

Suggested Opening Song: Whiter Than Snow #318

Scripture: Luke 8:40-56 (see also Matthew 9:18-26; Mark 5:21-43)

Suggested Closing Song: Jesus Is All the World to Me #185

Two Desperate People One Great Physician

Introduction (*Note – Use a personal illustration, or have someone else relate such a story concerning thoughts and feelings with accompanying harmful diversions, behaviors, habits, addictions.*)

A young, 28-year old single pastor, we will call him Tad Oxney, with his seminary education and three years of pastoral experience, was told his services would no longer be needed in the large metropolitan area where he was working with an evangelistic team. Soon to be without a job, thoughts of desperation, discouragement, disillusionment and despondency began to develop.

Pastor Oxney was apparently without a future as a pastor. What next? He was engaged to get married. How would his fiancé respond to this bad news? How will he cope with his potentially dismal future? He turned to comfort food and hours of television viewing.

Was overeating and watching TV hour after hour just a diversion, or were these ingrained activities? Were these activities detrimental and harmful practices that might jeopardize his future?

After a few days, Tad went to spend some time with his father – a pastor with more than 35 years experience. In conversation, his father said: “If I were a young pastor with your situation, I would attend the School of Public Health at Loma Linda University.” A decision was soon made to connect as a full-time student with this world-renown university whose motto is, “To Make Man Whole.”

Tad’s decision, based on faith in his father’s advice and the health education he received, led to a more abundant life and gospel ministry filled with messages of help, hope and health through Jesus Christ.

How do you cope with discouragement and despondent feelings? Do you turn to a detrimental or harmful habit?

We find the story of two desperate people who were searching for healing in the Bible. You can find the story recorded in the book of Mark, chapter 5, verses 21-45.

Jairus, the ruler of the local synagogue, has pleaded earnestly that Jesus come to heal his twelve year old daughter. Some of the Bible writers tell us that she “was dying” or “at the point of death.”

Death is imminent. This is serious, the family has done all they know to do. She is an only daughter. There is much concern for her. She is loved and her death would mean a great loss. What emotions would you experience at such a time?

The only viable option is to find Jesus. Jairus has heard of Jesus ability to restore people to health. These stories give Jairus hope that Jesus will be capable of doing something for his daughter.

When Jairus finds Jesus, he falls down at His feet and pleads for Him to come to his house because his daughter is very sick and may soon die. “Come, place your hands on her and she will be healthy and live.” He reaches out in faith that Jesus is able to restore His daughter.

The disciples wonder why Jesus would consider the desire of this administrator of the local synagogue. Weren't the local Pharisees criticizing Jesus for eating with tax collectors and sinners? Jesus response was, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." Mark 2:17 (NIV).

As Jesus begins the walk to Jairus' house, there are crowds of people pressing around Him. They are eager to hear what He is saying. Progress is slow. Jairus is anxious and impatient with the delay as Jesus often stops to relieve suffering or speak words of encouragement.

It is here that we find another desperate person, a woman who needs healing. She has had a hemorrhaging condition for 12 years. Her suffering has been great. She has spent all she has, but the doctors have not been able to help.

She has heard about Jesus and His healing ministry. She joins the crowd of people who are following Him. She thinks, “If I can just touch His clothes, I will be healed.” She is focused and undistracted by the crowd. She touches the edge of His garment. She is cured immediately. She has found wholeness by touching Jesus. Jesus tells her to, “Go in peace and be free of your suffering.”

She was now free of her suffering. She can go about daily life as someone who doesn't need to worry or be anxious concerning her future. She has peace, no more anxious thoughts concerning her disease.

At this point, men arrive from Jairus' house with the news that his daughter has died. They ask, “Why bother the teacher any more?” But Jesus ignores them, He overlooks their message and tells Jairus, “Don't be afraid. Only believe.” Jesus not only gives life and health – He is the resurrection and the life.

Jesus doesn't let the crowd follow. He and His closest disciples, Peter, James and John, go with Jairus to his house where the mourners are wailing, making a riotous noise.

Jesus says, “The child is not dead, but asleep.” Jesus so often refers to death as “sleep.” The people gathered in Jairus' house laugh as if Jesus doesn't know what He is talking about.

We see Jesus softly touching the girl's hand and saying: "Little girl, get up." She immediately stood up and walked around. To the astonished people, Jesus gave strict orders to not let anyone know about this.

In this wrap around story we see despair turned to joy for more than one person. The intercession of Jairus for his daughter is spurred on by his faith. The woman, long in suffering has faith that she will be healed just by touching Jesus garment.

Jairus had faith and went to find Jesus. The woman had faith and reached out to touch Jesus' garments. The power for complete healing and recovery resided in Jesus Christ.

