

BREAKING FREE FROM THE PAST #2

Clearing The Clutter Of The Past

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I. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

In this series of messages we are looking at how we can personally break free from the bondages of the past. In the first message I basically opened up the wounds we have all picked up along life's journey, so that you can begin to effectively deal with them. We all have areas in our lives that we need to break free from so that we can be more successful as individuals in the present and the future. The primary emphasis of the first message was on the fact that there is hope for you no matter who you are or what has happened to you in the past. Jesus came to heal and bind up your wounds.

Luke 4:18 *"The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed..."*

Review of Wounds: Their Causes & Results.

1. The Major Causes of Most Wounds.

1. Emotional wounds inflicted by parents.
2. Physical, mental, verbal or Sexual abuse.
3. Abandonment.
4. Your own sin.
5. Broken relationships.
6. Major disappointments.
7. Nasty Divorce (Yours or parents).
8. General meanness in others, eg kids can be very mean sometimes.
9. Major moral failure, eg. adultery, abortion, etc.

2. Results of Most Wounds.

Maybe you are not sure how affected you have been by your wounds. You may think everything is ok. Here are some indicators as to how you may be affected.

- < Wounded people hurt others - Exdus 20:5-6.
- < Anger, bitterness, hate & violence.
- < Repeating the things that happened to you.
- < Shame, guilt & unworthiness.

- < Self condemnation.
- < No Confidence - low self esteem.
- < Lonely and withdrawn - very few friends.
- < Unable to respond to others properly.
- < Eating disorders.
- < Afraid to show love.
- < Inability to trust others.
- < Misconceptions about God.
- < Lethargic about life - sense of depression.
- < Deep sense of despair & depression.
- < Major addictions, eg. alcohol, dugs,
- < Suicidal tendencies.

Unfortunately, the person we have become has been shaped by these wounds and their results. The wounds have produced major strongholds in our lives that render us ineffective and unproductive. This is why many people are unhappy with the way their lives are turning out. They have failed to deal with these important issues and as a result they are impaired from having a life filled with God's riches and abundance.

II. RECOGNIZING THE CLUTTER AS STRONGHOLDS.

In this message today, I want to focus more specifically how we can get rid of all the clutter in our lives that these wounds have caused. All of the things mentioned are areas that only clutter our lives and hold us back from being successful individuals who have been set free to enjoy the abundance of life that Jesus promised. We must recognize these areas are strongholds that must be torn down.

Hebrews 12:1-2 *Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, **let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us**, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross...*

We must get rid of everything that slows us down, especially the sin that just won't let go. These areas are all strongholds that have invaded our lives and being, which have affected the person who we are. Webster's Dictionary defines a **stronghold as a place dominated by a particular characteristic**. You need to ask yourself if you are being dominated by any of the above characteristics. If so, you need to understand that God has given you the power and the weapons to breakdown these strongholds.

2 Corin. 10:4-6 *For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in*

God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and **being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.**

Someone else has defined strongholds as a mindset impregnated with hopelessness that causes us to accept as unchangeable something we know is contrary to the will of God.

III. WEAPONS DESIGNED FOR CLEARING THE CLUTTER.

In this message today, I want to share with you the weapons of our warfare that will enable us to clear the clutter or the strongholds in our lives -- that will enable you to receive the healing and restoration that God desires for you.

1. We Must Believe That Jesus Really Desires To Heal And Mend Our Wounds.

The Bible says that it is our faith that overcomes the world. Therefore for our healing process to begin in our lives we must believe that Jesus really desires to heal us and make us whole again.

Mark 2:17 When Jesus heard it, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, **but those who are sick.** I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

Hebrews 4:14-16 Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. **Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.**

The story of Mary Magdalene is a beautiful story of the compassion and mercy of Jesus towards those who have been wounded by the cruelty of the world in which we live. Jesus was able to completely deliver her and help her to have a very successful and rewarding life.

Luke 8:1-2 He went through every city & village, preaching & bringing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with Him, & certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities; Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons.

2. We Must Openly Acknowledge And Confess Our Wound.

Some of us are ashamed of our wounds and really fear that others may find out that we are not as perfect and whole as we pretend to be. The problem with this is that you just continue to make the wound worse by not dealing with it. You must come out of denial.

