

May 21, 2023
7th Sunday of Easter
Acts 1:12-26, 1 Peter 4:12-19, 5:6-11, John 17:1-11
“God’s Antidote For Your Heart”
Hymns: 525,539,623,664

This morning I want to talk about suffering, and for Canadian hockey fans, we have a history of long-suffering. But there is an antidote for your heart when it comes to suffering and that of course is Jesus, because 1. Jesus will settle the score and 2. Jesus will soothe our wounds.

If I were to ask the wives and mother’s here this morning, have you ever suffered for doing what was right? How many of you would raise your hands? Just about every one of you, right?

I still remember the words of my mother saying to my dad as he was preparing to go to church one Sunday morning and saying, “You’re not going to church like that are you?!”

Immediately, he got defensive and didn’t like what my mom said to him, until he looked in the mirror and realized she was right, and quickly went upstairs and changed into something more appropriate.

Or how about you mothers with your kids when they were young. You love them dearly. You know what’s best for them. You make a suggestion to your teenager about what they should be doing or thinking about.

But instead of respecting your opinion, and listening to it, the teenager attacks you, shouts and screams at you. Again, your intent was just to help. You did what was right and you paid the consequences.

Suffering for doing what is right. It happens quite regularly. It might even be someone teasing you because of your Christian convictions. It might be when you confront someone on a type of behavior that might be causing them to live a risky lifestyle or jeopardize their financial situation.

A lot of us have been hurt, for actually doing what they thought was right. So, let's put some ointment on those wounds today okay and remember our theme: God's Antidote for Your Hurt.

Our second lesson from Peter begins with the words, "For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God. But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God."

The point is, if you are getting bothered, hassled or reprimanded for doing something wrong, then it's probably a life lesson you need to learn from it but if you are getting bothered or hassled or reprimanded for doing what is right, then that is a commendable thing with God.

Let's take a more in-depth look at what not to do when you are faced with a hurt feeling. 1. DON'T IGNORE IT. Don't suffer in silence and hope it will go away. Acknowledge it to yourself.

We often try to cope with our hurt by pretending it doesn't exist. By denying it and saying I don't have a problem. I'm not hurting. Or Minimizing it, saying it was no big deal or even Procrastinating the issue by trying to sweep it under the carpet.

Ignoring your hurt never heals it. The hurt that you're trying to ignore won't get any better. People say, "Time heals all wounds" – but sometimes time makes them worse if we keep putting it off. Ps. 39 says "I kept very quiet... but I became even more upset. I became very angry inside, and as I thought about it, my anger burned."

2. DON'T RUN FROM IT David tried to do this and failed. Listen to what he says from Ps. 55 reminds us, "I wish I had wings like a dove. Then I'd fly away and rest. I would hurry to my place of escape..."

Sometimes when we face difficulty we just want to run from it. Here's something that's sort of interesting. It's not by accident that all doors in public buildings open outward because when people panic, they run and so the doors are meant to swing outward.

Many times we try to get away from our pain and there are a lot of different ways to run away and escape: isolate yourselves from others, occupy your time with movies and television, turn to alcohol and drugs, even divorce can be an escape. but the problem is that if you run away, the problems linger even when you return.

In fact some people are quite good at camouflaging their pain. They wear nice clothes and have a pleasant smile but the fact is they've been hurt by somebody very deeply and when you ask "what's wrong" they say "nothing" and go on their way.

We hate to admit it when we're hurt. We might admit it something when we're angry but when we're hurt, it's hard to share and we end up suffering and that's not healthy.

So if none of these methods work, how do we handle our hurts and deal with our suffering? 1.LET JESUS SETTLE THE SCORE. If someone has hurt you don't try to get even. Don't seek revenge. Don't retaliate against those who hurt you.

Trust God to even the odds. Give it to God and let God settle the score and You know what...He will. Just think of what David says "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies." God will look after you.

Remember the words of Jesus when he says I am the shepherd. You are the sheep and sheep have many natural enemies -- wolves, coyotes, bears, snakes, ticks...but sheep are very defenseless animals.

They cannot defend them-selves from anything. They don't have teeth that are sharp that they can bite with. They don't have claws. They can't kick. They can't run fast. They are absolutely the most defenseless animal there is. They don't know how to do anything. They can't be safe unless somebody protects them.

