

# (Apostolic Vision) the Healing Community

by Dale Heisey

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*The church is a healing community that has a responsibility to meet the needs of others and to spread the gospel.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 23:5, Isaiah 58:12, Matthew 10:7-8, Matthew 18:15-17, Luke 4:18, Ephesians 4:10-12

**Topics:** "Church Discipline", "Restoration Ministry"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the process of restoring someone who has fallen into sin within the church community. He shares a specific example of a young man who engaged in improper conduct with a 15-year-old girl who was working for him. The young man eventually confesses his actions to the speaker. The speaker emphasizes the importance of addressing such matters within the church and involving the community in the restoration process. He also highlights the role of wise individuals within the church who can judge and help restore those who have fallen. The sermon concludes with a powerful story of a father expressing his remorse for not being a better role model for his son.

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## Transcript

on a Thursday night, but I was wondering, as our brother was praying, for how many of you was he praying, for how many of you was he praying when he prayed for those who are on the mission field? For how many of you was he praying when he prayed for those who are on the mission field? How many of you are on the mission field and when do you plan to get there if you're not there? What in the world are you doing here? Why are we here if we're not on the mission field? What are we doing here? We have absolutely no business being here unless we're on the mission field. I wonder for how many of us he was praying when he prayed for those who were on the mission field. I suppose that's enough of a sermon for us to dismiss and go home.

We can think about that. Are we on the mission field? And if we're not on the mission field, what kind of field are we? We must be on more than just the clover field. We've got to be on the mission field.

I do appreciate this wonderful group that's come out here this evening on a Thursday night. We welcome everybody to this service and we welcome you in the name of Jesus. And he has a missionary heart and he loves the Lord.

I had the opportunity to work for several years in the emergency room of a hospital and along with that responsibility, I served on the AMBU team of that particular research hospital where I was working. An AMBU team is a team of supposedly trained people and doctors that are called in that case of emergency

when a patient somewhere in the hospital on one of the floors goes into cardiac respiratory arrest and then you're called there to do what you can as rapidly as possible to resuscitate them and try to revive that person. And that kind of experience helps you appreciate the value of life.

It helps you appreciate the brevity of life. It helps you appreciate what is necessary to sustain life. And it helps to create in your heart a healing mentality.

Now, I'm not going to make you wait in suspense for very long to know what we're speaking about tonight. I am concerned about the large number of hurting and wounded and suffering people we have in our churches about whom or for whom we can do virtually nothing to help them. I'm concerned about the large number of people who have great needs, be they spiritual needs or emotional needs and maybe even physical needs, but especially spiritual and emotional needs that we need to send to the outside specialists for their help.

I don't understand why when somebody sins in the healing community of a church, why when somebody sins inside the context of the healing community of the church, why we need any help outside of the healing community of the church to meet the needs of those suffering people. I don't understand that. I guess I'm too simple to understand that.

I guess I never studied a course that could explain that to me. Why someone who is in sin, someone who's struggling in their emotions and in the attempts to regain and restore the feelings inside, why we need some kind of outside professionalism to help us with a problem that Jesus would so easily be able and desiring to heal. I don't understand that.

Now, and I realize this. I realize this and I try to be careful if I'm preaching in the States to not make this mistake. You might sense this mistake in me sometimes, but I try to be careful to not, I try to remember that I'm in the United States of America when I'm up here.

I'm not in Costa Rica or not in Peru or not in Nicaragua. And listen, I'm just asking you a simple question and you just please tonight take yourself out of the Willamette Valley long enough to answer this question. With our cases of emotional disturbance and with our cases of deep sin and personal problems, with our cases of deep woundedness and our members in Costa Rica, where is the deeper life conference where I'm supposed to send our members? And where is the psychological help? And where are the, I don't know what the specialty places where they send these people for these needs.

Where am I supposed to send them? And listen, do you want to pay the plane tickets to send them all up here? Or how do we do that? And if throughout the ages the church has met these needs, if throughout the ages, throughout history, the church of Jesus Christ, the healing people of God, the church, the healing community has met these needs, then what is wrong with the church today? I mean, right here. And we're responsible for this work. We have been given this work.

Our Lord Jesus has given us this healing ministry. I'm not afraid of a doctor. I believe in doctors.

I'm not afraid of medicine. I believe in medicine. I mean, I think I do.

But I, maybe you could understand these thoughts. The church is not a Sunday school class. The church is the church.

The church is not an auditorium filled with people listening to a preacher. The church is the church. The church is not a group of men ordained to certain positions.

The church is the church. And the healing community is the church. And I suppose that the church is no more the church in all of its existence as it is the church when it is ministering to the needs of its people.

That is what the church is for. The church is to meet the needs that we find around us. Be that need someone on Skid Row, or be that need someone out in the alley, or be that need someone down the street, or be that need a sinner that doesn't know Jesus.

Be that need a personal struggle in the hearts of those of us who meet together. But the church is to meet those needs. That's what the church is for.

The church was given equipment for that. In fact, we are to edify the body of Christ so that it can be functioning in its ministry. We'll read those verses in Ephesians 4. And that's not the work of the professionals, and that's not the work of the pastor.