Psalms 62:5-8 *My soul, wait silently for God alone, For my expectation is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my defense; I shall not be moved. In God is my salvation and my glory; The rock of my strength, And my refuge, is in God. Trust in Him at all times, you people; Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us. Selah*

Psalms 118:5-6 *I called on the LORD in distress; The LORD answered me and set me in a broad place. The LORD is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?*

John 8:32 *"And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."*

3. We Must Deal With The Root And Not Just The Symptom.

Amos 2:9 *"Yet it was I who destroyed the Amorite before them, whose height was like the height of the cedars, and he was as strong as the oaks; yet I destroyed his fruit above and his roots beneath."*

As we begin to deal with the wounds in our lives it is very important to deal with the root of the problem and not just the symptom. The list showing the results of most wounds is simply a list of symptoms. In order to change the symptom or result we must discern the root or cause. The following illustration shows us how we can do that.

See Transparency "Discerning The Root of the Wound".

In this illustration we see that there are four basic roots of most of our wounds.

1). disobedience or our own sin; 2). Other people's sins; 3). Evil Spirits; and 4). Circumstances. There is a specific healing and recovery process for each one of these root causes. Let's look at them.

A. Receiving Healing for Disobedience or Our Own Sin.

Psalms 38:4-5 *For my iniquities have gone over my head; Like a heavy burden they are too heavy for me. My wounds are foul and festering Because of my foolishness.*

The healing for disobedience comes through repentance and accepting God's

forgiveness through Jesus Christ. Repentance and forgiveness will clear the clutter of sin.

Acts 3:19 *"Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.."*

2 Corin. 7:10-11 *For godly sorrow produces repentance to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, **what clearing of yourselves**, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter.*

Now, in order to maintain our healing in this area and get rid of the stronghold we must continue to walk in obedience to God's word, realizing that it is the obedient who eat of the good of the land and receive from His blessings -- Isaiah 1:18 and 1 John 3:21-23. The stronghold is destroyed as we purpose to fulfill all obedience -- 2 Corinthians 10:5.

B. Receiving Healing When Others Have Sinned or Hurt You.

This is one of the harder areas to receive healing, because it is very difficult to do the very thing that brings the healing. And that is to totally forgive and love the person who did it to you.

Matthew 6:15 *"But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father [forgive] your trespasses.*

Matthew 18:21 *Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?"*

Colos. 3:12-14 *Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.*

Matthew 5:44 *"But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.*

It's important to keep in mind that with some wounds these root areas overlap. eg., a wound caused from a divorce would probably require repentance for your part in it and then being able to forgive the partner who sinned against you.

C. Receiving Healing For Wounds Done By Evil Spirits.

It's important for us to acknowledge that we do have an enemy who seeks to devour and destroy the lives of people everywhere.

1 Peter 5:8 *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*

Jesus healed many people who were in this condition and has given us as saints of God the same authority and power to pray for one another to receive this kind of deliverance through prayer. We must put on the whole armor of God to destroy this stronghold completely.

Ephesians 6:10-14 *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness..*

D. Receiving Healing Over Unfortunate Circumstances.

This is an area where we must learn to draw strength, healing and comfort from God's Word. We must allow Him to soothe our soul through His Word.

Psalms 119:50 *This is my comfort in my affliction, For Your word has given me life.*

The stronghold is broken in this area when we come to the place where we are once again having faith and trusting in God. We are taking comfort in Him, realizing that there is a good purpose in everything, not matter how negatively it may have affected our lives.

Romans 8:28 *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*

4. We Must Find A Safe Environment To Take Off Our Mask.

The reason recovery groups are so popular is that they provide a safe place for people to share their problems with one another, while receiving support from each other.

Small Groups are designed for this very purpose. They are designed so that we can all learn to be honest with one another sharing our needs and wounds that we may receive healing from one another as the Lord touches us all through His body.

IV. Concluding Remarks.

My prayer today is that you will take the necessary steps to remove the clutter of your past so that you can be free to enjoy the rest of your life living the abundant life that Jesus Christ promised you.