

## The Church As Hospital

12112023

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In the previous weeks, we talked about how the church is a school. The church is a school because we need to be trained and equipped and we need to grow in the Lord, so we can be mature in Christ and not be influenced by the world. In line with the church being a school, we would love to see people attend various courses run by this church.

We also talked about how the church is the bride of Christ. We are to have an intimate relationship with Jesus; we are loved by God and He is preparing our lives for that wonderful day of union with Him. So, we need to spend quality, intimate time with Jesus. Doing this helps us to understand our identity in the Lord.

We then considered the matter of the church being an army as we need to have the discipline to live the life that pleases the Lord. We should not to be overcome by the temptations of the world but to live lives that please our commander, Jesus. We are to care and look after one another, not leaving anyone behind but to support one another and care for one another, even in times of 'warfare'. We are to have unity so that we can win the spiritual battle against the enemy.

Today I turn our attention to the matter of the church as a hospital.

What can you think of when you think of hospital? A hospital is a place where you go when you are very sick; it is a place where you can be treated and recover, where there are lots of equipment to diagnose various illness so that the appropriate treatment might be given, and where lots of doctors and nurses work together to look after those who are unwell and it is a place to rest and recover.

If you travel around, you might see a blue sign with a white cross insignia on it. If we are in trouble, sick or whatever, this sign lets us know that a hospital is near and that this is the place where we can get help.

When I see a church with a cross on it, or a church sign by the side of the road, I am quickly reminded that this is a place where people can get also turn to get help.

Unfortunately not every church you see is a place where we can get help. Sometimes churches are no more than museums or some kind of club, and these are totally unable to help those who are in need. Sometimes, churches are so focused on their agenda and ways of doing things that no longer have the power of God moving in the meetings and in the lives of the people and in such a situation few, or even no people are convicted to repent of their sins and to be reconciled with God.

God has called the Church to be a Ministry of Reconciliation. Jesus died on the cross so that man could be reconciled with God. Humans were created to love God, and be loved by God; we were made to have relationship with God.

In today's world there are many people who are broken, who are filled with hurt, which could be caused by experiences that they went through while growing up or because of their current life situations. These feelings of brokenness could be from their ancestors or may even start as far back as when they were in their mothers' wombs. These feelings could have been from their childhood, from unpleasant experiences in their families, schools, their work places, their homes, or life after marriage.

These pains could be because of the way that people treated you, or because of things like verbal or physical abuse, mistreatment or disappointment, or because of events that happened to you such as the loss of a job (i.e., redundancies), financial challenges or even from loved ones.

These events can cause your life to be broken and twisted especially as a result of the way you respond to other people and to situations in life. Sometimes we see that people are broken when they misinterpret and thus react harshly to something that was not actually meant to hurt the person. Some people may just shrink back or become full of fear because of the situations they are in or because of the people that they feel stuck with.

But Jesus has come to heal us and set us free from these challenges.

### **Jesus the Great physician**

Luke 4:17-19 NIV

<sup>17</sup> The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

<sup>18</sup> "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed,

<sup>19</sup> to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

In verse 18, when Jesus came to this world, He didn't just come to die on the cross to save us from our sins but also to proclaim freedom for prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, the release of those who are oppressed. Jesus came to heal us from our brokenness.

Cast your mind on computers that have the sticker that says, "Intel inside". We should be a church that says "We are a hospital for sinners. Wounds are healed inside."

Maybe we should print this sign and place them on the church's front lawns.

A broken world needs a place to those who are suffering from spiritual injuries. We need an emergency room more than a courtroom. We want healing more than judgment. Hospitals can heal the physical illnesses of people, but it can't heal the broken spirit or the soul. Broken spirits and souls need the healing that only Jesus brings and such healing is often brought through church. Why might this be so? The answer is because Jesus is in the church. Of course I am not saying Jesus is only in the church but Jesus works through people and the local church, and the Church at large to bring healing to those in need of such healing. This is often done through the love and acceptance demonstrated by Christians, and through healing ministries like Christian counselling, prayer and deliverance.

### **Church is a hospital open to all people**

Mark 2:15-17 NIV

<sup>15</sup> While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house, many tax collectors and sinners were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him.

<sup>16</sup> When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the "sinners" and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: "Why does he eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?"

<sup>17</sup> On hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

V 16 says that Jesus associated with sinners. Jesus, the holy son of God, who was without any sin, freely interacted with sinners.

