunkenness, wild and drunken parties..."

You need to face your future, and focus on God, and forgive your offender.

Fourth: PRIORITIZE prayer.

Until you make prayer a priority in your life you will never truly experience healing from those hidden hurts.

1 Peter 4:7 (HCSB) "Now the end of all things is near; therefore, be clear-headed and disciplined for prayer."

When you cry out to God and pour your heart out to him it's like opening up a wound to the love of the Father so He can drain the poison and begin the healing.

Prayer is the avenue that God gives us to get His power flowing through our lives.

Whatever God does, He does in concert with our praying.

James says that we have not because we ask not.

Jesus invites us into His throne room where we find the help we need.

Hebrews 4:16 (NASB) "Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

Peter tells us to be clear-headed and disciplined in prayer.

In context he is telling us to pray with an eye toward heaven watching for the return of our King.

What a wonderful reminder that the things of this life are passing away and are only temporary, but there is before us eternity.

This world with its pain and hurts, its joys and sorrows is only temporary but our focus need always be on that which is eternal.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 (HCSB) “For our momentary light affliction is producing for us an absolutely incomparable eternal weight of glory. So we do not focus on what is seen, but on what is unseen; for what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”

Prioritizing prayer keeps us focusing on that which is eternal and not that which is temporary.

You need to prioritize prayer, face your future, focus on God, and forgive your offender.

Fifth: CONNECT to other believers.

You'll never fully recover by yourself. You're not alone in this world. God never meant for you to have to solve your hurts on your own.

Hidden wounds heal quicker when you get support from other people.

1 Peter 4:8-10 (NASB) “Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaint. As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”

a.) "Keep fervent in your love for one another, because, love covers over a multitude of sins."

"Love covers" -- what does that mean?

There is enormous, tremendous, powerful healing power in love.

Love is the antidote to fear. Love is the antidote to guilt. Love is the antidote to resentment.

When your life is filled with love it doesn't have room for those things that eat you up on the inside. **Love is the ultimate healing power.**

b.) Then he says, "**Be hospitable**" to one another..."

Hospitality means loving concern. Care about each other.

c.) Lastly Peter says, "**Serve one another ...**"

One of the missing keys to healing is your willingness to move out of yourself and invest your life in others.

How do we do that? **Loving - Caring - Serving**

Why do I need supportive relationships?

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 (NASB) "Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up. Furthermore, if two lie down together they keep warm, but how can one be warm alone? And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart."

Simply put we need each other.

Where is the best place to get connected to supportive relationships?

The church - The fellowship of believers. That's one reason why God made the church. It's to be a family of supportive relationships.

Hebrews 10:24-25 (NASB) "let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near."

That's one of the purposes of a church family; it's to be an encouragement place. Life is tough. We all need a boost.

Encouragement is not just me standing up here and encouraging you. It's you encouraging the people sitting around you. And they encouraging you.

The Bible says that we are to encourage each other. God means for all of us to encourage each other.

Fifty-eight times in the New Testament the Bible uses the phrase "one another".

Love one another, care for one another, greet one another, pray for one another, counsel one another, help one another, support one another. . . **It is the mutual ministry of the body to itself.**

That's why we need a church family. We are to help each other. Not just come and sit and hear a message and walk out. **God means for you to be involved.**

God meant for us to help each other. God can even use the pain that you've had in your life to encourage other people.

He wants to use it for a positive purpose.

Look at what Paul says to those believers in Corinth.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 (HCSB) "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort. He comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any kind of affliction, through the comfort we ourselves receive from God."

Do you see it? You have problems and the God of all comfort comforts you so that when He puts someone in your life that is going through hurts and pain you might be used by Him to comfort them with the comfort you received from God.

Everybody has a hidden wound. What's yours? Would you like to be healed from it? Would you like to get over it? Then take the first step.

Jesus says, **"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28)**

Jesus says, just come to Me and I will give you rest -- mental, spiritual, physical, emotional rest.

Invitation:

Forgive the Offender, Focus on God, Face the Future, Prioritize Prayer and Connect with Other Believers.

Application:

How would you rate your personal application to these five principles?

1. I am able to forgive those who have hurt me.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
2. I focus on God and not the hurts in my life.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
3. I am able to put the past behind me and move forward to the future God has for me.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
4. Prayer has become the priority of my life.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
5. I am connected to the family of believers and demonstrate that connection through loving, caring and serving others.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What has the Holy Spirit been saying to you?

What will you do to adjust your life to God's revelation of Himself?

Memory Verse: **Matthew 11:28 (NIV) "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."**