Does our faith have to reach a particular level before God will give us what we are asking for? Will God only give if we have faith to believe? No, God has already given us all things. We read in 2nd. Peter 1:3, “His divine power gives us everything we need for living a godly life. He has called us to receive his own glory and goodness!” His blessings are all around us. Regardless of the level of our faith, He will respond.

Are there any here today that are like Jairus and the woman - discouraged, despondent, and most likely depressed?

Are there any here with Physical issues? Like the woman, do you have a problem the doctors aren't able to resolve?

Are there any here with Financial issues? Are you overwhelmed with bills and wonder how these will be taken care of?

Are there any here with Social issues? Do you have problems with family and friends that are unresolved?

Are there any here with Emotional issues? Are you anxious and worried?

And are there any here with Spiritual issues? You wonder where God is during your time of need.

Jesus Christ is the only one who can meet your needs. He came to this world to bring life more abundant. Jesus came and grew mentally, physically, spiritually and socially (see Luke 2:52).

We see these four components of life and health included in the ministry of Jesus (see Matthew 4:23; 9:35). Rather than our life being like a layered cake, it is more like a multi-grain loaf of bread where all the ingredients are integrated and necessary to the completeness of the whole.

Each of us is unique and the way pain and emotional wounds touch us is different. Some of us become fearful and shy. Others may be like a volcano, ready to explode at any provocation. Others turn to substance abuse as a form of escape. We try to build walls.

Some become addicted to food or become anorexic as the pain affects them physically. Some turn to alcohol and drugs, while others become rageaholics and violent. Or could some of us even hide our pain by over-working, over-exercising or over-shopping?

Addictions are generally the result of past emotional wounds. These wounds need to be healed. God is interested in our recovery as a total person. Jesus has not changed (Hebrews 13:8). He is still in the business of healing today! Pain from past experiences can be healed by Jesus. Addiction to drugs, and pornography, broken hearts, childhood physical, sexual or emotional abuse – the power for complete recovery resides in Christ.

With God, all things are possible (Matthew 19:26). The physical damage can be healed, and the spiritual bondage can be broken.

Jesus' commission when he came to walk among us was to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, to give recovery of sight to the blind and to set at liberty those who are oppressed (Luke 4:18).

Because Jesus took care of it on the cross, and now lives to continue His ministry in our lives, we can put our hurts and addictions, behind us. Jesus tells us to go and sin no more (John 5:14). Oppression came through sin. As we live close to God, and allow Him to work in us, our lives will become cleaned up. Jesus forgives our sin, and we are cleansed. The oppression then has no more rights to us. Jesus is the One who sets the captives free!

What are you expecting God to do for you today? Do you believe that God can respond to your expectations? When Jairus was worried about his daughter's life, he fell at Jesus feet and begged him to come to his house to heal his daughter. Jesus met Jairus' expectations. We don't need to worry about how much or little faith we have, we just need to fix our eyes on the One who holds the power for complete recovery, Christ Jesus.

Jesus can say to us as he did to the woman, "Go in peace and be free of your suffering.

Whatever your need: “God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”
Philippians 4:19

There was something different about the woman’s touch. There was intent behind it, there was faith behind it, there was rich content in her touch that made her contact significant, so significant that it coaxed power to proceed from Jesus!

Jesus tells us that her faith was what made her whole. She believed even after twelve years of physical suffering. It may have been her suffering that gave her the rich faith.

Suffering can inspire deep kinds of faith so she was prepared to meet Jesus. She had nothing to lose. She abandoned all feelings of shame, of fear. She passed beyond everything to touch the hem of His garment.

“Whatever you ask in my Name, not doubting” will be done, Jesus says in one place. “Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and the door shall be opened.”

A Christian 12-step program is ideal in working through the different feelings and emotions that are keeping us from getting healing for our many harmful addictions. It will focus on Jesus who holds the power for complete recovery. No one else can give total healing. God is interested in our total recovery, He meets us where we are and helps change us as we allow Him to work in our lives.

One program that may help with this process of healing is offered by the North American Division Health Ministries Department.

Adventist Recovery Ministries, www.adventistrecovery.org offers new materials, *The Journey to Wholeness* which can be used in small group ministry. With this program, you can get help and provide help for others to find freedom from harmful habits, obsessive and compulsive thinking. In helping others, the person you help the most may be you.

Not all sickness and disease is physical. Other diseases include and diminish the quality of health and wholeness at the level of each separate component. Emotional health impacts the whole being – body, mind and spirit, along with the social aspects of life.

Adventist Recovery Ministries mission is to “promote healing and freedom from harmful practices by providing resources and training to facilitate recovery.”

Attachment -

Character defects and tendencies – whether inherited or cultivated often result in faulty thinking which leads to addictions, harmful habits. If you would like to learn more about Adventist Recovery Ministries and *The Journey to Wholeness* resources - complete the “Adventist Recovery Ministries” response sheet. You can help people find freedom from harmful habits, obsessive and compulsive thinking.