

Restore Series (2): Sodzo Pt 1 // Steve Sutton

Last week, this week and next week we are slowly constructing a biblical framework for understanding brokenness and restoration. We need to be careful to avoid two extremes: one that offers us no hope of God's intervention in our brokenness or the other extreme of triumphalism, which expects God to miraculously intervene if not always, certainly often in human affairs. In my view both perspectives are flawed and unhealthy.

Last week we took a look at the Old Testament concept of 'shalom'. We said that shalom according to the Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggemann is 'God's dream for the world'. It's a great word meaning: *Wholeness, harmony, wellbeing, healing, and prosperity. It points to a world in which 'nothing is broken, and nothing is missing'. It is all things as God intended them to be.*

The New Testament equivalent of shalom is the Greek words 'sodzo' meaning 'save or saved'

Sodzo: Protect, heal, deliver, make whole, make well, rescue, restore

Sodzo appears 118 times in the New Testament.

We tend to use the words 'saved' in a limited or narrow way: primarily we think of being saved to describe our conversion – being born again and having our sins forgiven.

Forgiveness of sins

And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save (sodzo) his people from their sins. **Matthew 1:21**

Jesus = Jehovah is salvation

Whilst obviously important, sodzo covers far more than having our sins forgiven but describes the ongoing continues work of God that covers all aspects of the human condition.

An American Pastor tells the story of one of a recent convert coming to see him with an exciting testimony. The new Christian comes to him saying, 'Pastor, Pastor, you won't believe what happened to me today. I was in the subway and this guy with a knife tried to rob me. So I pulled out my gun and 'Praise the Lord', I shot him in the leg. Hallelujah! How wonderful is that! The Pastor was absolutely horrified and said 'You shot him in the leg? You can't do that now that you are saved.' The new Christian responded by saying, 'But Pastor, before I became a Christian I would've shot him in

the head.'

Salvation is a process that begins with the forgiveness of sin but is an ongoing work that over time results in a transformed life; spirit, soul, body as well as a transformed society. It is God's comprehensive and holistic work in our lives and the world. Sodzo is like shalom – it is God taking broken pieces and restoring things to the way they should be.

Let's take a quick journey through the New Testament to see how sodzo is applied to our lives beyond forgiveness.

Freedom from wrath

Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved (sodzo) from God's wrath through him! **Romans 5:9**

There are two ways for understanding wrath: a) God's anger that actively punishes wrongdoing (traditional view) or b) love that permits a person to experience the consequences of their wrongdoing (ancient and emerging view)

Physical healing

Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of

his cloak. She said to herself, “If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed.” Jesus turned and saw her. “Take heart, daughter,” he said, “your faith has healed you.” And the woman was healed at that moment. **Matthew 9:20-22**

The Gospels outline the threefold ministry of Jesus: teaching, healing and casting out demons. When we come across the words/phrases ‘heal, made well, made whole, and cured’ in the Gospels it is likely to be the word sodzo. The healing ministry of Jesus acted as a sign of the Kingdom. I have no doubt the healing ministry of Jesus continues today but it is obviously not as common.

The story of my brother Jason.

But how and why is it that some people experience the mystery of physical healing and others do not? We will explore this during our series.

Mental/emotional healing

[H]umbly accept the word God has planted in your hearts, for it has the power to save your souls. **James 1:21**

[F]or you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls. **1 Peter 1:9**

Souls = psyche = the seat of the feelings and desires.

I shared the statistic last Sunday that one in seven primary school children are diagnosed with an anxiety disorder.

Psalm 23 'He restores my soul'. During the course of this series we will spend a few weeks discussing mental health - how to care for our mental and emotional wellbeing and also how to support those with mental health issues.

Deliverance from demons

Those who had seen it told the people how the demon-possessed man had been cured (sodzo). **Luke 8:36**

In ancient times a range of physical and behavioural conditions were attributed to dark spiritual forces. We cannot read the New Testament and not avoid what was a significant component of Jesus ministry. During this series we will look at demon possession and address whether it responsible for adversely affecting peoples lives today.

Richard Rohr says that addiction is a contemporary expression of demonisation.

Inclusion in community

Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because **this man, too, is a son of Abraham**. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” **Luke 19:9-10**

Restoring people disconnected from community is central to the restorative work of Jesus. The Gospels are filled with stories like Zacchaeus, such as the woman who was hemorrhaging, lepers, the poor and sinners who were brought in from the margins to be included in community.

Restoring the earth and society

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. **John 3:17**

‘the world’ = kosmos – the universe, the earth and the inhabitants of the earth society.

Last week I introduced the Jewish concept of ‘tikkun olam’ the repair or healing of the earth. The Jewish longing for the world and all that's within it to become what God intended it to be. An image of future wholeness and wellness. I hope to have a Jewish Rabbi friend of mine come and talk about ‘tikkun olam’.

Conclusion

Hopefully, we appreciate that salvation is the comprehensive work of God – it is a package including:

- Forgiveness of sins
- Freedom from wrath
- Physical healing
- Mental and emotional healing
- Deliverance from demons
- Inclusion in community; and ultimately the
- Restoration of the earth and society

For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save (sodzo) them. **Luke 9:56**

And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (sodzo). **Acts 2:21**