That is not the work of a few people, of a few select ones. That is the work of the church. It's the work of the church to heal the needs of the church.

Now, I've worked with doctors for years, and I know very few doctors. There might be some. I know very few doctors who are not well aware, the doctors that I work with are well aware of the fact that they cannot heal the patient.

The only thing they can do is put bones together, remove certain tissues, close up certain openings, pull together skin, suture the organs back together and the layers of subcutaneous that comes up to the top and finish it off with hopefully a fairly nice line down the end of the skin and finish this thing off when it heals. That's about as much as they can do. And they know that.

The healing, God has created our bodies to do that. Now, who's going to heal this body here? This body right here. How's that supposed to heal? I would just like to think about that.

The church is a healing community, and I'm concerned about all the needs we have for counseling here and there and counseling centers and this and that. I don't understand all this. And I'm not looking at it this evening from a theological point of view.

I'm not looking at it this evening philosophically. I just don't understand anything else but this, that Christ wanted people to heal the needs in the church. And there are tremendous needs in the church.

And it would be a day of revival. It would be a revival meeting. It would be a day of revival if those needy ones, the ailing ones and aching ones and hurting ones and lonely ones that we have among us would come to the church to have their needs met.

It would be a day of revival. It would be a revival meeting. That meeting would be a revival meeting.

I'd like to ask you something. How many of you have ever been present among the body of brothers and sisters when needs of that kind were being met in the church? We have never had better revival meetings in Costa Rica than we have had in such meetings. When everybody is so humbled before God that nobody can talk.

When no one needs to say a word. When every eye is filled with tears and everybody is humbled in the presence of God and the needs are met. That is what the church is for.

If you're not experiencing that, you need a revival meeting. Now let's just see what this Bible says about the introduction that I just gave. Is this Bible truth that you just heard? Is this the heart of God, what we have just heard? Did someone just simply put that on their plane and haul it up here from Costa Rica? Or is this in the Bible that we read from every day? Is this a Bible position for the church? And we can read a lot of scriptures this evening, but let's start in Psalm 23.

When the Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me beside the still waters.

What does he do to the soul? What does he do to the soul? What does it say in your Bible? What does he do to the soul? What does that word mean? What does restore mean? What does restore the soul mean? We're hearing he's not restoring the strength, he's restoring the soul. He leadeth me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.

For thou art with me. There's much fear in the church. Thou art with me.

Thou art with me. How do you know God is with you? Thou write in thy staff, they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.

Thou anointest my head with oil. We need to be, as Brother John Oberholt used to say, an oil-pouring church. We need to be an oil-pouring church.

An oil-pouring community. The church, the healing community. My cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Isaiah 58. There's much worth reading here, but we'll read just verse 12.

And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places. The old waste places. Thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations.

Thou shalt be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in. This is the message. This is the call.

This is the ministry of the church. Build up the old waste places. Raise up the foundations of generations.

The repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in. And when Jesus began his ministry and read from the prophets, and we have this record in the fourth chapter of Isaiah, the fourth chapter of Luke, I'm sorry, I want to read verse 18. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor.

He hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and the recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And this was on the heart of our Lord Jesus. This is what he wished to do, planned to do, was prophesied to do, and did do when he came.

And when he sent his disciples out, his early apostles in the tenth chapter after you, he said this to them in verses seven and eight. And as you go, preach, saying the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils.

Freely ye have received, freely give. This was the message, this was the ministry he gave to his disciples. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils, freely ye have received, freely give.

Now, we're in the book of Matthew there. That was chapter ten. Let's take a look at Matthew eighteen.

We read this the other night. But this is the ministry of the healing community, the church. Verse fifteen says, Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, do tell him his fault between thee and him alone.

If he shall hear thee, thou shalt gain thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. If he shall neglect to hear them, tell him unto the church.

But if he neglects to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican. I could ask you a question tonight that would be very, for me, it would be very illuminating, the biblicism of the Willamette Valley. I could ask you a question tonight that would help me believe, if we truly believe the Bible and if we are obeying the Bible and we hear the Bible and we practice the Bible here in this valley, I could ask you one question that would give me a very clear indication if we are Bible-believing people or not.

And the question would be this. How many of you have ever participated in verse sixteen that I just read? And that would be an indication to me of how biblical we are as a people. In our community, we very seldom have to go to verse seventeen.

When someone was faithful in doing verse fifteen and sixteen. And I have had many opportunities when someone has come to me and said, Brother Dale, would you go along with me to visit so-and-so? Would you go along with my wife and I to visit a certain person? Would you go along with us? It is the most beautiful thing to see what happens when somebody in all honesty and all desire to deign the brother, not to shame the brother, not to suspect the brother, not to point out the brother, not to ridicule the brother, not to shame the brother, but to deign the brother. And the attitude to deign the brother goes with one or two others because the first attempt did not work.

And goes a couple of days later with one or two others and says, Brother, you remember I was here before. We need to work on this. That's what the church is for.

