

HEALING A WOUNDED CHURCH
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2 CORINTHIANS 2:5-11
S-1290

●**SLIDE:** HOW DO YOU HEAL A WOUNDED BODY? It depends.

●**SLIDE:** Injured in war?
Broken leg in car accident?
Family hurt?
What if it happens in church?

Broken arm
Northway Pastors
Church split

As we begin the New Year I thought it might be appropriate to do some "clean up" work from the past year (or years). If we live in a church setting long enough we will eventually suffer some hurts. No church is perfect. None of us is perfect.

Somebody in the church in Corinth hurt a lot of people. Then he got hurt. Paul's second letter to the church included a short section on how to heal the hurts and wounds. By the way, the same principles apply if hurts have occurred in your family, or in any relationship.

●**SLIDES:** READ 2 CORINTHIANS 2:5-11.

The context of this passage indicates that Paul was referring to a specific case. The word "if" referred to a real situation. The Greek clause is in a form that assumes the truth of the statement: "Since there is a certain person among you who [has caused trouble]."

●**SLIDE:** I don't know how you read this, BUT I READ A LOT OF PAIN in these words.
THE BODY HAS BEEN WOUNDED. People have been hurt. PAIN IS EVERYWHERE. AND IT NEEDS TO BE HEALED.
INDIVIDUAL²-----³BODY (When one hurts, all hurt.)

●**SLIDE:** **LET'S EXAMINE WHAT CAUSED THE HURT IN THE CHURCH.**

Apparently when Paul visited Corinth there was a ring-leader in opposition to him. The short, unhappy visit had been poisoned by the activity of one man. This man had clearly personally insulted Paul. Paul had insisted that discipline must be exercised upon this man. The majority of the Corinthians had come to see that this man's conduct had not only hurt Paul, but had injured the honor and the good name of the whole Corinthian Church.

Discipline was exercised, but some felt that it had not been sufficiently severe and who desired to take still sterner measures and to impose a still greater punishment.

Paul's plea is that quite enough had been done; by their exercise of discipline the Corinthians had demonstrated their obedience. The man is penitent and to exercise still further discipline would do far more harm than good, for it might simply drive the man to despair, and to do that is not to serve Christ and the Church, but to offer an opportunity to Satan to exert his power.

This incident is specifically about a personal case which resulted in hurt and pain and ended up in formal church discipline. I want to expand the principles beyond just hurts from discipline.

after week and sense the hurts--many of them caused right here in this place.

●**SLIDE: HOW DO WE HEAL A WOUNDED BODY?** (wounds in individual and the church)

●**SLIDES:** READ 2 CORINTHIANS 2:6-11.

●**SLIDE: 1. BE AWARE OF SATAN'S SCHEMES.**

Warren Wiersbe at Moody Pastors Conference - Psalm 78:

●**SLIDE:** 1. Sheep stink

2. Sheep need to be led, not driven.

3. The sheep are not the enemy: Ephesians 6:10-12: "Wrestle not against flesh and blood . . ."

A. He Delights In Causing Division And Dissension In The Church Family.

B. He Encourages Tolerating Sin.

C. He Delights In Harsh Discipline Which Ostracizes, Discourages, And Drives People Away.

D. He Promotes An Unforgiving Spirit Which Leads To Bitterness And Resentment.

HOW DO YOU HEAL A WOUNDED BODY?

●**SLIDE: 2. DISCIPLINE EXPOSES ISSUES SO THEY CAN BE HANDLED WITH HONESTLY.**

Heard of dysfunctional families.

Dysfunctional families communicate double messages.

In a dysfunctional family, love had to be earned.

There's a certain amount of denial and delusion that goes on in a dysfunctional setting.

Church family can be dysfunctional. Refuse to recognize and deal with the truth. And that brings tremendous pain and wounding.

●**SLIDE:** Several years ago interviewing candidates for Worship minister. Met at his home for lunch and interview. Asked all my questions.