Who are the sinners here? In the days of Jesus, sinners would be defined as either Jews who led loose, dissolute lives, with full disregard for the law of Moses. These often lived like Gentiles and were possibly excommunicated and cast out of the synagogue. Sinners also included the non-Jews, i.e., the Gentiles. In the eyes of the Pharisees tax collectors are regarded as sinners because they collect taxes viciously on behalf of the Roman government, and the Romans were of course their enemy. But Jesus accepted them first, not condemning them. Jesus did not accept their sin but as broken people who needed God's salvation, forgiveness, and healing.

The church should be seen as a hospital, a rehab clinic and a place of refuge. The church is not a club for the elite, where only those who look good and who are dressed well are allowed to enter. The person smoking outside the church doors, the woman in "less appropriate clothing", the man with whisky in his breath, these may look undesirable but in truth they are all loved by God rather than merely people whom we can pass judgmental glances at. That said, we should ask them their story, perhaps buy them coffee and REALLY listen to them. That, is the Gospel, not telling them that they "need to get their act together" in order to attend a church.

In verse 17, we can also see Jesus responded to the question concerning His association with sinners. Jesus responded to the Pharisees by telling them that He came to save sinners and to lead them to repentance. Jesus compared sin to sickness, and He viewed Himself as the master physician.

I believe the church should be a hospital, where Jesus is our master physician. The church should be a place where those who are physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually wounded can come. The church should be a place where those in need should be able to 'check in' and when they leave, they are either healed or on the road to recovery.

### **Recognizing our brokenness leads to healing**

<sup>17</sup> On hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

When we read this passage, it may appear that Jesus was saying that while sinners needed His forgiveness and healing, the pharisee was not unrighteous and so did not need Jesus' forgiveness and healing. In fact, what we can see here is that Jesus gave the pharisees a rhetorical statement. It is saying, 'you Pharisees think you yourselves are righteous so you don't feel the need of forgiveness of sin and healing. But the tax collectors know they are sinners because of the work they are doing or the lives they are living, or because of who they are. These people need Jesus.

### **What does brokenness mean?**

Brokenness is a condition in which something is badly damaged and is thus unable to continue to work correctly:

Brokenness can also be defined as a state of strong emotional pain that stops someone from living a normal or healthy life:

Some of us may be like the Pharisees and we might think that we are fine, we are already Christians and that all things have become new. We feel that we can deal with our hurts, our broken lives when in reality we do not even realize that our lives are broken.

A lot of people think that they are fine until someone steps on the 'mine' of that person which then triggers outrageous reaction. Many people are broken and are not functioning properly, not working correctly, and may not realize it or might be too proud to acknowledge that they are so. This is why we hurt people, because hurt people hurt people. Some people get defensive easily, some are fearful of conflict, some will readily and easily criticize other people, while some become angry, depressed, or negative easily.

We need to realize that we are broken, and that we need Jesus to make us whole again. I say it again, when God created mankind, it was perfect but because of the sin we became broken.

Some broken people need love from the other people, some need encouragement and acceptance from others. These are the healings that can be brought to those who are broken.

The problem is many people do not even realize that there is something wrong with them. It is like you think you are fine until you go for a health checkup. We need to realize that there is something wrong with us. Quite often we don't know we had these problems until we attend things like healing courses or marriage courses. Often the result of attending these is the realization that something is wrong with our lives or with our marriages.

It is also like we might have messy hair, or something is on our face but we don't see it until we take a look in the mirror, and then realize that something is wrong or not in order. We don't recognize our problem until we look at the mirror. What is our mirror? The Bible is our mirror, and the daily reading of Scripture shows what we are supposed to be, i.e., our true selves.

### **Galatians 5:19-23**

<sup>19</sup>The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; <sup>20</sup>idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions <sup>21</sup>and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

If you still have these problems, you are still broken and you had better seek the services of the Great Doctor Jesus, as you need His healing. You better get healed because you will not be able to inherit the kingdom of God if your life is full of hatred, discord, jealousy, self-ambition and so on.

<sup>22</sup>But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup>gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

These are the characters that you can become.

When we are spiritually healthy, we are less critical, more gentle, because we know that every single one of us have faults and that we are all saved by grace. We will be more positive and have courage to face the difficulties and pressures of life. When we ourselves are filled with God's love, we would then be able to love others more.