Are you practicing this in your churches here? The church of Brownville, the people are from Brownville tonight. The people here from Harrisburg. Are you practicing at the church of people of Valley Fellowship? Are you practicing this in your church of the people of Kansas? Are you practicing this in your churches here? Won't you make a commitment tonight to practice this in the church? This is not for the preachers to do.

But don't wait for Jason Schwartz to do it. Don't wait for Wilbert Krupp to do it. Don't wait for one of the ministers to do it.

And don't say to your neighbor, I wonder when the preacher is going to get busy. It looks like I'm not doing nothing. I don't see him working on this.

I wonder when they're going to get after him. Look at what he's doing over there. And what have you been doing? You're the sweetest thing in all the world.

The sweetest thing. No, the beautiful thing is when you go there. You go there.

Maybe you thought you were the only one. You were just the only spiritual one in this church. You're the one that took this responsibility.

You came and you got there and found out that others were concerned also. And we're speaking to the person about the same need. The brother senses that instead of being gossiped about and being ridiculed.

He's being deemed by the brotherhood. That's what the work of the church is. The reconciling and healing community.

Now it says here at the end of this 17th verse, if he neglects to hit the church. We teach in Costa Rica that there's only one reason why we can excommunicate somebody from the church. We don't have a long list of reasons to excommunicate people.

We only have one reason. We don't excommunicate people because they adulterated. Because they stole.

Because they told a lie. Because they got drunk. We don't excommunicate people because they told a lie.

Because they said a bad word. We don't excommunicate people because they weren't faithful in their church attendance. We don't excommunicate anybody but for only one reason.

There's only one reason that I know of in the Bible for excommunicating somebody. Now you look at that verse once again. Tell it unto the church.

That if he neglects to hear the church, let him be unto thee that he is a man of the public. And just keep your finger right there. Turn to 1 John chapter 4. I'd like to read here verse 6 in this same connection.

But we are of God. He that knoweth God heareth us. He that is not of God heareth not us.

Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. He that is of God heareth us. And he that is not of God heareth us not.

Or heareth not us. And the only reason I know to excommunicate somebody. When we've taken the Bible steps.

We've taken the Bible order. We have done all we can to win this brother, this sister. This erring one.

This needy one. And we brought it before the church. And the church spoke to this need.

The church, the reconciled community spoke. The church spoke to the young father. And he was delivering some pineapple or something like that.

One of the people in our community in a truck. And took some neighborhood boys along with him. And on the way home after the truck was empty.

On the way home they had some money in their pockets. And it was a hot day. They were thirsty.

They stopped at a tavern. And drank three beers each of them. He bought beers for the young fellows that were with him from the community.

And they came home. And for some way or another the church learned about the experience. And having taken all the steps we could to solve the problem.

We finally got to step three verse 17. And we brought Johnny before the brotherhood. And I tried to explain as we opened the meeting why we were here.

And I asked for the brothers to speak to Johnny. And one by one they stood and spoke to Johnny. And the last person that spoke was Johnny's daddy.

And Johnny's daddy stood to his feet. And he could not look at his son. He just put his head down and cried.

I am so sorry Johnny. I am so sorry Johnny. It's my fault.

If I had been a better daddy you wouldn't have done that. If I had been a better daddy you wouldn't have done that Johnny. If you were to be in a revival meeting.

Be in a meeting like that. If you were in a revival to come to your church. Have a meeting like that.

If you want to see healing come upon a group of people. Get yourself in a meeting like that. That's what the church is for.

That's what the church is being the church. That's the purpose of the church. See if I was pointing any fingers.

You think that was a finger pointing meeting? Was that a shaming meeting? Was that a slamming meeting? I should tell you this. That most of the people that spoke before Johnny's daddy spoke. Didn't say a word about Johnny.

Almost everyone who spoke before Johnny's daddy spoke. Came front before the group and said. I'm worse yet.

I'm going to tell you what I did. And one by one they came. And nobody was forced to say anything.

And they said things that I knew nothing about. But when the night was over. We had had a revival meeting.

And the church was the church. I do beg you to hear these words. Would you turn to Galatians chapter four.

Chapter six. The church is the healing community. Why can't we heal the needs we have in our churches? Doesn't Jesus want us to heal them? Isn't Jesus the healer of all diseases? Doesn't he forgive? Doesn't he heal? But this is verse one now.

Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault. Ye which are spiritual, restore such in one in the spirit of meekness. Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

Bear ye one another's burdens. And so fulfill the law of Christ. And I asked you just a little while ago.

What does the word restore mean? And to help us understand what the word restore means. I'd like to take us to Mark chapter one. And look at this word in Mark chapter one.

Restore such in one in the spirit of meekness. Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Mark chapter one.

Jesus says here verse 17. Come after me. I will make you to become fishers of men.

Verse 18 says. And straightway they put up their nets and followed him. Now 19.

And when they had gone a little further since. They saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother. Who also were in the ship mending their nets.

The word restore in the Greek language is katartizo. And katartizo is the same word we have in verse 19. Mending their nets.

Katartizo. Now let's go out fishing for these nets. And the fishermen take their nets out during the day.

And they pick up the nets that are filled with fish from the day before. And leave the new nets and come back. And then the next day they change those nets again.

