

**The Healing Ministry of the Holy Spirit**  
**1 Cor 12:4-11, Matt 18:21-35**

Brothers and sisters, last week we celebrated Mother's day and emphasize how the Holy Spirit wants to pour out His wisdom and His strength upon us, using the Super-wife of Proverbs 31 as an example of how that wisdom and strength are manifested when the Spirit is poured out upon us.

And certainly, the difficulties and challenges of Motherhood are a good example of why we need the Spirit's wisdom and power, not just for parenting, but for our life callings and our calling to make disciples of all nation as Jesus' followers.

And this morning as we continue to welcome the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon us at Valleyview I want to highlight another reason why we need it – the fact that we get sick and suffer from disease... and how this diminishes our capacity to function in our callings to serve God and steward creation.

Now the bible reveals to us that sickness and disease and death is result of the curse on creation, the consequence of

Adam and Eve's sin of rebellion against God. And we are all born under and into this curse – as evidenced from the fact that we all experience sickness, and disease and death.

Now, the biological insight from medicine can help to explain "how" our sickness and disease result from being born under the curse on creation. This wisdom allows us to better cooperate with the biological healing capacity that God designed in our bodies.

But it's important not to confuse the biological reason for "how" sickness occurs with the reason "why" we get sick. Because this does not accurately and fully reflect who are as human beings. Confusing the "how" and the "why" reduces us to merely biological creatures and keeps us from recognizing the spiritual component to who we are. And as any good doctor knows, if you are going to treat a condition to bring healing, you must not only deal with the "how" but find the correct diagnosis for the "why." So the "Why" for sickness is the Curse, a consequence of Evil and Sin being brought into this world.

And the bible shows us that this Curse affects the non-biological immaterial parts of us as well. Proverbs 12:13 says *“Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life.”* and Proverbs 18:14 says *“The human spirit can endure in sickness, but a crushed spirit who can bear?”*

You see, the curse not only affects us biological but also emotionally, mentally, and psychologically in our inner person as well.

And just as we can be born with a physical sickness, disease or deformity, so to we can be born with some degree of mental or emotional or psychological sickness... *(which may not become apparent for any number of years)*

Furthermore it is inevitable that going through life in a fallen antagonistic cursed world will inevitably wound us, to one degree or another – not only with scrapes and bruises to our knees, but also with injuries to our hearts and minds.

And brothers and sisters in Christ, I’m sure that you will agree that wounds and injuries and sicknesses of the spirit are often far more debilitating than physical ones, and they are more difficult to understand, identify and treat.

We see soldiers coming back from fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq – physically healthy and whole - but struggling with the disruptive and debilitating effects of Post-traumatic stress disorder. Or we might know persons who are engaged in self-destructive behaviors, substance abuse, and who struggle with thoughts and desires and identities which do not line up with God’s intentions and calling for us...

Perhaps we’ve personally experienced some of this...

Or maybe you are aware of those inner parts of yourself where you have put up walls, hardened your heart so to speak, to protect those places where there is an old injury which has not healed properly, to block the memory of a traumatic experience, or even hold on to something like anger about an injustice that occurred in your life.

And just like being physically sick affects our ability to function normally, these inner wounds and sicknesses do as well, and we all have them.

Sometimes the way they impair us from functioning normally is obvious – especially to those around us, other times we have become very good at hiding and coping with them and no one would know – unless they make the mistake of poking at one of those injuries...

Now, many people don't like to hear about how living in a fallen world and being born under, and into the Curse affects us in this way – physical sickness ok maybe... but this, in my inner person?? It's too personal!

It brings the issues to close to home; no one wants to hear there is something wrong with what we consider to be the center of who we are and that which forms our identity.

In fact you can hear this fear reflected in the modern definition of what it means to feel 'shame' which says "*I haven't just done something wrong – I am wrong*"

For many people the realization that something is wrong, or sick, or deformed in their inner person, in the center of their identity is just too much to bear - and they seek freedom from that shame through alcohol, drugs, or doing lots of good works – but when that doesn't bring freedom they despair and often attempt to escape through death...

