

Restore Series (10): He Restores My Soul // Louise Sutton

Current series is titled RESTORE and we have been basing this series around two key words, which I am sure you all know by now: SHALOM & SODZO.

When Steve began this series he talked about how God's salvation is much broader than Jesus saving us from our sins. He has hopefully enlarged our thinking to appreciate that God experiencing a life and world in which nothing is broken and nothing is missing (shalom), and being healed and made whole (sodzo) covers many areas such as:

1. Society and the earth
2. Community and relationships
3. Sin and wrath
4. Physical healing
5. Demonic – addictions
6. Mental and emotional healing

What has happened in Christendom is that we have focused solely on the salvation of God being about saving us from our sins. This area is always under the spotlight and everything else that shalom and sodzo encompass are lost or forgotten. We think that the only power available to us through the Cross

is for the forgiveness of sins. We have been so blinded by the spotlight on sin that we have forgotten the full message of the Cross.

The church is not just a salvation centre, which saves people from their sins but it is meant to be a shalom/sodzo centre – a centre of wholeness and healing.

Today I want to focus on emotional healing represented here by the defibrillator.

The word used by Scripture in reference to our mind and emotions is the soul or heart. The basic definition of the soul is the mind, will and emotions.

Today I am going to focus on the healing of the emotions or inner healing.

3 John 1:2, “Beloved I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health just as your soul prospers.”

John is saying that our whole being and our health is linked to the condition of our soul. God wants to restore our soul. He wants to heal and make us whole in our mind, our will and our emotions.

When I came into Christianity I was 20 years old, full of insecurity (never felt anything I did was good enough), rejection (always felt left out, overlooked, ignored), very low self-esteem (couldn't accept compliments), fearful (afraid to walk into shops) and was really good at throwing self-pity parties and feeling very sorry for myself & make everyone around me want to walk away. Thankfully early on some great people took me aside and lead me through a process of inner healing. I changed dramatically. Remember the day someone paid me a compliment and I said "thank you". I was so shocked that I hadn't gone through the normal rebuttal out loud and the self-destructive comments in my mind. No longer perceived everyone around me disliked me or criticised me.

A: WHAT CAUSES DAMAGE TO THE SOUL?

Is damage to our soul biblical?

Several references in the OT refer to a crushed spirit...

Prov. 18:14 "A man's spirit will endure sickness, but a crushed spirit who can bear?"

Prov. 17: 22 "A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones."

James 1:8 "Double-minded (literally double-souled) man is unstable in all his ways."

Why would our souls need healing?

Circumstances in our lives affect us all in different ways. Just as a physical illness limits and restricts us, so to our emotions can make us unstable and limit our lives.

What takes place in our lives that causes damage to our emotions?

Sometimes it is hard to work out what causes damage to someone's soul. Things that break one person may not affect another.

But the causes can be major significant life experiences like:

- Childhood traumas
- Physical injuries: The physical & emotions are connected
- Abuse both physical and emotional,
- Neglect: Young children neglected can die from lack of physical contact
- Bullying/betrayal/rejection
- Grief: Death of loved ones or dreams

Or causes that seem insignificant or minor:

- Change - this is what I think affected me moving towns
- Overlooked, ignored
- Criticism
- Personality – Introvert, shy etc

When our daughter was little she sang a song for Steve & I and our response was to laugh as it was so cute and sweet. At the time she got annoyed at us but we didn't think anything of it. Years and years later we were talking to her about why she was upset about something and she recalled this event and how us laughing at her had really hurt. She had held on to this offence for many years. We were shocked as we were not making fun of her but that is how she interpreted it.

B: RESPONSES OR OUTCOMES FROM A DAMAGED SOUL

Our responses to damage to our souls can be as varied as the causes but there are some common one:

- Poor self-image
- Inferiority and sense of inadequacy
- Relationship issues
- Fear and anxiety
- Depression
- Negative talk and attitudes – especially negative critical head talk

These issues left undealt with in our lives lead to

- Relationship issues – when someone is very insecure it is so hard to relate to them as they perceive everything you say through a negative lens

- Withdrawal from people as they are the ones who have hurt us
- Isolation as difficult to be around people who are full of self pity
- Critical of ourselves & others – because we don't feel good about ourselves, we criticise everyone else to try make ourselves feel & look better
- Boasting about achievements & experiences to mask a sense of inadequacy
- Too afraid to “live” life – risk averse due to fear of failure

Tom Marshall writer of a book “Free Indeed” writes, “Damage to the emotions are observed in (a person's) behaviour and attitudes.”