And that happens on the Pacific coast of Nicaragua every day of the week. And I'm sure that's something about what they did here. But you come home now.

And you brought these fish in to shore. And you brought the net along that you had gathered up out of the water. And you come in shore here.

And you found that as you were grabbing that net up. Some of the fish were slipping through the net and going back out to the sea. Well that's not very profitable fishing.

So we've got to do something about this problem. So before we go out the next morning. What are we going to do? Thank you.

Mend that net. Now this net has holes in it. What is a holey net worth? I'm talking about holes in the net.

What is a net worth that's got holes in it? And how good is a net that has holes in it? And so it's worth it. I mean you might as well be out there fishing with a hooly hook. Because it's not going to catch any fish.

And so you've got to fix this thing. You've got to patch it. And you've got to sit there and meticulously work that thread and repair all those holes.

You've got to. I don't know. I'm not a seamstress.

But you've got to fix that thing. And someone is there sewing. I suppose that's how they do it.

Mending the net. And when you're done mending the net, the net has the value that it had before it broke. Before it tore.

And so when you restore the net, when you mend the net, you put it back to its original value. It is now capable of doing what it could do before. Now let's leave the fishing.

Let's leave the net and go out there to the needy brother or sister in the church. And what are we supposed to do? The command of the gospel is to restore that person to his original value. Brethren, here's someone that was overtaken in something.

You spiritual ones that have the patience to do it. That have the time to do it. That have the love to do it.

That have the humility to do it. That have the meekness to do it. That have the compassion to do it.

You restore this person to his original value in the spirit of meekness. Get that done. The same word is found, just for those of you who are interested in it, in Ephesians chapter 4. We're right close to that when you're in Ephesians, when you're in Galatians 6. Just turn to Ephesians 4. You have that same word in verse 12.

It talks about here, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. The perfecting of the saints is the same word. So the whole Christian body is a perfect net.

It is like a brand new net ready to go to work. And I wanted to read these verses anyway, so I'll start with verse 10. He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.

And he gave some apostles and some prophets and some evangelists and some pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. And this phrase, and please understand it, brothers, for the work of the ministry, does not mean for the work of the bishop, for the work of the deacon, and for the work of the minister. This work here is the work of ministry.

The work of ministry. And we have these apostolic gifts. We have this giftedness that Christ gives to his church in verse 11.

And these brethren, when they do their job, when they are pastoring, and when they are teaching, and when they are preaching, and the office is functioning like it should, the result is a body. It is a body of the church, a body that can minister. It is a body that is equipped to minister.

It is a body that is prepared and perfected and restored and in order and in good shape to minister to the needs of the church. Now, this next sentence is not so easy to say. But when the church is not prepared for ministering, it's because we have not prepared the church for ministering.

And we are here to prepare the church for ministering. And if we are not using the church, if the church is not ministering to these needs among us, then there's something we ought to be doing for our brothers and sisters in the congregation that we're not getting done. And we're satisfied to have it so.

This is not good. You preach the sermon so the church can minister. You teach a Sanskrit class so the church can minister.

You give careful instruction to that new believer so that the church can minister. You visit that home and give that word of counsel so that the church can minister. You try to meet the needs that are present in the congregation so that the church can minister.

You work in the church so they can minister. And the ministering comes from the church. And that's when it's effective.

It's very effective when that happens. Verses 14 through 16 in the same Ephesians. That we henceforth be no more children to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the splendor of men and cunning craftiness whereby they lie and wait for deceit.

But speaking the truth in love, may grow up in him in all things which is the head even Christ from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplyeth. Every joint supplyeth according to the effectual working in the measure of every part maketh increase to the body unto the edifying of itself in love. This is the plan that God has for his church, the healing community, every member involved, everyone contributing to the ministry of the church.

And what is the ministry of the church? It's a ministry to people. It's a ministry to need. It's a ministry to the needy.

It's a ministry to the lonely. It's a ministry to the ones that are emotionally drained and sin sick and needy. And it's the whole body contributing to the ministry.

This is what the Bible teaches. First Corinthians chapter six. And up to now, maybe it was only one person that was needy.

In this situation, we have two or more needy ones at the same time in the church. Verse one says, Dare any of you having a matter against another go to law before the unjust and not before the saints? Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world and that the world shall be judged by you? Are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels how much more things that pertain to this life. If you then have judgments of these things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church.

Now, I want to just say a word about verse four before we go on. I don't have a Greek text in front of me here. I think some of you have one right there in front of your eyes right now.

But I think the end of verse four is more properly a question instead of a statement. In the Spanish Bible, it is a question. And in that kind of setting, it would read like this.

Verse four, again, if you will. If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, do you set them to judge those matters who are the least in the church? I speak to your shame. Is it so that there is no wise, there's not a wise man among you? Know not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren.

And we see here again that God intends for the healing and the needs to be met within the context of the fellowship, within the context of the community, not going outside of the community to find these answers, but inside the church. So the two of them decided to raise pineapple together. The one had the land, the other had the knowledge to do it.

