

Getting Healed

by Gary Wilkerson

Gary Wilkerson's sermon emphasizes the importance of acknowledging our pain and allowing the Holy Spirit to bring healing to our lives amidst struggles and challenges.

Duration: 49:59

Scripture: Psalm 34:18, Isaiah 41:10, Matthew 11:28-30, John 14:27, Romans 8:37, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Philippians 4:6-7, James 5:16, 1 Peter 5:7, 1 John 4:18

Topics: "Healing", "Overcoming Pain"

Description

Gary Wilkerson addresses the theme of healing in his sermon 'Getting Healed,' emphasizing that many may appear joyful on the outside while harboring deep pain within. He discusses the importance of confronting our struggles, such as anxiety, rejection, loneliness, and shame, before experiencing true freedom through the healing power of the Holy Spirit. Wilkerson likens the church to a 'Holy Ghost Hospital,' where individuals can find healing and support in their journey. He encourages the congregation to embrace their pain, seek community, and rely on God's unconditional love to overcome their struggles. Ultimately, he reassures that healing is a process that begins with honesty and faith in God's transformative power.

Transcript

I wanna speak to you this morning about getting healed. There are people in this room here today that have come in and we've sung some happy songs and joyful songs. You've said hello to some of your neighbors and maybe even given a hug or a nice high five.

And you might be even smiling at me as I am smiling at you, but deep down inside, there's a possibility that you are in a hurting place. And so I wanna speak to you this morning about getting healed to letting the power of the Holy Spirit bring healing to your life, no matter what kind of difficult situation you found yourself in. The first half of this message might seem almost a little bit melancholy, a little bit hitting some difficult issues before we get into the news that is the news that sets us free, the good news of the healing power of Jesus Christ.

So I hope you'll bear with me for the first few minutes. I know churches, we're meant to lift you up and encourage you in the Lord, but sometimes we have to face the battles that we're facing honestly before we get to the place of the liberty and the freedom. If we don't face sometimes the truth of our situations, we'll never let the truth set us free.

The truth comes first, then the freedom. So Holy Spirit, we pray now in the name of Jesus that you would give this message of authority that I don't have in myself, but the power of your word and the power of your accompanying Holy Spirit has the ability to set captives free, to take the darkest moments of the night of the soul and transition that Lord into a brilliant light of healing. And we thank you for this in Jesus' name.

Everybody said together, amen. My dear friend, Nikki Cruz, who I've known since I was born, a little boy who my father led to the Lord as a gang member here in New York City, calls the church something that I believe with all my heart. He calls the church the Holy Ghost Hospital, the Holy Ghost Hospital.

And that's what you've come into today. You've come into a place that worships, that teaches the word, that has fellowship, and you've come into a hospital where there is healing. How many of you, if we were to get real honest with ourselves and sort of take the mask off, how many of you would say, honestly, you came from a broken home? A lot of you, yeah.

Thank you for being honest, come from a broken home. How many of you, maybe a mother or a father, when you were a child, left home, abandoned you? Something like this, a large number of you. How many of you would say that you were even in a situation where you were hurt and wounded as a child? Maybe abusive words were spoken over you, abusive situations verbally, emotionally, all kinds of ways as a child, you were hurt in those situations.

How many of you say, as you've gotten a little bit older, as you've gotten a little bit older, you found hurt in that place as well? You found maybe a spouse that you had trusted in, a marriage that you had hoped would bring, finally, after the childhood, you didn't really wanna be a part of, you entered into a marriage, you thought, now things are gonna work out, and all of a sudden, that marriage became abusive or difficult. How many of you would say, that's me, Pastor Gary? How many of you have had to face the difficult situation of a divorce, going through the brokenness of a marriage coming to an end? Divorce is a hurtful situation that breaks the hearts. How many of you have children that have become prodigal children, run from the Lord, and your heart is breaking over that? There's the wound of the soul of seeing your children in a difficult situation there.

There's some rough stuff we're facing, right, church? My goodness. We're not starting off here extremely happy right now, but as a truthful, and what we wanna do with those hurts and those wounds and the pain that we're facing in our life, what do we wanna do with those is not think about them. Certainly don't wanna come to church on Sunday morning after singing happy songs and have a man stand up here who's not even from New York City to start telling us about how bad life is.

We certainly don't want that, and so what we do is what we call, in my 40 years of pastoral counseling, is called repression or denial. You just press those things down, so you don't wanna think about them. They cause too much pain, and so you think happy thoughts, and you're drawn towards songs and sermons that ignore the pain and get you right to the dance, right to the place of celebration, and we certainly need to be at that place of dance and celebration, but if we're not healed, if we're still living an unhealed heart and an unhealed life, the celebration's not gonna be true.

