

“Wounds” (Renew Your Mind: Gospel Hope for Mental Health – Pt. 4)
(1 Peter 2:24-25)

- **Just A Rock**

- A long time ago I had a seminary professor who opened up our very first class with an illustration I'll *never* forget. He held up an exceptionally ordinary looking rock and asked us, “*If you saw this rock on the sidewalk while you were walking to class today, what would you do with it?*” We all struggled to answer as we passed the rock around the room and introduced ourselves one by one. People said, “*I’d kick it off the sidewalk, pick it up and put it with the other rocks, walk around it, step over it.*” Some got a little more creative, but we all treated the rock like an ordinary rock and tried to move on with our day as we humored this professor with his odd ice breaker question. Once it got all the way around the room, the professor set it aside. Then he brought out another rock that looked *just like it*—but this one was *split open*. Inside this ordinary-looking rock was an intricate array of sparkling crystals—beautiful, and a lot of sharp edges. (Pic) The rock was a *geode*. His point, after we just introduced ourselves, was that every person you encounter is like this geode: they may look exceptionally ordinary, they may seem like the kind of thing you can just walk around and move on with your day—but *inside* there is a much bigger story. Inside, there is an intricate, complicated, beautiful, broken story. Inside every person, made in God’s image, but fallen in sin, you will find *beauty* and *brokenness*.

- **Wounds**

- And that brings us to a heavy but important topic for today, in week 4 of our series, ***Renew Your Mind: Gospel Hope for Mental Health***. We’ve talked about *Thoughts, Feelings, Habits* and today it’s another vital category: ***Wounds***. You know, the word *trauma* actually comes from the Greek word for *wound*. Now, “trauma” has become *such* a common topic today that some people get a little weary hearing about it—maybe our culture is guilty sometimes of a bit *too much naval gazing*, I think that’s fair to say. But also, *it’s real*. Wounds are real. Big

wounds, small wounds, obvious wounds, subtle wounds. It's part of mental health, for all of us.

- You might be someone who doesn't particularly struggle with "wounds" or "trauma"—you've, thank God, lived a relatively unscathed life—your wounds might be pretty surface-level and you've been able to move on easily. Or you might be someone who has been *deeply-wounded* in any number of ways, and your life has been profoundly impacted. There's plenty of room in the middle, too. Wherever you're at, the fact is, it affects you: because it impacts you personally, or it impacts someone you know, or people you walk past (*hello, rock*) every day. The Bible has plenty to say about this—and the Gospel has *lots of hope* for it. So, we're going to talk about it.
- Now, if you do some research to look at the general ways psychology frames this, you'll find definitions like this for a "psychological wound" or trauma: **"An emotional and cognitive injury resulting from an event or series of events that completely overwhelms an individual's ability to cope and process emotions."** So, we might think of clinical disorders like PTSD, chronic depression and anxiety, things often caused by traumatic stuff someone's been through. It's serious and it takes a lot of care from wise and well-trained people—thank God for them. But psychologists also talk about other categories that are more broadly experienced, that have to do with childhood and personality development. There's a concept called "Core Wounds" that gets broken into 5 common types: **Abandonment, Rejection, Betrayal, Injustice, and Humiliation**. And the causes of various wounds and traumas can be *interpersonal* (in other words another person) or they can be *circumstantial* (like through grief, or loss, or an accident, an event). There's a whole lot to go into here and we don't have time. Nor am I an expert. But I just want to get us thinking about this broad category of "wounds" as we reflect on our lives and the people we love, so that we can now open up Scripture and find the Gospel hope. So, let's get ready to see what God has for us, and let's pray.
- **By His Wounds We Are Healed**
 - Open up to **1 Peter 2:24-25**, **"He himself bore our sins' in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; 'by his wounds**

you have been healed.’ For ‘you were like sheep going astray,’ but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.”

This short passage from the Apostle Peter is “Gospel 101,” he’s reminding the Christian community he’s writing to of truths that are found throughout the Bible and how they all come together in Jesus Christ. But the truth contained here is also *ocean-deep* and Christians have been looking into it for ages—I suppose we’ll be marveling at it for all eternity! The way Jesus gave us this “Great Exchange” of His perfect righteousness for our wickedness, the way He became the substitute, the sacrifice for our sin, and the champion who triumphed over the grave, the way His wounds became the source of *eternal life*. Peter was an eye-witness of it all, like Paul, like the other Apostles, he went on to die for it. I want us to look at this passage as we discover *Gospel hope* for our wounds because of how it conveys with so much power the paradox of Jesus Himself *becoming wounded* in order to *heal our wounds*.

- Maybe you noticed the “quotes within quotes” in this translation: it’s because Peter is quoting a well-known part of the Old Testament as he’s talking about Jesus. Isaiah 53 is a famous passage about “the suffering servant”—if you’ve never read it, go read it this week. Here’s the Scripture Peter’s quoting—and if you didn’t believe the Bible was inspired by God, think about the fact that this prophecy was written 5-700 years *before* the time of Christ: ***“Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.”*** (Isa. 53:4-6)
- *By His wounds you have been healed...* That’s a unique way of talking about salvation, isn’t it? When we think about “sin” and “righteousness” like Peter mentioned, we usually think first of “forgiveness,” we think of a *moral* and *legal* framework. That’s a very true and biblical way of thinking about salvation, for sure. We’ve *are* guilty of breaking God’s law, we *do* need to be forgiven if we’re going to

be saved. So, why does Peter then start talking about *healing*? I mean, it would be strange to think of someone breaking the law, having their sentence pardoned, then saying, *they got healed*—we wouldn't talk like that. So, what's going on here? Well, the Bible doesn't just talk about Salvation in terms of the legal, moral framework—it has other ways of helping us understand how Jesus saves us, all the Gospel means for us.