The one had the money to provide the hijos de piña, the seed. And so the other one had the knowledge of doing the work. And so they made an agreement there and they worked together.

But then problems began. And the man who owned the land had a bunch of cows and his cows get into the pineapple field and chewed that pineapple to shreds and ate a bunch of it up right at harvest time and made an awful mess. And the man then that had planted this and waiting for his half of the investment felt bad because the man who owned the land could easily afford the loss, but he could not.

And it came to be a serious problem in our congregation. And so what shall we do? And the one says the other doesn't care. And he was told to put that fence up and he left the gates open.

The cows get out and he's not doing anything about it. So the brethren got together. We tried to solve it and we didn't get it solved.

And so the brethren named two brethren in the congregation. I remember this very well. They named Rodrigo and Luis.

And these two brethren listened to the whole story. And then they went out into a room. And closed the door.

We sat there and we were praying back here. And they went out there and the door shut. And for all they came back.

And they said what each brother should do. Two national brothers. One was a Christian a very short time.

The other one maybe for six or seven years. Other one probably only two years at that time. But they were named because of their wisdom.

They both understood pineapple production. They both had good rapport. With both of the brothers involved in the problem.

And those are the ones the church chose. They went out there. And when they came back in the room they both were crying.

And they explained what both his brothers should do. To solve this problem. And no one ever had the least doubt about the wisdom of their decision.

That's a little simple example of what we just read here. What we just read that. Now I do not have any idea how much you do these things here.

Maybe this is your normal practice continually. Maybe you have many meetings at that time. But for as large as your churches are.

I can well believe that your congregations could spend a lot of their time ministering to needs among you as large as your churches are. Your churches are larger than ours. And we spend a lot of our time in this kind of ministry in our churches.

Now with what we've read I want to give you this evening some of the characteristics of a healing community. A community that has the capacity to restore. To restore one to its original value.

To mend the net. To mend the brother or the sister that is faulty and ailing and lonely and needy. And restore them to their full usefulness of such a community.

And you might want to pay close attention to these points. The healing community is a community that is that consists of commitment and accountability. If we are not committed to each other as brothers.

If we're not committed to seeing this thing through. And that's probably one advantage that we have over you. You see our members cannot jump out of La Merced and jump into Brownsville.

You can't jump out of Brownsville and go to Fairview. You can't jump out of Fairview and go to Shiloh, Solo, Hilo. I don't know what all you have around here.

You've got all the churches around here. I don't know what all you've got. You can't jump out of one and just go to the other one.

If we lose a brother we lost a brother. If we lose a brother we can't afford to lose a brother. And so you're forced to do something about it.

And so we've got to make commitments to each other. I mean we're either in the church or we're not in the church. We're either part of this brotherhood or we're not part.

We don't have Jack Travis in history. Those are up here somewhere. And so it takes commitment.

And if you're not committed when you run into a problem, if you're not committed and you're the erring brother, if you're not committed and you're erring, you just simply put a little bit more in your suitcase than normal and go out the back door. And you can soon find a flight down a moving van and you're soon on your way when you're not committed. And when you're not committed and you're not the erring brother, but you're a brother that should be helping, but you're not committed, you say, such a church.

I didn't realize we have problems like this in this church. I'm not going to put up with any more of this. And that one goes.

Because we're not committed. You've got to be committed to it or it doesn't work. This, what we read this evening, does not work apart from commitment, apart from accountability.

It's a surrendering of myself. Those two brothers in the pineapple business had to let those two brothers out that door and they had to be satisfied to accept what was said when they came out that door. And without that commitment, it never would have worked.

And when Johnny was listening to all the brothers speaking, and finally his daddy stood up and hung his head and said, Johnny, it was my fault or you would not have done it. Johnny could have taken off with his motorbike at any moment, but he was committed to the church. His daddy was committed.

The rest of the brothers were committed to it. And we're not running away. We're going to solve this thing without commitment.

This does not work. You cannot heal problems if you're not committed. Go to the hospital and watch an uncommitted doctor working on the sick.

You would never take your patient to him. That doctor should work at one place, in the morgue and nowhere else. It takes commitment to work on an amputee.

It takes commitment to work in an emergency room. It takes commitment to work in an ICC unit. It takes commitment to be a healing community.

That's one of the things that's lacking. It's too easy to jump. Too easy to run.

Too easy to go. Too easy to find something else. Too easy to find an easier way.

Too easy to escape. We're not committed. And that's why it doesn't work.

So, we have this tear mentality or this ladder mentality, ladder run mentality. And if you're in run number 10 and things aren't going well, you either get more conservative and go to run number 11 or you get more liberal and go down to run number 9. And all the rest in run number 10 take a sigh of relief. Except the ones that are committed.

They're hurting. Commitment. It requires commitment and accountability to one another.

Another thing that requires to be a healing community, another characteristic is that that congregation which can heal its needs must have a clear new test of a position of doctrine and practice. It must know what its practice is and know what its positions are and know what's required and know what we've agreed upon and know what the brethren expect of one another. And I will just give you a simple illustration to verify that point.