Have you ever sang a song and everybody around you is really dancing? I mean, they're dancing because they have a reason to dance, and you're kind of like dancing because everybody else is dancing. They're rejoicing because they have a real reason to rejoice but you're just rejoicing because they're rejoicing and because you're supposed to rejoice because you're in a church that rejoices, but inside there's this pain, and that's what I wanna talk to you about today, and that's why I wanna bring you into the Holy Ghost

Hospital here today, and again, the title of this message, Getting Healed. How do you get healed of all those pains, all those abuses, all those hurts, all that brokenness of heart? How do you get healed of the sense of being alone in this world? How do you get healed of a sense of being a failure, of not being enough, of not being worth it, of not being loved, of not being accepted, of not fitting in? How do you get healed of depression and discouragement and suicidal thoughts? How do you get healed? I ask my best friends this.

How do they get healed? A couple that I've loved for years, when they find their young daughter had years of alcohol abuse, had in her apartment died, and they didn't even know it, and they found her body days after she had died without knowing they couldn't find her. And how do you heal of that kind of brokenness of losing a child that you love and have prayed for? How do you get healed when the marriage that you'd hoped for comes to an end? How do you get healed when you go to the doctor and you're hoping that the diagnosis is good and it's not a good word? How do you get healed? How do we get to that place of getting healed? You see, the church promises victory. The church promises power.

The gospel promises life, but it doesn't promise it in a pain-free experience. It doesn't promise it to this journey to be one without suffering or hardship or persecution or difficulty. All those in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

There's going to be hardship. There's going to be difficulty. In Genesis chapter one and two, we hear of this beautiful creation story, and then God creates a garden.

Wouldn't you just wish it was still that way? There's this beautiful garden, and it's the garden of creativity. It's the garden of life. It's the garden of joy.

There's a man in this garden. He's got all kinds of animals around him. He's got the beauty of horses and deer and dogs and I guess cats if you like them.

He's got all this stuff in the garden, but he's still alone, and so God says, I'll create a woman, and he's thrilled. It's just like, I'm in a garden, and everything's beautiful, and all these animals and trees and plants and rivers and gold and a beautiful woman that I'm with, and the end of chapter two, the last words of chapter two, and there was no shame. Wow, wouldn't that be amazing to live a shame-free life where you don't feel bad about stuff, where you're not down, we're not downcast, we're not discouraged, you're not disappointed, you're not living in fear, you're not living in anxiety, you're not remembering your history and saying there's so much hurt, there's so many painful wounds.

There's so many words I remember spoken to me, you're a failure, you're no good, you never amount to anything. You're not enough, you gotta do more, try harder, all these words that ruminate in our minds, and there's that cyclical thinking, that loop of infinity that brings these words over us. Wouldn't it be nice to be in the garden again with no shame and just there with somebody you love and you're not hurt and you trust and there's no covering up, there's no hiding, and that was in the garden.

And then all of a sudden, the next verse, chapter three, verse one says, and the serpent was more crafty than any other creature in the garden. So there was a snake in the garden. And my son, when he was about five or six years old, was looking at the book of Genesis we were talking about and he said, I don't understand that, dad.

If God knew Satan had fallen to the earth and that's where he was living, why did God put man on the same planet as him? Couldn't he put him on Mars and us on earth? Wouldn't that be better? Like he couldn't get to us, but no, he put us in the garden and I don't know what the theological word you wanna use, but it was allowed, placed, positioned, orchestrated that there would be a snake in the garden. He could have disallowed it, he could have put the snake on another planet, the snake outside the garden, but he put the serpent in the garden. There was a snake in the garden.

And my suggestion to you here this morning, and here's, again, we're still dealing with some honest but tough news, there was a snake in the garden with Adam and Eve and you know what? Ever since that time, in your life and mine, there's always been a snake in the garden. There's always a snake in the garden. Sitting over here, I have what I believe is a garden of a message.

I'm going like, this is gonna be good, this is gonna help people, this is gonna bless people, and then a snake comes in and says, you don't have anything to say. This is not gonna help anybody. What's that called? A snake in the garden.

You come here and your hands are raised and you're saying, Lord, I worship you, and you're feeling like, but I'm not worthy to worship you. I've sinned this week. I broke covenant with you this week.

I did something to just not walk in your steps and I'm not worthy. See, that's part of the snake in the garden. When you wake up at 3 a.m., anybody here wake up at 3 a.m. filled with anxiety and stress and a little bit like, what's tomorrow hold? And fears rehearse themselves over your mind.

Again, that's the snake in your garden. There's always a snake in the garden. And I asked myself the question, why would God allow a snake in the garden? He could have crushed them before this all happened.

My friend of mine, who used to be my worship pastor, he tells a true story, a cute story of his, I think his son was maybe three or four years old at the time and he was coming down the stairs and on the stairs, somebody had left a towel and he caught his leg on the towel and tripped and fell, tumbling down the stairs. And his father was at the bottom of the stairs and reached out his hands and caught him just at the last second before he hit his head on the last part of the, on the floor there. And he picked up his little boy up in his arms and said, Jackson, aren't you glad that I was there to catch you? And the little boy was wiping the tears away and he said, yeah, why didn't God just move the towel? Why didn't God just move the towel? Why didn't God just move the snake? Why didn't he just move the abuse? Why didn't he just move the divorce? Why didn't he just move the cancer diagnosis? Why didn't he just move the painful experience of my life? Why is my heart still breaking? Why is there still hurt and wounds that I remember from past? Or even when I'm finding myself, some of you are experiencing not past wounds, but you're in a difficult situation right now.