This is why our society now seeks to deal with this experience of shame of realizing something is wrong with us by saying "*there is nothing wrong with you! Don't be ashamed of what you experience as being "wrong" – it's not wrong, celebrate it, take pride in it!*"

Now brothers and sisters, this is a lie. The truth is that there is another way to deal with the shame of being broken. The solution to avoiding the dark places and self-destructive behavior and eventually death, or the equally destructive

practice of celebrating brokenness and taking pride in it is to turn to Jesus Christ, and receive His outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Brothers and sisters the good news, the gospel, is that Jesus Christ came to reverse the Curse and this is why He performed miraculous healings in his earthly ministry.

While we are all born under the curse brothers and sisters, Jesus was not! This is because, as the Apostle's creed confesses, He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He is not under the curse as we are and He is able to break the curse on our lives and bring healing from its effects on us.

Do not believe the lie, the false choice that the only way to be free from the shame of being broken is through the celebration of being broken.

God has stepped in and made a new humanity – unbroken and unblemished, not wounded or hardened in any way – in the

person of Jesus Christ, who demonstrated this while suffering incredible physical pain and rejection on the cross by praying *"Father forgive them they know not what they do!"* (Luke 23:34)

And brothers and sisters this new humanity is ours through faith, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit – who produces that faith in us. Now remember that Hebrews 11:1 defines faith as *"confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see."*

This means is that the Holy Spirit poured out on us and enables us to believe that Jesus Christ is this substitutionary new humanity for us, even though we don't see it... and that we live our daily lives vicariously through His new humanity by faith as well – even if it we can see it happening! remember Hebrews 11:6 says *"without faith it is impossible to please God"*

So when those instances where your sinful nature resurfaces, where you see and experience your brokenness is still evident,

where you still experience desires contrary to God's will, things that cause you to doubt that you are fully restored in Christ, we have faith that we actually are.

This is what Paul is speaking about in Romans 7:18-19;

*"For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. [Because the good itself is located physically in Jesus] For I have the desire to do what is good, [the gradual transforming work of the Holy Spirit] but I cannot carry it out. [the lingering effects and consequences of the curse] For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing."*

So does Paul say – "well forget it then, I'd like to believe in Jesus and in His power to make me over in His image but obviously it's not working because I still struggle with sin!"

No – Paul's response is one of faith and he writes in vs.25

*"Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!"*

So living by faith means we are always going back to Jesus – not only as the source for the forgiveness of our sins – but also every time we see our sinfulness, sickness, or brokenness surface in some way we go to Him believing and trusting that the core of our identity and humanity is there in Him, fully restored and unaffected by sin, sickness, disease or any sort of brokenness.

This is why Paul writes in Colossians 3:3-4 *"For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory."*

Does that make sense?

Good – because we need to this background understanding in place in order to help us continue moving on towards maturity as members of the Body of Christ and learn to co-operate with Holy Spirit's desire to bring more and more of Christ's restored humanity into our very being as He is poured out upon us.

And the first way we begin to co-operate with the Holy Spirit in this is to understand and realize that our salvation involves much more than simply having some sins forgiven and then it's done and over with.

All of us have areas in our internal persons which need to experience the healing of Jesus through the work of the Holy Spirit poured out on us. We may need emotional healing, psychological healing, mental healing... or some combination of all three!

Remember brothers and sisters, a few weeks back we talked about how Jesus promised that those who believe in Him – will continue to do the works which He did, and do even great works because He ascended to His Heavenly Father, and poured out the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is poured out to bring healing, and to empower the Church to bring about that healing as one of those greater works, works which further what Jesus started.

This is supposed to be part of the regular everyday activity that Christ's Body is called to do as we go and make disciples of all nations... furthering the healing ministry of Jesus, as the Spirit is poured out – both physical and inner is just a normal part of our Christian experience – but a very important one!

Because as we read in Hebrews 12:14-15 we need to *“Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.”*

Brothers and sisters in Christ, without the healing ministry of Jesus in the church - the danger is that many among us will fall short of the grace of God – or miss out on the grace of God being applied to whatever “bitter roots” internal hurts, brokenness or emotional disabilities – we have.

And this bitter root will gradually grow deeper and deeper into our persons – and how we view ourselves and our identity and how we act on that that will eventually bear

bitter, poisonous fruit in our lives that will harm us, others, the body of Christ.

So, with this in mind, what does our Lord have to say to us from 1 Corinthians 12 to encourage and instruct us at Valleyview to co-operate with the Holy Spirit being poured out for the work of healing?