Here someone's got a 1947 Chevy and they want to restore this 1947 Chevy. And when you want to restore a 1947 Chevy, there's only one possible way to restore it. And if it looks like a 47 Buick when you're done, you've not restored that 47 Chevy.

It's not going to look like a 47 Packard. It's not going to look like a 47 Nash. It's got to be a 47 Chevy or you didn't restore the automobile.

And there's only one pattern. There's only one standard. There's only one example.

There's only one arrangement that works for the restoration of that car. And when we restore our brother, we must know to what point we are restoring him. And if we don't have that position, you know what happens? If we didn't restore the brother, we just allowed the brother to drift.

It made him feel good as he was drifting. That's all we could do. There's only one pattern.

And we must come back to the original model and restore the brother to that model. I'm urging you to do that. What are the characteristics of a healing community? A healing community is a compassionate community.

It is a compassionate community. A community that has patience. A community that has time.

A community that will take time to disciple. A community that will have time to sacrifice. Will have time to make investments.

It will have time to suffer. It's a community that is compassionate. It's a community that will have discernment.

It's a community that will understand. Is this because there's sin in the life? Is this because there's some kind of emotional strain and drain on this person's experience? Is this person going through a series of hardships that's creating this kind of unusual response? And the church is compassionate and it is discerning. Is this just simply some kind of physical ailment that is revealing itself in these emotional traumas that we're looking at here? What is causing this problem? And the spiritual church, the compassionate church is discerning.

Without compassion, you never do this. It does not work without compassion. It just makes problems.

May I pause to tell you something? What do you do in your meetings? The Mets. Do you mend the Mets? Are you listening? Do you mend the Mets? Or do you just point out where the holes are in the Mets? Now, there's a world of difference in what kind of results you're going to get. Oh, there's a hole there.

There it is. And that's the cause of it. 16 fish went through that hole right there.

Look over here. Torn three places. Look at that.

Or are you mending the Mets? And the purpose of the meeting is not to point up the holes. Mend the Mets. No, listen.

In that meeting, if you don't have solutions, if you don't have answers, if you don't have suggestions of how to solve it, we're not on our knees long enough. Until we know how to solve it. Until we have a suggestion.

And if we don't, all we have is a condemnation meeting. Do you know what a condemnation meeting is? Well, Jason, you've got one sloppy ass. I mean, you've got a sloppy ass.

I don't know who taught you housekeeping, but you've got one sloppy ass. So Jason goes back to his office the next morning, looks around and he's got a sloppy ass. What should he change? The picture on the wall.

What should he change? There was a Kleenex that was not going to the wastebasket. What is wrong? Oh, there was a paper on top of his desk. Which should he change? And so Jason's got a sloppy ass.

And when I talk to Jason like that, all I do is condemn him because I gave him that one solitary solution for solving his problem. I was interested in putting him down. I was interested in... I was interested in... But I say to him, Jason, I think the last person that came into your office had muddy shoes and there was a soiled carpet there.

Maybe you'd like to clean up some of that because I know you have a very neat presentation in your office. Oh, thank you. Thank you, Brother Dale.

Thank you. He goes up next morning. Sure enough, there's a streak going across the door.

Someone kind of slid their shoe along and wiped it off on the run. So he mopped that some and did just fine. And for a compassionate community that's healing the needs and meeting the needs, we're going to be able to do that with one another.

We're going to not just point up the holes. We're going to give select suggestions for the solution. And the brother's going to feel that we love him.

The sister's going to sense that they're needed. The sister's going to sense that they're still worth something. And we're not just here to put them down just to show them how wrong they were.

And I think it's good in any meeting like this to bring out some of the positive points and the contributions this person has made to the church and let them know how much we appreciate it. This is not a lost cause. We have some good things going on here.

We appreciate what you've done. This whole net's not bad. This whole net's not lost.

We have some holes here. Listen, who has some thread? Where's the net? Let's go. We'll soon be done with this.

This is going to work. But just point to the holes. That's condemnation.

That's not restoration. If a church is going to be a healing community, it must be a community of faith. You're not going to heal these people without faith.

If you don't believe there's power in the church, if you don't believe there's enough of love in here, if you don't believe that God is interested, if you don't believe that God's going to come down, if you don't believe that there's an answer from God's word, if you don't believe that these verses can be applied, if you don't believe that God is going to minister to this need, it won't happen. I was sick in bed. I held my head like this with both of you.

And for five days, the world spun around. I've had inner ear infections many times, but never like this. I vomited every 20 minutes for I don't know how many hours.

And after that period of time, I could not move. And lying flat in bed, I could not raise my head. I could not speak.

And I could not move anything. I held my head like this to keep my sanity. And the whole world kept on moving.

And I went into hallucinations. I felt people wrapping me up in sheets and tying me tight. And I was in miserable shape.

And I asked my wife to call for a bishop to come and anoint me with oil. I was in terrible shape. And the brother came, and I think he did all he knew to do.

He did the oil. He did the prayer. He did the whole thing.

He left, and everything was as bad as it was. And I was in terrible shape. I said to my wife, I can hardly talk.

I said, call brother so-and-so. Call him and get him down here. It was a snowy night here in the state of Pennsylvania.