You're going to go home from church here today to a very difficult situation. You're going to fall asleep tonight and be wondering if you'll wake up at three or 4 a.m. Worried about the snake in your garden. In Judges, maybe you have a moment, turn to me Judges chapter three.

It takes this idea of a snake in the garden and moves it a little bit, centers it in a new place, talking about enemies in the land. You could call it snakes in the garden or giants in the land or enemies in the land. Whatever it is, it's the same reality, right? That we are in a garden, but we're facing difficult times.

And Judges chapter three, verse one says, these are the nations that the Lord left in the land to test those Israelites who had not experienced the wars of Canaan. He did this to teach warfare to his generations of Israelites who had no experience in battle. And then it goes on to mention the names in the next verse of four different giants, or excuse me, four different enemies that he left in the land.

Why did he do that? He left them in the land. In other words, he seems to be saying or he could have taken them out of the land or he could have empowered the Israelites to destroy the Canaanites immediately. So these four large enemies, giants of those battling against them, he could have caused them to be defeated early on so they wouldn't have to deal with it.

But he says, he left them in the land to test them. The word test there isn't sort of like, I don't know about you. I'm not sure you're going to make it.

So let me try to put a test in front of you to see whether you pass or fail. The word there is more like a word that you do when somebody is going into a ring, say a boxing match, and the man wants to challenge himself against a worthy opponent to, and there's a phrase we use called testing your mettle, to see what you're made of, to show you your own strength. Church, you don't know how strong you are in Christ Jesus.

You don't know how much power he's released in you. You don't know the authority that you have. You don't know the overcoming power that resides within you as a follower of Jesus Christ.

You don't know that the spirit oftentimes that's within you is greater than the spirit that's in the world. So God lets the spirit be in the world, the snake be in the garden, this enemy be in the land, not just to test you to see if you'll fail or pass, but to show you that through him, you will succeed. That through him, you will not be defeated.

That through him, you will be more than a conqueror. He wants to show you the strength that he's instilled in your life and in your heart, your overcoming ability, the power that resides within you. So he leaves these enemies in the land to show you there's something inside of you that he's put within you.

The Holy Spirit lives within you. So I wanna talk in the moments I have left with you real quickly, the Judges 3 speaks of four different enemies in the land. I wanna speak about four different enemies in our heart.

These are four enemies that we face and they seem to be defeating us at times, but they're a test. They're a towel on the top of the stairs. They're a snake in the garden.

In order to teach us and train us and show us that there's a victory awaiting us, that there's a power residing in us. The first one I wanna talk about is anxiety or fear. That's one of the first giants, one of the first snakes that many of us face.

It's the anxiety or fear. For some, it's an anxiety over a particular situation. This is happening in my life, this diagnosis, this financial difficulty, this job situation that's tenuous, I'm not sure I'm gonna have a job tomorrow.

How will I pay my rent? And for some, it's a defined anxiety. And for others, it's an undefined anxiety. Some people call it a free-floating anxiety.

I don't even know what I'm anxious over, but I'm anxious all the time. I'm worried about stuff. I don't even know what's gonna happen, but I'm worried about stuff gonna happen.

And there's enough bad stuff already happening to make up stuff that's not happening to worry about. Am I right? Yeah, but there is this anxiety or this fear within us. We oftentimes, through the enemy in our land or the snake in the garden, we take something that is happening and we blow it out of proportion.

That fear becomes extrapolated. It becomes more extravagant than it actually is. And so, we talked earlier about maybe having a child who's a prodigal.

And so, your mind could go to a place of, uh-oh, my son is running away from the Lord and he's smoking pot, but what if he starts taking this type of drug? And if he takes that type of drug, what if he gets in the wrong crowd? What if he gets in the wrong crowd? He starts committing crime. And what if he commits crime? He ends up in jail. And what if he ends up in jail? He gets murdered by a gang in jail.

Oh no, my son's gonna be murdered in a gang in jail. And all it started off with was like, you're a little worried about him because he's kind of falling away from the Lord. He's starting to experiment and things.

And so, you take something that is happening and you begin to make it even more. Oftentimes, when you have a difficult history, your past is a past of pain and sorrow and brokenness. You kind of project that then onto your future.

If that's the way it was when I was an innocent child and I got hurt that way, how much more so now that I'm adult are these things gonna be happening to me? And you get this view of the world of being anxious filled and stress filled and fearful. You're fearful. The Bible has the command that it most gives more than any other command in the world.

You know what that is? It's fear not. Why would the Bible use that more than love one another, more than don't sin, more than any other command that the Bible gives? The number one command is fear not. Why is that? Because God knows that there's going to be fearful events, fearful snakes, fearful giants, fearful enemies in the land.

And we're not gonna wanna fight them. We're gonna wanna withdraw. We're gonna deny that they exist.