Turned to wife to see how she was handling ministry. Wife began to open up and share pressures of ministry. "Should I tell him?" "Yes." Paused and then began to weep. Story begins to come out. Chairman of deacons making passes and sexual advances to her. Tell pastor and he refuses to deal with it because he is so powerful, influential, and financially supportive. She was weeping now. Encouraged them to have pastor deal with issue or get out as soon as possible. Don't want to remain in that sort of dysfunctional system.

Pain was incredible.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE KEEPS US FROM BECOMING DYSFUNCTIONAL BY GIVING US A METHOD TO BRING WOUNDS AND PAIN OUT INTO THE OPEN WHERE THEY CAN BE PROPERLY HANDELED.

Jesus' outline in Matthew 18.

READ EPHESIANS 4:15: "Share the truth in love."

Most of us have never seen this. We have seen the truth shared in anger, bitterness, and resentment. We have seen people refuse to share the truth.

HOW DO YOU HEAL A WOUNDED BODY?

●**SLIDE: 3. FORGIVENESS RESTORES**

RELATIONSHIP SO HEALING MAY

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PROCEED.

- SLIDE: One night this week with Bronwyn. 10:30 late for bed. “Is mom home?” “No.” “why did you lie to me?” “Please forgive me. I don’t lie to you often.” Next morning, “Please forgive me.” Need to restore relationship.

FORGIVENESS removes the offense as a barrier to future fellowship. Forgiveness does not mean that the offense is forgotten or belittled. It is rather to act in grace, like that of God’s, and use the ruptured fellowship as a stepping stone to a more loving fellowship in the future.

HOW DO YOU HEAL A WOUNDED BODY?

- SLIDE: 4. **COMFORT DISARMS AND BRINGS ENCOURAGEMENT.**

We don’t know much about how to bring comfort in American society any more.

Jeff Mockbee: “Will you men all shut up. You are not helping him.

Comfort deals with the inevitable disappointments of life.

Imagine your ten year old struck out with the bases loaded and his team lost. Or, he came home to tell you that he didn’t even make the team. Or, your daughter comes in the door weeping to tell you that she failed to make the cheerleading squad. Freeze frame. What do you say to her? “That’s life.” “Better luck next time.” “You didn’t really expect to make it, did you?”

Your ten year old was mercilessly teased on the school bus this afternoon and comes weeping in the front door. And you say to your child, “What did you do to cause them to treat you like that?” That 10 year old shared that story in a shelter after trying to commit suicide.

Freeze Frame: Comfort is weeping with those who weep. “I am so sorry. I know this really hurts!” “Thanks, Mom.”

IT TAKES EMOTION TO HEAL EMOTION.

Not logic, facts, reasoning, or advice.

Let me tell you what comfort sounds like:

“I have a great pain and sadness that you were hurt by . . .”

“I feel compassion for you because I love you . . .”

“My heart is filled with sorrow because of what has happened to you . . .”

Comfort is filled with feeling words. It brings love, acceptance, security, and understanding.

HOW DO YOU HEAL A WOUNDED BODY?

- SLIDE: 5. **LOVE REAFFIRMS AND RESTORES.**

I was shaken by a small news item about a 14-year-old boy who took his own life because “no one seemed to care.”

He felt no love from anyone, except his dog, and in a brief suicide note written to his parents, he left instructions for the care of his dog.

“No one seemed to care.” What a sharp rebuke to our lack of love -- or lack of showing our love. It is likely that the boy’s parents really did care, but distracted by the cares of everyday living, they failed to communicate their love.

- SLIDE: MAYBE THAT IS WHY THE LOCAL TAVERN IS SUCH A POPULAR PLACE.