The snow was blowing. It was a cold night. These three men walked into the second-floor bedroom where I was.

The one leaned against the chimney. There was a chimney going up through. He said, the whole chimney moved.

The whole building was shaking. It was kind of a poor house, wreck of the old place where we lived there. And I was terribly sick.

I could hardly talk. And I asked one of them to read a certain portion of scripture in Luke chapter 11. And they read this scripture.

And then they began to pray. And when they prayed, they prayed the prayer of faith. Three men were praying.

And as they prayed, I felt the presence of God. And I felt that though I did not know what was going to happen, I was going to let everything into their hands, into God's hands. And they got up from prayer.

And the one man had a real deep voice. He said, I was lying in that bed. He said, Brother Dale, when the sun comes up tomorrow morning, you're going to get out of this bed.

Another one said, you don't have any voice tonight, Brother Dale, but you're going to rise up and preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. I slept all right that night. The next morning, I asked my wife to come.

I told her, I said, it's awful hot in here. I said, can you get these covers off of me? She got the covers off. I said, I'm tired laying in this bed.

I said, I'm going to get out of this bed. I got up out of that bed, walked down the stairs exactly as you said I would. And if we're going to be a human community, we must be a community of faith in God.

My wife was never lower in her life than what she was when she had not slept for about three weeks, could not eat, and got to the place where she could not talk. And got to the place where the only thing that came out of her mouth was an unextinguishable garbles of sound. And her oldest son, our son looked at me and said, Daddy, did you ever see mother like this before? And he was scared and I didn't know what to do.

And I decided there's only one thing to do. We did what little we could for my wife. I remember her lying in the bedroom in the bed when the brothers and the sisters started to come.

One brother came in and said, let us pray. My wife told me that while he was praying, she just felt that God was ministering to her needs. Then a sister came, a sister recently converted.

Recently converted, came in an old motorbike. If you have seen how they came to their home that night, there's no light on the motorbike. It had no light bulb in the front.

I don't know how they drove down through those mountainous roads that night, got there. She went in, sat inside the bed, began to talk to my wife. Just talked real quietly, speaking to Suzanne.

And the brothers and sisters raised Suzanne up out of that bed. It was the power of God. But the church is a healing community.

That's what we're here for. That's the reason why we're here. If we're not in faith, we can't do it.

We must have faith in what God can do. If we've never seen God do it, we probably don't believe he can do it. But God is a healing God.

God ministers to our needs. And when the church is the church and the church is taking its part, we are a healing community. I wish you'd believe that.

Someone must know how to find the promises in God's word. Somebody must know how to pray. Somebody must know how to read the scripture and say, I want to leave you with this precious promise.

I want to leave you with this verse. Somebody must know how to find those truths in the Bible. Someone in that ministry community should be able to do that.

And so when there are needs in the church, let's say the need is sin. There's several steps we take. We have to see the need.

The person in need must see that need. Of course he must. We must help him to see that need.

He must confess that need. And then he must repent of that need, not just confess it, but repent of it. And there's a big difference between confession and repentance.

That's what my team tonight, it'd be a sermon in itself. A big difference between confession and repentance. There must be repentance after the confession.

And then with the repentance, along with the repentance, there's restitution. Where restitution is necessary. For the testament of the brother and for his fortification, he must make restitution for what he has done.

He must hear then, she must hear from the church, the word of forgiveness. And they must sense from the healing community, the offer of acceptance. And then that healing church should try to reinforce the weaknesses of this person with love and fellowship.

And now we have this thing together and we're walking in the light. We're walking beside this brother and this sister in their problem. And as this person regains their strength, maybe over time, the congregation carefully restores them to their original usefulness.

That's a simple outline of how it is done. That's a simple, a simple outline. And I thought we'd close this evening with just a few examples.

I've given you some. A young brother, a single brother in the church, has a little, simple little business and had an employee working for them there in the home. It was him and his rest of his family.

It was a family project and he was in charge of the family project. Had a younger girl, 15 years old, working there in the project. We didn't know that it happened.

I didn't know that it happened. But there was some improper conduct between him and this girl. Right after this improper conduct, the 15-year-old left the church.

The young man was still in the fellowship. None of us knew what had happened. But the young man, in the time of spiritual searching, came to me and confessed what he had done.

Otherwise, I would not have known it. And so I talked to him with the other minister that I work with at home and we decided to ask him to choose five brethren from the church. So he chose five brethren and I marveled at his maturity.

I marveled at the five brethren that he chose. He chose five very capable brethren. I don't know if I would have been better able to choose five brethren from the church than what he chose.

And we sat down in a room together and this young man, after a time of opening and prayer and explaining why we're here, asking God's blessing in these proceedings, he explained to the brethren exactly what he had done. And it was understood that when he explained to the brethren what he had done, that these brethren will be telling him what he is responsible to do to solve his problem. What he's responsible to do to restore this thing and put it back to order and have the blessing of the church and the

forgiveness of the brethren, he was going to be expecting them to tell him what to do.