We're gonna hide from them. Or we're going to want to cover them up, medicate them with drugs or television or social media, all kinds of things to try to make us forget that there is a snake in the garden. And so we repress these things and they find themselves out.

They have a way of surfacing, of showing themselves in the surface. You can't repress fear. It will come out in anxiety.

You can't repress anxiety. It'll come out in the stress. It will come out in, it will even come out in your physical body, headaches, migraines, tension in the shoulder, stomach aches, heart problems.

It will affect you physically as you repress these things. See, there's a snake in the garden called anxiety, but God has, and we'll talk about this as we close a little bit later. God has a way of dealing with that.

He doesn't just leave it and say like, how terrible of you. I told you not to fear and now you're fearing. I'm just really upset with you.

That's not how God works. He has a better plan. The second enemy that he's left in the land is the enemy of rejection.

You have been rejected as we took a little survey here this morning. I wasn't sure whether you wanted to raise your hand or not, but many of you were just open enough and expressing the pain of your past, of abusive situations and broken homes and abandoning by mother or father and hurtful situations there. And those are all things that we would call rejection, that you feel rejected by people.

You feel abandoned by people. You feel, not only feel, but you've experienced, right? You've experienced the pain and the wound of this as a pastor, again, of 40 years. I can't tell you how many people I've ministered to in my office just hearing their story, their broken story of being rejected, of looking for love, but getting the reverse instead of getting wounded by somebody that you felt like this was gonna be the love story.

This was gonna be, he was gonna be your knight in shining armor and instead he ended up being a snake in your garden. And he ended up being an enemy in your land. And he or she rejected you.

Mother, father rejected you. They abandoned you. And again, the hurt and the pain, oftentimes that leads to various addictions.

It leads to oftentimes a shutting down. People that are rejected will, rather than face the pain of rejection, what they try to do oftentimes is repress that pain. The problem with repressing that pain instead of dealing with that pain is your heart is not, it doesn't have categories.

It doesn't have segments. Your heart is your heart. And if you shut down one part of your heart, it shuts down other parts of your heart.

So if you shut down the pain and you don't face the pain, what's gonna happen is you're gonna shut down love as well. You're gonna shut down passion as well. You're gonna shut down ambition as well.

You're gonna shut down the movement and community towards other people because rejection causes us to be a place of not trusting. My wife and I, years ago, we were passing a situation where a group of people in our church just sort of, I don't know what it was. They just sort of got something against us and they started speaking bad about us and they started trying to gather a group around us.

And then they came hard against us. I mean, attacking us, accusing us, demanding certain things of us, calling us these things. And it was, these were people that I had loved.

These were people that I had trusted. These were people that I had even raised up in ministry. When they were broken and when they were hurting, when they were rejected, I pulled them out and said, you can do this and I believe in you.

And then those were the very ones wounded in the house of our friends is I believe what Proverbs calls it. And so my wife and I, we were just broken over this. What was it? It was the wounds of rejection and feeling like that you've been abandoned and it leaves you hopeless.

And that's a snake in the garden. There's, the church is good. People are lovely.

The worship is amazing. But there's always these things in the garden that do this. The third one is loneliness or isolation.

The anxiety, the fear, the rejection, the hurts, the wounds, the pain oftentimes cause us to withdraw into isolation and to community from community. I was, I've been studying the book of Jonah lately. Have you ever studied the book of Jonah? It's an incredible story.

It's, as I look at the book of Jonah, if you've read it before or studied it before, you know, the book of Jonah is usually described as a book about obedience and disobedience to the call of God or the destiny in your life. And the story of Jonah is oftentimes used is that God's called you to something. It's he has a great plan for your life, but if you disobey him, you're going to end up in a whale in the belly of a fish.

So, so don't end up in a belly of a whale, obey God. But I saw something different. The Holy Spirit was showing me something in the book of Jonah I've never seen before in the four easy chapters, simple chapters that, that are in this book.

And, and it was just that Jonah starts his story unlike almost every other biblical character from Adam to the John in the book of Revelation. He starts not like Adam who was, it's Adam and Eve. All right, and then you have like Moses and Joshua or Moses and Aaron or Moses and Miriam or Moses and the elders.

You've got Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, a story of people together, a story of community. You've got David and his mighty men and David and Jonathan, his best friend. It's a story of people together in community.

It's not a story of isolation. It's not a story of fear and withdrawal. It's a story of engaging with other people.

The whole book is a story of people doing life together in community, except for Jonah. He starts his story alone. There was a prophet named Jonah and God asked him to go somewhere and preach the story to preach the good news to the Ninevites.

And instead of going there, he goes alone, running not only from, see, he's already alone, right? And now what's he doing? Now he says he's running from the presence of God. So when you're alone, I might suggest to you starting your story alone will make it easier for you to run from the presence of God. I've been married 40 years and whenever I start running from the presence of God, I've got a beautiful, lovely, godly wife who tells me, don't run, stay in this fight.

You're being tested, but there's a victory for you ahead. And so starting your story in community is one that keeps you from isolation. Jonah didn't do that.