- The Bible doesn't just connect salvation with *forgiveness*, it also connects salvation with *healing*. Think about some of the healing stories of Jesus, when he *forgives their sins* as He's healing their afflictions. Think about how He not only addressed the person's physical traumas, but the ways His loving touch *restored the whole person*. It's all in there. And it's actually right there in the *word*: the root of salvation is "salve," like a healing ointment. *Salvation is healing*. It's the healing of your soul. There's a connection between salvation and healing, because there's a connection between sin and wounds. When we break God's law, we also break *ourselves* (and others). When we "miss the mark" (that's the literal definition of sin in the O.T.) of how God designed life to work, things get damaged, people get hurt (we get hurt). And, sin isn't just something we do, it's a condition—it's a sickness of our souls.
- The reality is: *sin* and *the effects of sin* always lead to wounds. When you sin, it *wounds you* in some way, and usually it *wounds others*. When you experience *the effects of sin*—in other words, this fallen world, sickness, death, brokenness—it *wounds you*. This fallen world *traumatizes the soul*. When you find a wound, somewhere, somehow, it's connected with sin—it might not be *your sin*, it could be someone who sinned *against* you, or it could be the effects of Adam and Eve's sin, because that's how sickness and death entered the story. But you see the connections, right? The point is, for redemption to happen, we need to be forgiven, *and* we need to be healed. Here's the Good News, folks: *Jesus is a healer*.
- Down through the ages, Christian teachers who have looked into the ocean depths of God's grace through salvation in Christ have expressed the same idea, and it's best captured in this quote from Leanne Payne (1932-2015): **"The soul is healed**

through union with God.” Chew on that. *The soul is healed through union with God.*

- *By His wounds you have been healed...*because by His wounds, the gulf of sin that once separated you from God has covered, and now you can be with Him again. *By His wounds you have been healed...*because by His wounds, the condemnation we were under has been borne by the sinless lamb of God. *By His wounds you have been healed...*because on that Cross, He fully identified with our human condition, He took on Himself our sin, our sickness, our wounds, our brokenness, so that He could take them to the grave and return to us with *resurrection life*. We were lost, like sheep without a shepherd—but because of our Savior, we get to be reunited with our God, our soul’s true home, and the place our wounds get healed.

- **A Family Story**

- We all have wounds, because we all have sin and we all live in a fallen world. Some of the wounds are pretty minor and have been tended to, some are devastating and severe. Along with that, we all come from family systems and stories where the effects of sin and wounds get passed down in ways we sometimes aren’t even aware of. (Time to pick up that rock again...)
- When I was in my early 30’s, not too long ago, I heard a story about my grandfather (my dad’s dad) that changed how I thought about my family-system of origin. My grandfather was a good guy. He was a WWII vet. He got married, had 3 kids, worked hard. He came to Christ when he was an adult, after he already had a family. He loved his kids, and us grandkids. But, he wasn’t exactly the kind of guy you could get real *close* to, if you know what I mean? My grandfather was one of 5 kids himself. I heard a few stories about his parents (my great grandparents), but I had never met them and I didn’t really know much about them. After he and my grandmother had passed away, by the time I had 4 kids of my own, I heard this story for the first time: when he was still a kid, maybe a child or adolescent, his parents had a lot of troubles. His dad was unfaithful, and left his mom, with 5 kids, for another mistress. And I got to hear for the first time, a story about a deep wound, that was passed down, in hushed-conversations, through my

family, to me: I know none of the specifics. I just heard about a day when my grandfather was a kid of some age, and he chased his dad's car down the road, while his dad drove away to abandon his family for someone else. And his dad never came back. I will never know just exactly how my grandpa felt in that moment, or how exactly it affected him, until I get to talk to him again in heaven. But hearing that story for the first time left me deeply reflective, and compassionate, and heartbroken over the effects of sin in this world. And it made me wonder how that wound affected my grandfather as he grew, how it affected his kids, and how it affected me. It also made me reflect on the healing power of Jesus, the way He can redeem broken stories, the way He can interrupt and break the cycles of family curses and begin new chapters, how He can still bring good branches out of bitter roots.

- **From Relief To Redemption**

- Because...*by His wounds we are healed*. This is the mystery of the Cross and the wonder of the Gospel: that in God's sovereign goodness, He can always bring *good* out of *that which was meant for evil*. In His grace, the *wound that destroys* can become *a source of life*. It happens most greatly in the sacrificial death of Christ—but once we're united with Christ, He can take *our wounds* and do the same thing: He can bring healing into these broken places and use them to help heal others. *It's just what He does. It's just who He is.*
- **If you have some wounds, are you aware of them? Have you tended to them?** If you ignore them, eventually they will define your story in all the wrong ways. Do you know and believe that as Jesus brings salvation into your life, He wants to heal your wounds? Did you know that you can invite Christ into your wounds, that you can walk back with Him into broken memories to reveal His life-giving presence and restore you? Did you know that **He can place His wounded hands upon your wounds, and make you well?** What if we take time to simply, and gently, to invite Him into our stories today, and begin that journey? Let's just pray together for a bit, and ask Jesus to be our wounded-healer this morning.