

Restore Series (6): Who Needs Saving? Steve Sutton

Intro

Wynand is unable because of sickness to share with us today on Overcoming Structural/Institutional Evil. He is deeply apologetic.

Every corporate entity has a culture or spirituality: nations, governments, political parties, companies such as Apple, the media, community groups, churches, schools, families even your AFL team have an unseen dimension, a spirit or culture. The spirit or culture of the institution can be godly or ungodly, healthy or unhealthy. But is more than likely to be a mix of both.

The Bible talks about principalities and powers and these powers operate in and through the spirit or culture of nations, governments, political parties, companies, the media, community groups, places of education, religious organizations such as churches, families and AFL clubs to **prevent** or **promote** human dignity and flourishing.

Structural or institutional evil is present when the principalities and powers at work in nations, governments, companies, the media, community groups, churches, schools and families etc fail to be or do good

Jesus overcame principalities and powers through the Cross - the role of Christians and the church is to bend the culture or spirit of these structures or institutions into line with God's love and justice through prayer and actions that uphold God's goodness.

Institutions as well individuals need rescuing and restoration.

Today, I'd like us to look at who needs to experience God's shalom and sodzo? That is who needs: healing, restoration, rescuing, repairing, delivering, harmony, wholeness and wellness?

I'd like to suggest to you that there are three kinds of people.

Let's look at the first kind of person found in Mark 5.

So they arrived at the other side of the lake, in the region of the Gerasenes. When Jesus climbed out of the boat, a man possessed by an evil spirit came out from the tombs to meet him. This man lived in the burial caves and could no longer be restrained, even with a chain. Whenever he was put into chains and shackles—as he often was—he snapped the chains from his wrists and smashed the shackles. No one was strong enough to subdue him. Day and night he wandered among the burial caves and in the hills, howling and cutting himself with sharp stones. **Mark 5:1-5**

The first group of people that need sodzo are the suffering. Next Sunday we are looking at the demon-possession but today I want us to see that this man is a picture of human suffering.

This man was tormented. Dominated by dark forces that governed his life.

Lived among the dead because that's how he felt.

Chains = metaphor for bondage and enslavement – addiction

Cutting himself – self-inflicted pain

Hurt people, hurt people and the people they often hurt the most are themselves.

We don't know the cause of his demonization but we do know what happened when he met Jesus!

Luke 8:30-36

Jesus demanded, “What is your name?”

“Legion,” he replied, for he was filled with many demons. The demons kept begging Jesus not to send them into the bottomless pit. There happened to be a large herd of pigs feeding on the hillside nearby, and the demons begged him to let them enter into the pigs.

So Jesus gave them permission. Then the demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the entire herd plunged down the steep hillside into the lake and drowned.

When the herdsman saw it, they fled to the nearby town and the surrounding countryside, spreading the news as they ran. People rushed out to see what had happened. A crowd soon gathered around Jesus, and they saw the man who had been freed from the demons. He was sitting at Jesus’ feet, fully clothed and perfectly sane, and they were all afraid. Then those who had seen what happened told the others how the demon-possessed man had been healed (sodzo).

This is an extreme example of suffering. Think it’s not relevant to me but if we read it as a metaphor we will perhaps see that we all suffer in some way:

- There are issues in our lives that bind us – hold us back and restrict us
- dark, dead places we escape to
- we hurt ourselves / self-sabotage

Jesus reaches out to us to deliver and heal.

The second kind of person in need of sodzo is found in Luke 19:1-10

Jesus entered Jericho and made his way through the town. There was a man there named Zacchaeus. He was the chief tax collector in the region, and he had become very rich. He tried to get a look at Jesus, but he was too short to see over the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree beside the road, for Jesus was going to pass that way.

When Jesus came by, he looked up at Zacchaeus and called him by name. “Zacchaeus!” he said. “Quick, come down! I must be a guest in your home today.”

Zacchaeus quickly climbed down and took Jesus to his house in great excitement and joy. But the people were displeased. “He has gone to be the guest of a notorious sinner,” they grumbled.

Meanwhile, Zacchaeus stood before the Lord and said, “I will give half my wealth to the poor, Lord, and if I have cheated people on their taxes, I will give them back four times as much!”

Jesus responded, “Salvation (sodzo) has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and save (sodzo) those who are lost.”

Zacchaeus’ issue wasn’t Satan or suffering – it was sin and selfishness.

Rich from ripping people off. Zacchaeus was a Jew who was conspiring with Rome, the sworn enemy of the Jews

to exact unfair taxes from his countrymen. He was a thief and a traitor and at the lowest end of the moral scale. In the eyes of a good Jew, it would be hard to find anyone who would be considered to be as sinful as Zaccheus.

Jesus risks his reputation to go the home of this notorious sinner. Jesus embraced someone that no other good Jew would have anything to do with.

One encounter with kindness, acceptance and forgiveness turned Zacchaeus' heart. He became a giver not a grabber of money.

The third kind of person that needs sodzo is found in Philippians 3:5-6

I was circumcised when I was eight days old. I am a pure-blooded citizen of Israel and a member of the tribe of Benjamin—a real Hebrew if there ever was one! I was a member of the Pharisees, who demand the strictest obedience to the Jewish law. I was so zealous that I harshly persecuted the church. And as for righteousness, I obeyed the law without fault.

Paul is an example of the third kind of person who needs sodzo – the successful and the saint.

By the age of 12 he would've memorized the first five books of the Bible.

He was well educated.

He had a great career.

He was looked up to by his peers.

He'd lived a good, clean moral life.

He was passionate for God.

But he still needed rescuing. Acts 9 – he encountered sodzo for the very first time.

Paul wasn't suffering or bound by Satan like the Garasene demoniac, he wasn't sinful like Zacchaeus, he was was a saint/successful – but even good people like Paul need healing – the reason is successful people are often prone to self-righteousness.

There are degrees of suffering/sinfulness/sainthood and most of us are a mix of all three.

Anoint with oil - recognition that I need Jesus, I need repairing = Salvation = Latin 'salve' a healing ointment or balm.

Take communion - the table of salvation

Ask if you need someone to come to you to anoint and
serve you communion