He didn't start, so he started alone, got even more alone from the presence of God, gets on a ship with some guys and says, throw me out alone into the water. It gets worse. See, life always gets worse when you're alone.

It starts off him just running from the Lord, it starts off him on a ship, it starts him being thrown overseas into a storm, and then he ends up in the belly of a whale for three days and three nights. You can't get more uncomfortable than that. You can't get more alone than that.

Near death, utter darkness, near drowning, hungry, thirsty. And then he gets spewed up onto the dry land and he goes to Nineveh and they repent. Okay, you guys are preachers.

If this church were full of sinners and they all repented today, you'd be going like, yay, they repented. Hallelujah, I'm so excited. You were living an ungodly life and things changed and you turned and I'd be

dancing and singing.

So the whole city of Nineveh repents and returns to the Lord and I gotta imagine they're celebrating, they're thanking God for saving their nation. God is moving among them. There's revival.

The king is from the king to the poorest. All of them have turned to the Lord. Where's Jonah? He's not celebrating with them.

He's not giving high fives, hugs. No, there's no tears in his eyes. Thank God for your repentance that you come home to the Lord.

He's outside of the city up on a hill and he's mad at God. I knew you wouldn't make those people repent. I knew you, he's accusing God of being, he says in Jonah, I knew you were gracious.

I knew you were long suffering. I knew you were kind. Wow, it's like, what's that? He's accusing God of being nice and he's angry at that.

And three times, maybe even four times in the book of Jonah, he says this to God, it would be better if I wasn't born. It'd be better if you just take my life. He's suicidal.

He's angry. He's angry at God. He's angry at Nineveh.

He's angry at himself. A shade tree comes over his head and he finally feels good. Oh, something to cover me, something to help me, something to make me feel a little bit better about my miserable life.

And then God takes that shade away. And then he wants to die again. It would be better, he ends the story by saying it'd be better if I didn't live.

The book of Jonah is not just a story of, did you obey or disobey? It's a story of, do you love people? Are you gonna get out of your isolation? Are you going to get out of the loneliness? Yes, you've been hurt. Yes, you're anxious. Yes, there's fearful things.

Yes, there's a snake in the garden. Yes, there's enemies in the land, but are you gonna do this thing alone or are you gonna join a community? And I don't mean just showing up on church on Sunday. I mean, maybe even with some of these small groups, like Pastor David was saying, he's gonna join the shadow boxing one because he's a tough guy.

I'm joining the knitting. I'm joining the knitting one. There's a knitting community here.

Isn't that cool? And my prayer for this sermon is not that you just respond as we close in just a moment and give an invitation for you to come forward for prayer about these giants, these enemies in the land, these snakes in our garden, but that you would take an extra step, take that next step and get involved here. The reason that the pastoral leadership here has developed these small group communities is so that we could get beyond just living our life in anxiety and fear and stress and rejection and isolation and loneliness. And there's more to your life than living alone.

Don't do it. The story of Jonah is a story of warning us. The last one I wanna share with you is shame or some people call it self-hatred, self-loathing.

Again, in my pastoral experience, most people that are finding themselves, I can't even describe it. There's a reason people come to pastoral counseling. There's a hurt, there's a wound, there's a shame, there's a loneliness, there's a rejection, there's a difficulty, there's a relational difficulty.

But at the core of it, I find almost this thing almost every time is this, there's something about a person who's suffering, who's in pain, that takes that pain and begins to project it onto themselves. It goes something like this, and oftentimes it's unsaid and maybe even sometimes unidentified, but it's real. And it's in you.

My father left me when I was six. It must've been something I did wrong. My mother would slap me around the apartment, yelling and screaming and throwing pots and pans at me.

It must've been because I provoked her to do that. My husband left me. It must've been because I'm not a good wife.

I'm not loving enough. I'm not kind enough. I'm not serving enough.

And so we get to this place of, it's my fault. I did something wrong. I am a mess.

I am, guilt is this. When you do something wrong, you feel guilty about it. I shouldn't have done that.

That's guilt. It's good to have some guilt when you're guilty of something so that you can repent and change your ways. Shame is different.

And I've heard it put this way. Guilt is when you've done something wrong and say that was bad. Shame is where not you've done something wrong, but I am wrong.

I am bad. Shame is this deep rooted sense of I'm not worthy. I'm not enough.

I don't do enough. I don't, I'm not, I'm just at the core of me. I'm bad.

I'm not enough. I'm unworthy. I'm unacceptable.

I am unlovely. I am unlovable. And this is the shame.

So remember we read in Genesis chapter two, the last verse of chapter two there says, and there was no shame in the garden, but then the serpent came along. And whenever that serpent comes along, he has this one agenda in mind. That's why this is not a mistake that chapter two in the garden ends with no shame.

And chapter three starts a whole new story of the snake in the garden. What's he trying to do? Produce shame. That you're not enough.

That you're not a good enough Christian. That you don't pray enough. That you're not holy enough.

That you made too many mistakes. That you're not a good enough husband. That you were a terrible father.