Well, let's start with vs. 6 we read *"there are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God as work"*

So, someone in the Body will receive a message of wisdom, another a message of knowledge, another will have motivating faith to pursue action, and others will have gifts of healing.

But as we go on to read in vs. 7 that *"the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good"*

Let me suggest that the common good with regards to bringing healing is that we use all the different gifts, which come from the same God, and thus apply the grace of God to each other's' lives so that no root of bitterness can grow up in us. That is something good which is common to us all.

So there are people in the Body of Christ who have been gifted to bring about inner healing in other's lives, by cooperating with the Holy Spirit through prayer ministry.

But as we acknowledged earlier on, inner wounds and hurts can be tricky.

It might be very obvious to us that someone needs inner healing for some issues – but they don't see it yet, and they are not ready to deal with it yet.

The Holy Spirit can help by manifesting through another person with a message of wisdom on how the Body is to deal with this person, and cooperate with how the Holy Spirit is leading them to the time and place for their healing...

Or perhaps someone has issues that neither they nor anyone else is aware of – but the Holy Spirit is, and so He manifests through another member of the Body with a message of knowledge...

And through that message the person is made aware that there is something, which they may have forgotten, hidden and or ignored, that God now wants to bring up and deal with it and bring His healing and restoration to it.

And how does that healing come about – well in different ways, complimentary ways – manifested in members of the Body of Christ by the one Holy Spirit – working us together for the common good.

So sometimes the healing, of whatever form physical or internal comes about through a miracle, or what is better translated in vs. 10 as the operation of powers (dunamis). It's bold direct and immediate and impactful!

Sometimes it is prophecy – the proclamation of specific truth that will counteract a lie which is keeping someone from healing.

Sometimes it is through prayer – and specifically here we see it the use of praying in tongues, and if there is a message from the Lord in those tongues to pass that along to the person who is being prayed for to encourage them or instruct them.

Now – remember what we've just looked at here, is how the Holy Spirit is poured out and works through different people in the Body to bring healing for our common good.

And its set within the understanding of how the Holy Spirit is the one responsible for taking that restored humanity of Jesus and getting it into our humanity – saving and healing us, in every aspect of who we are.

And that described how God sent Jesus specifically to reverse the curse on creation and undo Adam's failure.



So – when we experience the Holy Spirit being poured out among us – there is no need to freak out, or be concerned or get worried.

In fact the Holy Spirit also helps us to distinguish when He is manifesting, versus when it is our own spirit or an evil spirit.

And part of that discernment is receiving and learning to think about healing and the Holy Spirit in this way, and also debriefing with each other about any experience afterwards so that we can determine what the fruit of it was...

Because in the passage we learn the Holy Spirit manifests in this way for the common good.

The common good is that nobody among us misses out on the grace of God – because if they do, bitterness will take root and grow up to cause trouble for them and for the Body.

So, a final word about how we can all cooperate with the Manifestation of the Spirit for our common good here, and it is a word about forgiveness.

You see, in vs. 4 the scripture says there are different kinds of gifts – and a fuller translation of that greek word “charismata” would be the “things of grace” – grace gifts if you will.

And this ties all of this inner healing work back to the initial work of the Holy Spirit freely and graciously applying the forgiveness of Jesus Christ to our lives - that is what has started it all.

And these it is these grace-gifts which come out of that forgiveness the Holy Spirit pours out on us in order to minister healing through identifying, addressing, diagnosing and apply healing to our brokenness.

So brothers and sisters in Christ – since this is all grounded in grace, let also work together for the common good by passing on the grace of the forgiveness we have received in Christ to

others. That we are willing to forgive others as Christ has forgiven us.

This is the most significant way we can co-operate with the outpouring the Holy Spirit for healing in our own lives and in other's lives.

Let us to offer forgiveness to whomever is responsible for the hurts or trauma that we carry.

To whoever has shamed us for our brokenness, to whomever has made us feel unworthy or unlovable and rejected us because of how we experience being born into and under the curse.

Forgiveness is the key brothers and sisters – as the Holy Spirit is poured out on us in grace, may He empower us more and more to offer healing to others through extending that grace, that forgiveness to them.

As the parable of the Unforgiving Servant makes clear to us, we are set free when we forgive others as Christ did.

Brothers and sisters – Our Lord is the great physician, He has come to Heal us, and he has poured out His Spirit upon us, let us be His Body and administer His healing where it is needed – Amen.