

HOW TO HEAL BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS

2 Corinthians 1:23-2:11

Calvary Church of Pacific Palisades

January 29, 2012 ♦ Sunday Morning Worship

Ill. Have you ever broken a bone? Well I have ... 3rd day of 18 day trip to Yellowstone. Lake City CO ... sliding down a glacier. Rocketed off the edge and landed on a moraine. Rolled my right ankle. Went to a hospital in Gunnison CO. Convinced that the DR on duty was an OB/GYN. Cast on it, up to knee and told me to go ahead on my vacation to Yellowstone and see an orthopedic when I got home. Never been in more pain. Naprosyn – what I needed was the hard stuff ... narcotics. My pain was my kids delight (best vacation ever) ... when I got home, the doc scheduled surgery. AND FOR THE NEXT YEAR, my ankle was healing (still not the same). Never in more physical pain.

While broken bones exceedingly painful ... takes time to heal, sometimes requires surgery. Broken relationship are just as painful ... By BROKEN not referring to one that's over. One that's hurting, not working, in need of surgery, one that is **chronically and acutely** painful and in need of healing. Not the ones you have severed? Cut it off, fast track to healing ... some attachments you may want to keep. When your relationships get twisted up ... ready to throw in the towel. Before "asta la vista" ... make sure you do everything in your power to bring healing.

Please open your Bibles to 2 Corinthians. **Page 817.**

Clogged sink ... the roter connection. Red light on the dash ... get to the dealership. Short of breath, blurred vision ... emergency room.

Broken relationship ... go to the word of God. Consider the people of God.

Reminds us ... We are not alone. Every week. Almost daily, someone tells me they are struggling.

Encouraging to know that even the most committed followers struggle ... get sideways with people they love, experience betrayal of trust to unhealthy family dynamics. **PAUL and Corinthians.**

Paul's example encourages us to take steps to heal broken rels ... Pain, Misunderstanding, Breakdown.

1st step in healing is to ... **A. Admit that something's wrong ... that there is a problem. LETTERS ... divisions in church, sexual immorality.**

Some prefer to live in a state of denial, trying to make it work. Making excuses, afraid to admit it and seek help. The wonderful thing about Christians, willing to suffer.

Ill. Story of betrayal or abuse. Broken relationship. Wondering why felt so bad.

Healing begins when we stop sweeping things under the rug.

Clearly share the issues. Paul was not in denial. Not about him.

Paul wrote four letter and even made a painful visit to them. Why? Not to punish ... communicate clearly. EXPLAIN THE FOUR LETTERS AND THE VISITS IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER.

1st letter is lost.

2nd letter is 1 Corinthians addressed the issues, every one of them.

1 Cor 7:1 Now for the matters you wrote about:

They had opened the door .. it wasn't like he was giving answers to questions they weren't asking. Paul put them in black and white, on paper. He had answered, Clear!

But they had ignored him ... they did not follow his instructions. Which called for a response; he loved them to much to let them go, to walk away. It's not like he was intruding, they had asked for this.

Ill. Best counsel he could have given (Holy Spirit, Biblically based) ignored.

Not like spiritual leaders are the oracle ... but the Holy Spirit does speak through them. FREE. Ignored.

3rd letter is lost, we don't have it.

4th letter is 2 Corinthians. Here he is referring to his 3rd letter ... where clarity brought great sorrow.

2 Cor 7:8 *Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it—I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while—*

Take a stand. There is something really wrong and it has to be fixed ... the health of the body is at stake. Fighting for the life and health of the church. Family of God.

B. vv. 1:23-2:4a Admit it is broken, clarify the issues, take a stand then ... the WAIT.

Because they'd not yet responded in confession and repentance, Paul knew he couldn't come to visit, he knew it would not be pretty. So he exercised some self-control. He stayed away.

Once you've admitted your relationship is not working, once you have clearly stated the issues and taken a stand ... then STOP.

Respect their space. Keep your distance. Give them time. Refuse to play the Holy Spirit. Let God do the work. Stop trying to force it.

Ill. Susie has done this so well with me. Not your role to convict of sin, God does that.

Never burn bridges (sever), never lose hope. Understand that healing wounds takes time.

The Spirit was working to convict them of sin; move to confession repent. No forcing it.

Give them your best and let God do the rest. Trust God with them.

Without God working, there will be no healing. Don't chase, don't nag. Trust.

You have to be desperate, on your back, reaching out to God ... once broken, healing begins.

Ill. Some have to hit bottom ... and everyone's floor and rate of descent is different. Pray hit bottom.

Transition: He admitted something was wrong, clearly stated issues, took a stand then waited for Spirit to move them, to confession, repentance and obedience to God's Word.

vv. 5,6 don't lose the fact that the Cors had responded to Paul's admonition to deal with the issue had resulted in confession and repentance; a change of heart and behavior.

There is no healing without confession and repentance ... grief must be felt.

2 Cor 7:10 *Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.*

Ill. One woman who had been living with a big bully for 25 years (he had bullied me too) took a stand ... she asked me "how will I know if there is godly sorrow?" I said you'll know, he will be weeping, taking responsibility ... no more rationalizing, no more denial, taking full responsibility, changed life.

Clearly share the issues. Take a stand. Respect their space. Let God do the work.

When they respond in confession and repentance ... C. Reassure them of your love. vv. 4b-10a

His disappointment was deep. He addressed the issue, gave it time, prayed Spirit to work ... and now he clarified his purpose ... not to punish, not punitive, but borne out of love. To mend broken lives.

Answer to his prayers, He knew he was called to move toward them ... to restore and reconcile the relationship.

Extend forgiveness. What does that look like? For another time ... as much for us as it is for them.

Ill. The father in the prodigal son. Running to meet him. Broken relationship healed ... father received him on basis of his confess and repentance. Ate with pigs (hit bottom) before he was ready to return.

Question ... will you receive back those who have wounded you, those who act out? YES!

Conclusion ... **vv. 10b,11**

Can't heal if swept under rug ... just continues to fester, eat away. Denial leads to continued brokenness

Can't heal if do give it time ... healing takes time, time for God to work.

Can't heal if we refuse to forgive and restore ... once there is confession and repentance.

Broken ... offer it up to Him. He is the repairer, restorer.