That you just, you didn't tithe last week. And just whatever it is. The, our world is full of this thing of trying to get you to fill yourself with self-hatred and shame.

The result of this is that oftentimes you don't want to be that way. And so what we do is we look for external validation. We try to construct an image of ourselves that will be that better person.

That will be that lovely person. And so you learn it from a childhood. I learned it when I was a little kid.

When I started feeling rejected and I started feeling alone. That if I would use my sense of humor, people can like smile and warm up to me. You know what I mean? So I became the class clown in school.

And like I was hilariously funny. I've seen, I've lost a lot of that. But at one point in my life I was, like how funny this message is.

That's, no I'm joking. So we find ways to validate ourselves. But it's an external.

I'm feeling bad inside. Are you following me? I feel down. I feel discouraged.

I feel hopeless. I feel lost. And so, but if I become this, if I could become a great singer or a great preacher.

If I make a lot of money. And so we build this, I call it constructing a false self. We construct a whole life.

A whole life, do you hear me? A whole life built on like, if I could just become this. And that's why people ignore and neglect their families and hurt their children so that they could make more money. It's because if I make more money, I'll feel good about myself.

My self hatred, my shame will be gone. If I sleep around with a lot of girls, then I'll feel good about myself. So sexual immorality becomes part of the construction of the life you wanna have to give you joy.

For some it's even religious. It's like, I'm gonna put this persona on of being a holy saint. Inside you know it's a fake story.

It's not real. You're putting on this false construct of what you believe. If I'm that, then I'll be loved.

If I'm that, then I'll be accepted. If I'm that, then I'll be enough. And I remember years ago, just having this vision of building this building of my house.

And it was a building of success and building of fame. That was my false construct. If I become well known, if I become like if I sell a million books and if I'm on radio and television, like Billy Graham, then I'll finally be worthy.

Then I'll finally be something. And I was constructing this life. And I had this vision of being up on top of this building, like a scaffolding.

You know what a scaffolding is? When they put it, you see them all the time here in New York. And I'm building the scaffolding and I'm up on top of it. And I'm starting to shake in the wind.

It's moving back and forth. And I'm going like, help me, Lord. Help me, Jesus.

You know, this thing is shaky. This thing's not built. And it's like, it's built on sand and it's not healthy.

And I said, Jesus, please help me. And I looked down and Jesus is at the bottom of the scaffolding. And I'm thinking, glad you're here.

Glad you showed up. And he's going like this with the scaffolding. He's pushing it.

And he's saying, I'm wanting him to help me build my life this way. And he's saying, no, I want to tear it down. I want to completely destroy that false self, that hope in other things, that life in other sources, that broken cistern that you get dirty water from Jeremiah calls it.

You get dirty water from there, rather than drinking from the rivers of living water. And so he told me, he said, look at the foundation, it's sand. You're building your life on fame and success and notoriety.

And that's sand. And you're building this whole life of how many people follow you on Facebook and how many books you sell and how many invitations you get to conferences. And all that stuff is garbage.

It doesn't mean a thing. And instead of helping me build that false life, he said, tear it down. Tear, destroy this temple.

I was building my own temple. Destroy this temple. And in three days, here's the good news, I will rebuild it.

He'll rebuild it. And he puts that building on a rock and he begins to help you construct a whole new life that is secure and that has peace and that has joy and that has life. You see, if you're living on the wrong foundation and you're building your life to try to protect you from pain and sorrow, then what's gonna happen is you're gonna cry out for peace and for joy and for love and for kindness and gentleness, but you're not gonna find it because you're in the wrong place.

And the Holy Spirit and his love has to destroy that whole lifestyle. And let me tell you, my friends, it's painful to face the reality of, for some, it might be you might be 60, 70 years old and saying, I've been doing this for 50 years. And you might say, but it's not too late.

I can tear this down. For some of you that are young in this room here today, you can say, man, I can start early of building my life on this rock of foundation. Yes, and when the snakes come and when the storms come, there's anxiety and there's rejection, there's isolation and there's shame.

I now have a new way of looking at life. I have, and I'll close with this, I have now what you would call, what the Bible would call unconditional love. The replacement of all four of these, the defeat of all four of these snakes in the garden of anxiety, of rejection, of isolation, loneliness and of shame and self-hatred, all four of these enemies in the land have the exact same answer.

It's the unconditional love of God, that God loves you, that you are loved by God. Therefore, you are safe. You will never be rejected.

You will never be alone. You never have any reason to fear because he is with you. Storms may come, enemies may be raised up.

Giants may be in the land, snakes may be in the garden, but God is with you. God is, hold on a second. God is, God is, he is for you and not against you.

He didn't put that snake in there because he wants to see it bite you and go like, yeah, you were unworthy of my presence, so I have the snake there to destroy you. He put the snake there for you. It might bite your heel, as he says, but he put the snake there so you would trample on its head.

And when you trample on that, when you trample on the head, you say, that anxiety, it's just gone. It's gone in Jesus' name. That isolation, that fear, that loneliness, it's gone in Jesus' name.

