

Sermon preached by Bishop Hamish Jamieson at the Healing Service at St. Andrew's Cathedral,
Sydney on Wednesday 15th November 2006. Reading: Isaiah 61:1-11 Luke 4:18-19
"Mending the Broken Heart"

1. The Heart.

a) The Isaiah passage is Jesus' mandate for ministry, and, therefore what Kingdom ministry looks like Jesus responded to John the Baptist: "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me."ⁱ

This ministry sets us free, heals and reintegrates us, so we grow into the men and women God wants us to be.

Authentic Christianity always sets people free to do God's business:

§ free from the power of sin to walk in the freedom of God's love, joy and peace;

§ free from control and manipulation, the misuse of power, released from slavery to walk in the fullness of humanity;

§ free from deception, to walk in truth, in integrity; and

§ free from the shattering resulting from trauma to walk a re-integrated people.

Tonight we look at this aspect of God's kingdom - the binding up of the brokenhearted.

"The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit." Ps 34:18. cf Is 57:15, Heb 61, Matt 5:8, 9:2, 9:22)

Then there is the promise of God: "I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh."ⁱⁱ

b) *Heart* in the Bible is used in many and varied ways. Biblically, It is the centre of a person and is the basis, the motivation, for our thoughts, our actions. It is the rhythm, the heart-beat of our moral fibre, strength, our spiritual, and intellectual life. Hence it embraces, overlaps with, our mind, soul, spirit, forming a focus for our entire emotional nature and understanding.

However, it is from the *heart* that we rebel, that we stray, seek our ways, not His, that our hearts can become hardened. Our heart desires, doubts, fears, rejoices, loves, is obedient, and sorrows. (Cf Choosing of David as King:

1 Sam 16:7, Acts 13:22)

c) Brokenhearted, Biblically, it is far deeper than mooning about, having lost your latest boy-friend or girl-friend, being overwhelmed with self-pity, or in the pits of despair.

A brokenhearted person is one who is fragmented, and operates in a disjointed, uncoordinated manner. It is like a mirror which shatters on impact.

There are many traumatic situations - accidents, physical, sexual abuse, natural disasters, human disasters, deep grief, in which we feel shattered, broken, longing to be put back together again. Modern medicine may be able to heal our bodies, but has greater difficulty returning us into a reintegrated whole.

When we come to Jesus, and follow Him in discipleship, He is saying to us, "Come, follow me, and I will bind up your wounds, your broken heart, and re-connect you, body, soul and spirit. You no longer have to be a disconnected, fragmented, shattered, person." (Cf Lk 7:36-50, of reintegration, "Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little."

To walk this path, we decide to allow the Holy Spirit to do His work. Yes we might be hurt, filled with pain, devastated, and weep with broken hearts. Yes we may distance ourselves from His love, choosing to be isolated, putting on bullet-proof armour to protect ourselves. Then, we will wither, dry up, with no freedom, no life, and no heart.

"There is only one thing worse...than to break your mother's heart. and that is to find that she had no heart to be broken."ⁱⁱⁱ Our God does have a heart for He is faithful and reliable.

2. Bound Up Hearts.

Phil and Diego were two men that didn't fit. Phil a tattooist, bikie-bouncer type whereas Diego was a flashy, wealthy, Latin type. Behind the appearances were two men whose hearts had been healed, childlike.

Phil turned up at church and sat. He came regularly, said little. His presence questioned and embarrassed. He bumped into the Pastor, one day. "I want to be baptized!" He was. He is a delight, calm,

at peace. You sense he has travelled a long way - pain into freedom.

Diego couldn't work out his son who was an enthusiast for Jesus. Then, an horrific accident, the death of his son. Diego was a mess, but he worked through his grief, bears the scars, and has come into a vital and vibrant relationship with Jesus - just like his son. He knows that he has been set free from a past heavy life, and that an emptiness has been filled. It was in this reconciling, healing context that I met both these men Jesus had bound up their broken hearts. Both have found the pearl of great price.^{iv}

3. Mending Broken Hearts

All have a story to tell, a story of real or perceived hurt and pain, rejection, being put down, lack of affirmation, brokenness and failure. It is in weakness that we become vulnerable, either open to or shut from the healing of God's love..

Trauma, perhaps more than anything else, can shatter our hearts, leaving us in a state of shock, incompleteness, lacking togetherness within ourselves, open to fear and apprehension, uncertainty, and leaving us indecisive.

Forgiveness and deliverance may be required before God can mend, heal, that broken heart.

Prayer: Father, we thank you that Jesus came to bind up the brokenhearted. We thank you that your Holy Spirit is continuing this Kingdom work in our world today. We pray for wisdom, for understanding, and for that gift of faith to exercise this ministry in the name of Jesus.

We bring to your throne of grace those of us, those we know, who have been shattered by trauma, accident, and abuse. We release them to you, believing that by the wounds of Jesus we are healed.

We pray that your Holy Spirit will bind up their broken hearts, and reintegrate them into wholeness, one in body, soul and spirit, as You intended us all to be. Thank you, Jesus, and
“Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”^v

ⁱ Matthew 11:4-6 (ESV)

ⁱⁱ Ezekiel 36:26 (ESV)

ⁱⁱⁱ Temple, William, *Daily Readings from William Temple*, H&S, 1948, No 982, p 232

^{iv} Matthew 13:45,46

^v 1 Thessalonians 5:23 (ESV)