Jesus came to seek the broken. He came to seek you. The church is where Jesus is, where He can move in a powerful manner, because the church is a place where God-loving people with faith are gathered; where healing prayer ministry is available to those in need, where healing courses are conducted. The church should also be a place where marriage courses and parental courses are run so that broken marriages and families can be healed and become the loveliest place to be (unfortunately man are less aware of the marriage condition than are woman. So, men, please listen to your wife to attend the marriage course).

## **Church is a hospital that people get healed**

### **1 Samuel 22:1-2**

<sup>1</sup>David left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam. When his brothers and his father's household heard about it, they went down to him there. <sup>2</sup>All those who were in distress or in debt or discontented gathered around him, and he became their commander. About four hundred men were with him.

The people who first gathered around David were not the politically ambitious or established religious leaders. Rather, they were people neglected by their culture and threatened by their king. These were the exiles of king Saul of Israel. They went to the son of Jesse. David understood their struggles and their isolation. They were a community of outcasts whom David welcomed, not as subjects but as family. He encouraged them. He helped provide for their needs. He showed them a kingdom in which they found God's words and promises lived out. He didn't lead them in rebellion against the political system. He led them in the ways of God's righteousness. He taught them that security is not found in possessions and land, but in God alone.

Then what happened to these men?

### **2 Samuel 23:8-39**

<sup>8</sup>These are the names of David's mighty warriors:

Josheb-Basshebeth, a Tahkemonite, was chief of the Three; he raised his spear against eight hundred men, whom he killed in one encounter.

<sup>9</sup>Next to him was Eleazar son of Dodai the Ahohite. As one of the three mighty warriors, he was with David when they taunted the Philistines gathered at Pas Dammim for battle. Then the Israelites retreated, <sup>10</sup>but Eleazar stood his ground and struck down the Philistines till his hand grew tired and froze to the sword. The Lord brought about a great victory that day. The troops returned to Eleazar, but only to strip the dead.

<sup>11</sup>Next to him was Shammah son of Agee the Hararite. When the Philistines banded together at a place where there was a field full of lentils, Israel's troops fled from them. <sup>12</sup>But Shammah took his stand in the middle of the field. He defended it and struck the Philistines down, and the Lord brought about a great victory.

<sup>13</sup>During harvest time, three of the thirty chief warriors came down to David at the cave of Adullam, while a band of Philistines was encamped in the Valley of Rephaim. <sup>14</sup>At that time David was in the stronghold, and the Philistine garrison was at Bethlehem. <sup>15</sup>David longed for water and said, "Oh, that someone would get me a drink of water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem!" <sup>16</sup>So the three mighty warriors broke through the Philistine lines, drew water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem and carried it back to David. But he refused to drink it; instead, he poured it out before the Lord. <sup>17</sup>"Far be it from me, Lord, to do this!" he said. "Is it not the blood of men who went at the risk of their lives?" And David would not drink it.

Such were the exploits of these three mighty warriors.

These men became mighty warriors, close and faithful followers of king David and who accomplished mighty things for David and establishment of his kingdom.

When I led the church in Taiwan, these were the verses that God spoke to me. The Lord told me that our church was to be like this, to accept those who are despised and broken. These people may be considered as hopeless, but God said "You are to take them in, and one day, like the mighty warriors around king David, these people will become your great coworkers." We accepted those who had psychological problems like depression or bipolar; we accepted people with emotional problems, for instance there was a lady whose husband had run away with another woman. We also helped women whose husbands had passed away, and

those who lost millions of NZ dollars because of their business partners run away with their money. We prayed with them and for them; we walked through their hard time with them, and eventually they became coworkers who were willing to put in their life for the church. We were like a family and were no longer, “the Church and my life” but “the Church is my life.”

I pray that this church will be a church that welcomes those who are outcast, those who are broken, and those who are in need of healing. May we be a church where people can see Jesus Christ’s love and power working in the lives of the churches congregation.

People ask, what is the direction of this church. This is the direction of the church. We want to be a church that is full of miracles, a church where we can see healing and deliverance, a church where God is real to the people in these last days. As I mentioned in my previous message, there are to be no spectators in the church. We cannot become a people who sit in the pews and think, “We will see what it will come out” No! You are part of the exciting moment and together we are to bring the lost and the broken to the church and to pray for God’s mighty power to work in these people’s lives. To see things happen we must have faith, we must believe this is what God is going to do in this church.

May this church be a beacon of hope, the place of healing and restoration in the greater community.