You take authority and you begin to trample the powers of darkness. He has given you authority and this is found in unconditional love. I wanna close with this last verse of scripture, 1 Corinthians chapter 13.

All of you have read this before, but I wanna read it a little bit differently if you would, please. You see, because we, how many of you know by raise of hand that God unconditionally loves you? Okay, and how many of you know that, not that God needs unconditional love because there's no condition that he would need to meet that's not loving, but how many of you know we give God our unconditional love? We don't hold back. How many of you know we give God unconditional love? How many of you know we are meant to love our neighbors unconditionally, like we love them just, even when they're not doing so well, we still love them, right? We still love, we love our neighbors.

Okay, so we all agree on that, but you know, again, in my pastoral counseling experience, you know what I found? Is most people will agree to all three of those things, but not agree to the fourth one, that we are supposed to love ourselves unconditionally. That we're not to cover over our sin and gloss over it and say, there's no sin. We're meant to repent.

We're meant to be honest with ourselves. We're meant to face our sin head on. But even in our stumbling, even in our struggling, we're not meant to hate ourselves.

We, I believe, and I was studying this this week, and I told my wife, I said, I'm gonna close my sermon talking about unconditional love for yourself. I don't think it's right. That's what I told her.

I said, I don't know if I believe it. I think you're supposed to have unconditional love for God and for others, but not yourself. You're supposed to sort of judge yourself.

And I realized that God wants me to love me the way he loves me. He wants me, he wants, you see, when I don't have the love of God that he has for me in my own heart, then I'm gonna be full of anxiety and fear. Maybe life won't turn out the way I want it.

Maybe then the rejections will hurt me more than, you see, if God hasn't rejected me, if he loves me unconditionally and I love myself, then even if somebody else rejects me, it's like, I still feel pretty good about me. Isn't that nice to walk around comfortable in your own skin? And somebody calls you a bad name and you just go like, that's okay. You can believe that if you want.

I don't believe that. But see, if you believe that more than they believe that, they call you a bad name and you go like, yeah, you're just confirming what I believe about myself anyway. Then it's just gonna be another wound, another rejection, another heartache.

But if you start loving yourself the way God loves you, then things are going to be different. And so the false self won't need to be there. See what I mean? If you don't need the external validation, if you don't need somebody to prove of you, if you approve of what God's already done in your life, then you don't need to build this false construction.

You can trust God, you can have his way. And so I close with this verse four. Do you love yourself this way? Through the power of the Holy Spirit, not just a humanistic sort of, I'll try these things.

Love is patient. Are you patient with yourself? Or are you quick to criticize yourself? Ah, I'm such a failure, I'm such a loser. I'll never amount to anything.

Or are you patient with yourself and you say, I'm growing, I'm being stretched, I'm coming to new heights, I'm rebuilding my life on a solid foundation. Are you patient? Love is kind. Are you kind with yourself? Are you kind to yourself? Or do you say to yourself day in and day out, it's like, oh, I can't believe I did that again.

I'm always messing up, I always fail, I'm gonna never make it, I'll never amount to anything. That's not kind, is it? We say things about ourselves, we would never say things about other people. We're harder on ourselves than we are on our worst enemies at times.

And so it's kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. Are you ever rude to yourself? The things you say about yourself, again, would you say them to your children? I would hope not.

Love does not demand its own way. It is not irritable. It keeps no record of wrong being done.

Wow, it keeps no record of it. Yes, it will repent. Yes, it will cleanse the heart.

Yes. But at the end of the day, it will not keep a record of wrong. You see, if you keep records of wrong, I'm wrong here, I do this, my heart's full of shame, my heart's full of rejection.

If you keep records of wrong, then you're gonna try to look for external validation. You know, when enough people applaud me, when enough people shower affection on me, then I'll be acceptable. Rather than just saying no.

You know why I'm acceptable? Because God made me that way. He created you and I in his image. He created you and I to be like him.

And so how do we get to this Holy Ghost Hospital? How do we get to this place where we say, I really can be healed? It's painful. And I would, oh my goodness, man, I wish I could just say, come to this altar and you'll be healed. And all of a sudden you'll get healed and you'll never feel, no.

Can I tell you? There's an enemy in the land and it's there to test you. It's there to show you your mettle. It's there to engage with.

It's there to fight with. And it doesn't often come. Sometimes it does, but it very rarely comes instantaneously.

It comes through a battle. It comes through in getting back in the fight. You see, don't be like Jonah and just check out and say like, I knew you would make the situation right.

Just do it anyway. No, get in the community. Get involved in the battle.

Get involved in the fight. Why did God put that enemy there? To show you that there's a strength that he put inside of you. To test your mettle so that you might come out having been refined by fire and see the glory of God.

And so this Holy Ghost Hospital we're talking about today is one to help heal your heart and heal your wounds where you start trusting God again. Where you start believing there's hope for you again. Where

the pain could be alleviated and even eliminated from your life.