The job of a good shepherd is to go find a good table land, a mesa, a field of green grass, and drive out all the enemies. Then he brings the sheep and gives them a safe place to eat. He scouts out the pasture and drives out the enemies.

God says, "Let me handle those who've hurt you." And remember Romans 12 "Never pay back evil for evil. ... never avenge yourselves. Leave that to God, for He has said that He will repay those who deserve it."

And you what, God knows the people who've hurt you. He saw it and He cares and He can settle the score. The Bible says one day He will settle the score. There is a heaven, there is a hell and there is a judgment day.

God has far more resources to settle the score than you do. He says you cannot recover from your hurt as long as you're seeking revenge so you've got to decide, are you going to get revenge or are you going to get well? You can't do both.

Today, revenge is big business. Revenge doesn't work. It always backfires. It keeps the hurt alive. When you retaliate against the hurt, all you do is escalate the pain. It doesn't relieve the pain, it escalates it.

So there's only one way you'll ever get the relief that you need and that's forgiveness. Forgiveness doesn't mean that you say "It's OK that you hurt me." Forgiveness is not saying, "What you did is not a big deal." Forgiveness is not saying it didn't hurt. Forgiveness is not denying that evil is done in this world.

Forgiveness means giving my hurt to God and letting Him settle the score. Just trust God to handle the situation and not to try to get even. Let Him prepare a table before you in the presence of your enemies. Don't try to get even.

So why should I forgive? 1) You've been forgiven by God. God's forgiven you and He wants you to forgive others. 2) Resentment always makes you miserable. 3) You're going to need more forgiveness in the future yourself.

Only as I am forgiving to others is God able to forgive me. What you dole out is what you get back. The longer you try to get revenge, the longer you'll hurt.

Another way to handle our hurts is to. 2. LET JESUS SOOTH YOUR WOUNDS
Shepherds put oil on the heads of sheep for two reasons: to sooth and to heal.
The worst enemy of sheep is flies. They hate flies. They can't shake off the flies
either by their hooves or their tail.

Summertime means fly season for the sheep. The flies get up in their nose and lay
eggs and the larva drives them crazy. In fact, sometimes in the summer, you'll see
a sheep banging its head against a rock because he's going crazy from the flies. He
can't do anything about it. Isn't it amazing that it's the little things in life that
really irritate you?

So what shepherds do, is take olive oil and mix it with sulfur and anoint the head
of the sheep and it's like an insect repellent. This represents the shepherd saying,
"I'll take care of the irritations. The things that irritate you, I'll take care of them."

And the other way oil is used, is as a salve, an ointment. When a sheep has an
open wound, the shepherd would use it as an ointment. It would protect them
and it would be soothing.

When David says, "You anoint my head with oil" he is saying God is going to sooth
my wounds. This is the same thing Jesus Christ wants to do with the hurts in your
life.

Ps. 147 reminds us "God heals the broken-hearted and bandages their wounds."
He says, "Not only will I settle the score, but if you'll come to Me and let Me have
your hurts, I'll settle the score and then do a little repair work -- a little work on
restoring your spirit. I can sooth those hurts. I can bandage them up."

And how does Jesus do that? By having us remember the unjust treatment He
endured. They spat in his face, hit him, they mocked him saying, "If you are the
Son of God, come down from that cross. Yet He did not retaliate. He made no
threats.

He entrusted himself to His Heavenly Father, knowing that He would deal justly
with all the injustice in our world. And Jesus died on that cross, not for any
wrongs He did, but for all the insulting, and hurtful things that I (we) have done to
God with our lives.

We were like sheep who had gone astray but through His wounds, you and I have been healed and our reaction to all of this is simply: We want to stop doing what is wrong in our lives, and do what is right, no matter what the painful outcomes might be, knowing that Jesus will sooth my hurts especially when I consider how much He was hurt for me.

That's why Jesus uses fellowship to heal us. When you get together with other Christians, you find support. When you're able to share your hurt, you get emotional support. The first thing we need to do when we've been hurt by somebody is the need to share it with a Christian friend.

And finally, Jesus uses worship to sooth our wounds. Have you ever come into a church service when you were down, the music started and tears begin. This is emotional healing. Jesus uses praise and His Word to build us up and bind up our wounds.

Everybody here today has a hurt. It's different for each but everybody has hurts so let's leave in the loving care of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and cheer up, knowing that the Lord will heal the broken-hearted and bandage our wounds.

May God bless us and keep us in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.