LESSONS FROM A TAVERN By Charles Swindoll

An old Marine Corps buddy of mine, to my pleasant surprise, came to know Christ after he was discharged. I say surprise because he cursed loudly, fought hard, chased women, drank heavily, loved war and weapons, and hated chapel services

A number of months ago, I ran into this fellow, and after we'd talked awhile, he put his hand on my shoulder and said, "You know, Chuck, the only thing I still miss is that old fellowship I used to have with all the guys down at the tavern. I remember how we used to sit around and laugh and drink a pitcher of beer and tell stories and let our hair down. I can't find anything like that for Christians. I no longer have a place to admit my faults and talk about my battles - where somebody won't preach at me and frown and quote me a verse."

It wasn't one month later that in my reading I came across this profound paragraph: "The neighborhood bar is probably the best counterfeit that there is to the fellowship Christ wants to give his church. It's an imitation, dispensing liquor instead of grace, escape rather than reality - but it is a permissive, accepting, and inclusive fellowship. It is unshockable. It is democratic. You can tell people secrets, and they usually don't tell others or even want to. The bar flourishes not because most people are alcoholics, but because God put into the human heart the desire to know and be known, to love and be loved, and so many seek a counterfeit at the price of a few beers. With all my heart," this writer concludes, "I believe that Christ wants his people to be unshockable, a fellowship where people can come in and say, 'I'm sunk, I'm beat, I've had it.' Alcoholics Anonymous has this quality - our churches too often miss it."

Now before you take up arms to shoot some wag that would compare your church to the corner bar, stop and ask yourself some tough questions, like I had to do. Make a list of some possible embarrassing situations people may not know how to handle.

A woman discovers her husband is a practicing homosexual. Where in the church can she find help where she's secure with her secret?

Your spouse talks about separation or divorce. To whom in the church do you tell it?

Your daughter is pregnant, and she's run away - for the third time. She's no longer listening to you. Who do you tell that to?

Financially you were unwise, and you're in deep trouble.

Or a your wife is an alcoholic. Or something as horrible as getting back the biopsy from the surgeon, and it reveals cancer, and the prognosis isn't good. Or you had an emotional breakdown. To whom do you tell it?

We can become the most severe, condemning, judgmental, guilt-giving people on the face of the planet Earth.

- **BUILD SLIDE:** Or we can (1) be aware of the schemes of Satan, (2) deal honestly in the open with the issues, and (3) forgive like Jesus, and (4) comfort like Christ, and (5) open our lives and express love to those who are hurting.

And we will be the people God has designed us to be on this earth.

- **SLIDE:** PICTURE OF DANNY HANSEN, OUR CHILDREN'S MINISTER.

Danny does a wonderful job around here with our children. Has a heart to see them know Christ.

Stand if you had a child or were in Awana, or Danny's children's Sunday School, or if Danny counseled you about becoming a Christian.

Fifteen years ago Danny and I had a falling out. He was chairman of deacons and we did not agree on some issue. Locked horns. Ate lunches to try to resolve it. Couldn't. Like Paul and Barnabas when they disagreed over John Mark. And to this day I don't know who was right in our dispute. In fact, I'll tell you how important it was, I don't even remember what it

was.

Finally he was in my office. "If you want me to leave, just say the word. I will leave." "O.K. I want you to leave." And he did. I was hurt. Danny was deeply hurt. Danny left. Went into Christian ministry.

Then one day we needed a full time Minister to Children. Bill said, "Let's go get Danny." And Danny and I talked over our hurts, and forgave, and he's been here ever since.

And if Danny and I can heal our wounds and minister together for Christ, so can You.

- REPEAT SLIDES: 1. BE AWARE OF SATAN'S SCHEMES.
- 2. DISCIPLINE EXPOSES ISSUES SO THEY CAN BE HANDLED WITH HONESTY.
- 3. FORGIVENESS RESTORES RELATIONSHIP SO HEALING MAY PROCEED.
- 4. COMFORT DISARMS AND BRINGS ENCOURAGEMENT.
- 5. LOVE REAFFIRMS AND RESTORES.