And so he told them everything that happened and then he went aside while they discussed and deliberated these five brethren. And when he came back in, they told him what steps they wanted him to take to be completely free from his sin and restored to the congregation. And he did what they told him to do.

Within less than a month after he did that, are you listening, the young lady came back to the church. The church is a healing community. God gives us the power.

God gives us the grace and the love. God gives us the humility and the oil to restore our souls, to restore our needy brothers and sisters. We wanted to have a week of revival meetings.

We asked a brother from the states to come and he was planning to come, but because of a death, he was unable to come. And so we did not know what to do about our meetings. And it was short notice.

We only had one week to prepare. And so we thought that we will start our revival meetings without a preacher. And so we called the brothers and sisters together and put the sisters in one group and the brothers in another group and made two circles.

Circle the brothers, circle the sisters. And we told each one that we want you each to speak. And if there be anything in your lives tonight that you would not want to be in your lives if Jesus would come this evening, then we want you to have the opportunity to put this all out here before the other brothers, the other sisters in this circle, the brothers here, the sisters in another place.

It was a beautiful thing what happened as one by one, not going around the road. This one spoke, then this one over here, then this one spoke, then one over here. And it took several hours.

It took several hours to get that done. And it was a revival meeting without a preacher. It was a wonderful meeting.

Did you ever sit in a meeting like that? Sometimes we choose several people from the congregation to work with a special need in the congregation over a period of time. My wife recently had an assignment like that, working with another sister in helping one of the one of our single mothers, helping one of our single mothers. We have several single mothers who had fallen into sin.

And the church said that when these people helping her, discipling her, feel that she is ready for complete restoration to the church, they should present this sister again to the congregation, which has been done and beautifully restored. But I want to close this evening with one more important truth that we find in Nehemiah chapter one. And without this truth, probably nothing that I said.

It is going to work. But with this attitude, the church can be a healing community and we can meet the needs we have among our brothers and sisters. Nehemiah learned that the gates had been burned with fire, that the walls were broken down.

He learned that Jerusalem was a reproach. And so he prayed to God. And I'd like to start reading at verse four.

It came to pass when I heard these words that I sat down and wept and mourned certain days and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven and said, I beseech thee, O God of heaven, the great and terrible

God, to keep the covenant mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments. Let thy ear now be attentive and the eyes open that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, day and night for the children of Israel, thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned, which we have sinned against thee. Both I and my father's house have sinned.

We have dealt. We have dealt very corruptly against thee. And I'm not kept the commandments to the statutes and the judgments, which thou commandest thy servant, Moses.

Remember, I prayed thee the words that thou commandest thy servant, Moses, saying, If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations. But if you turn unto me and keep my commandments and do them, though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of heaven, yet will I gather them from thence and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there. Now these are thy servants and thy people whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power and by thy hand.

O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thy ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servants and to the prayer of thy servants who desire to fear thy name and prosper. I pray thee, thy servant, this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. And when you're in the meeting, you're not there to point up the holes in the net.

I've discovered this in my simple pilgrimage on this earth. It is impossible for me to be in the body, to be part of the body and not be part of the problem. And one of the reasons why we are not the effective community of healing that we ought to be is because it's his problem and not our problem, and he's shamed us, and he makes us look bad, and they are that way, and they don't understand it, and they have not learned it, and they don't see it like I see it, and they would be where I am.

And we cannot be a healing community like that. That's only pointing up the holes. It will not mend the nets.

But what did Johnny's daddy do? When a young lady in our congregation fell into a terrible moral sin, I went out to the river alone with God, and I told the Lord something like this. Lord, I know it's awful. I know it's terrible what has been done.

But in my heart, I have entertained the same thing. And I feel as guilty as what she is. And I need your cleansing if I'm going to be able to help her.

Forgive us, Father, as a church, for our sin. We have sinned. This is our sin.

This is what we have done as a church. It took two years to get her back. It took two years of prayer, and two years of visiting her, and two years of having this attitude, for two years.

Are there people asking tonight, are you willing to turn your congregation into a healing community? Are you willing to start meeting the needs that are among you? Are you willing to be biblical in this very, very important area of healing the needs of the church? I will assure you, you will have a beautiful revival meeting. Let us pray. Father in heaven, we need to hear your voice tonight.

We need to believe what we have heard. We need to trust you to work this in our lives. And Father, we realize the experiences here in Oregon are different from the experiences in other places.

But each congregation has its needs, and each congregation has access to this power, oh God. Each congregation has faith and love. Each one has compassion and humility.

Each one has nets that they can mend, and each one has the grace and spirituality to mend it. And each one does not want to condemn, they want to heal. Every one of us can say we have sinned, and none of us need to point the suspecting finger.

And each one of us can consider our own weaknesses, and can see what we have contributed to this sin. Each one of us can consider what we have contributed to this brother's emotional traumas, depressions and difficulties. Each one of us can see what we have contributed to the sickness and the pain that is among us.

Each one of us can consider our part, and we can repent. And dear God, then you can hear from heaven, and you can forgive our sin, and you can heal our land, and we can have a revival meeting. Oh God I pray, minister to the needs of our churches, and make us a healing community I pray, in Jesus name, amen.

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