A friend of ours was involved in a house fire at age of 16. She was staying at a friend's flat and it caught on fire and she was rescued but two other people in the flat died. Her emotional growth stopped at the age of 16. When we first met her she was a new Christian, in her early 30's but a self-confessed teenager in her emotions. The trauma she went through from the fire stunted her and she struggled relating to people. Thankfully God took her on a healing journey to wholeness.

We are all damaged in one-way or another. None of us have gone through life and come out the other end unscathed. We are in good company. King David knew what it was to be depressed and overcome emotionally.

In Psalms 42 & 43 he addresses the issue of a downcast soul: Ps. 43: “Why so downcast O my soul?” David’s speaks to his emotions. He acknowledges that his soul, his emotions are not the way they should be.

I am sure many of us can relate to David’s frustration. Soul what is your issue? You are frustrating and annoying me because you are so miserable and downcast.

C: HOW ARE OUR SOULS RESTORED?

David wrote in Ps. 23:3 “He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.”

Benson Commentary: Hebrew naphshi (soul 756 times OT) jeshobeb (restores 1060 times), my soul he bringeth or will bring back.

He restores our souls back into the paths of righteousness, right living, right thinking = “movement back to the point of departure”

This is God’s desire for each and every one of us – to restore our souls, to bring us into wholeness.

Ps. 43:5 “Why so downcast O my soul, put your hope in God”

There are some basic biblical practices that we can do that can help restore our souls. I realise that I am making it sound very simple and easy to do but I understand that it is hard to go on this journey but the results are worth it.

- a) Cathy – narcolepsy due to childhood abuse – forgiveness and healed.
- b) A couple we ministered to recently – both been through relationship breakdowns and betrayal. There was depression, anger, agitation and their relationship was under stress. We took them through a process of forgiving those who had hurt them and today that are completely different people. They were both offered new jobs, there’s been restoration of a broken friendship, even their faces looked lighter & brighter.

1. Repentance

Acts 3:19, “Repent then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.”

To turn around 180° and walk in the other direction...

- Unforgiveness – turn around and forgive
- Hate – turn around and love

- Pride – turn around and be humble
- Self-pity – turn around and focus on God not ourselves

2. Renounce

2 Cor. 4:2 “we have renounced the things hidden because of shame...”

Renounce = to speak off one’s self

When we have lived with something for a long time it becomes part of us and often don’t realise that it is not the way God intended us to be. We need to speak these things off our lives

Shame: Jesus took our sin and our shame

Grief: where we find our identity in our tragedies different to grieving

3. Renewing of the Mind

Rom. 12:2 “Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”

Neuroplasticity – scientists are confirming the truth of Scripture – we can change the structure of our thinking.

One of the symptoms of emotional damage is negative self-talk and therefore part of healing is changing the language in our minds.

Martha Nussbaum's: "the complex cognitive structure of the emotions has a narrative form — that is, the stories we tell ourselves (or others) about who we are and what we feel shape our emotional and ethical reality."

What we say about ourselves in does matter. If all we hear is our negative, critical self-talk then we will tend to replicate that in the way we live. King David knew this and spoke to his soul to put his hope in God,

We need to renew our minds by talking about ourselves as God sees us.

Conclusion

Jesus is our model of emotional wholeness and wellness.

When we look at his life in the gospels, we don't find someone without trauma or difficulties but rather he faced enormous challenges. Yet, he walked through those challenges and remained emotionally well.

Jesus experiences the storm yet is at peace, not was not in fear and despair like the disciples.

Judas betrays him, yet Jesus calls him friend and doesn't lash out like Peter did and cut off someone's ear.

Jesus was angry at injustice (the temple story) but he didn't sin – he was angry at the right things, at the right time and in the right way.

Jesus was able to maintain close intimate relationships.

The purpose of today's message is not to make you feel like a failure and tell you all how many issues you have. Rather to highlight that Jesus came to make us whole in our emotions. His desire is for us is to grow into healing and wholeness in every aspect of your lives. It is possible. You are not too hard, too old, too hurt, too broken, too angry, and too difficult. You are loved and accepted by God and I want to encourage each and every one of you not to be afraid of asking those that you love and trust to help you on the journey of healing.