Where all of a sudden this false construct that is looking for life is now moved to a new place and you have life. And all of a sudden you're starting to breathe differently. You're starting to feel some joy in your life.

You see, the false construct looks for success, for money, for fame, for fortune, for accolades, for applause but the true self that's created in the image of God in Christ Jesus has a whole different agenda. It doesn't look for external things that are measured by outward numbers. It looks for internal things.

What are they called? Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness. You see, you're not striving to become a superstar. You're just looking to Jesus Christ to fill you with his love and his peace and his joy and his life and his victory.

And I'll tell you what, this will change, revolutionize, turn your tables of your life upside down. And some of us need that. We need Jesus to come into the temple of our life and say, let's tear that idol down.

Let's tear that thing down and let's build something that's built on Jesus. Would you stand with me, please? And I wanna pray for you just before we close. In just a moment, I wanna ask some of you to come forward that need prayer.

And you say, well, why come, Pastor Gary? You just said this is a process. This healing process is facing the pain, realizing how I'm building my life and then letting the Holy Spirit tear it down and rebuilding a life through prayer and meditation and through community. So it's a process.

Why are you gonna ask me to come down to the front and pray for me? Because every journey starts with the first step. And I want today to, I truly believe that the power of the Holy Spirit is here to touch you, to heal you. And we started this whole message by the honesty that you were so kind to share in this place of saying there's been some brokenness in my life.

There's been some pain. There's been some sorrow and suffering. And maybe out of that, you've built on the wrong foundation.

And now you're saying, no, I wanna come to full trust in God. This test in my life actually is gonna help me. And so as I'm praying, we're gonna sing a song together.

Would you step out of your seat and come to the front and say, Pastor Gary, I need the Holy Ghost Hospital today. I need to be healed internally of this brokenness in my life, of the painful situations I've been in. And I wanna come through it to joy, to victory, to life, to peace, to kindness.

In Jesus' name, Father, I invite my friends to just take that first step in the journey of healing. Holy Spirit, you are the great physician. And you not only heal broken bones and cancer and disease, you heal our hearts, our wounds, our brokenness, our histories, our painful memories.

You are the great I Am, the faithful healer. So as people come from the balcony and in the front here, Lord, I just pray that your Holy Spirit's power would be here to heal them. Lord, you know my heart.

As a pastor, I'd almost rather just be in a room alone with these people, either as a couple or a one-on-one. I just like to be alone with them and just hear their heart and their story and pray over them together. But here we find ourselves in a large building with a large group of people.

And we thank you that you're not limited. You're not limited in this place, God, that you can do the same thing in an altar service like this that you would do in a counseling session with a pastor, that you can do it here. Lord, you can start the journey.

And I thank you for the honesty. I thank you, Lord. I pray for everyone who's come forward.

And I thank you just them coming forward shows honesty, that they're saying there's a pain, there's a need, there's a brokenness, there's a sorrow. And I pray right now in the name of Jesus that you would begin to heal the wounds. It's okay to cry.

Lord, I see brokenness in people's hearts. I see it, Lord, just in the memories and the voices. I see it, Lord, in the countenance.

Lord, in the, just even just, Lord, if we could somehow see internally what people are facing, it would be like they're, like a soul slumped over, painful, broken, weary, worn. Oh, but I thank you, Jesus, that you're a good and faithful God. You haven't left us alone, God.

You haven't abandoned us. You haven't let us get to a place where we just go like, this is, we're all alone in this world and I have no hope. Thank you, God, that you give us hope.

You give us abundant life. Lord, you, and I thank you that you're willing, oh, this sounds kind of hard, my friends. You're willing to wound us.

You're, like, the wound of, like, of that pain of saying, wow, I built my life on the wrong foundation. I'm looking for love in all the wrong places. I'm looking for healing by trying to get validation through social media, through success, fame, money, whatever it might be, sex.

I'm looking for love in those places. No, it's on the wrong foundation. And that's a wound to say, wow, that hurts that I spent so much time and energy in that life.

But I'm coming to this altar today saying, now, I'm letting you tear that down, Holy Spirit. I'm letting you tear that down. I'm not looking now for those things any longer.

I choose in this room today, at this front of this church today, I choose to say, God, shake, rattle it, destroy it. It doesn't belong. My life is not built on getting people to like me, people pleasing.

My life is built on being loved by God, loving others as I love myself. Jesus, you mentioned that, I believe it was three times. Love your neighbor as you love yourself.

Teach us in this room to love ourselves. Even for those of us who didn't come forward here today, Lord, teach us to love ourselves and say, Lord, we love you. And we thank you that you're doing a good work in our life.

Thank you, Jesus. Would you pray with me, those of you that came forward? Just pray, repeat this prayer after me. Dear Jesus, I give you all my pain.

I confess it to you. There is hurt. There have been wounds.

But in the name of Jesus, I bring them all to you. I will not build my life on the sand. I'll build it on the rock.

And on that rock, there is peace. There is joy. There is life.

And there is love. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen. Let's put our hands together and thank the Lord.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/30/SID30830.mp3>
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/gary-wilkerson/getting-healed/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net