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FLESH WOUND

What are some of the painkillers that you have used to deal with emotional and spiritual pain?

What are the consequences to their use?

What could life be like if you dealt with the wound and let Jesus heal it?

Jeremiah 6:14 – They have treated the wound of my people carelessly, saying “Peace, peace,” when there is no peace.

I) **Painkillers...**

Painkillers are a miracle. They alleviate unnecessary suffering while undergoing invasive procedures. They free us to carry on while enduring lengthy healing and recovery processes. They have their place in medicine. But they are not healing agents. Treating wounds and illness with painkillers when treatment is needed dooms us to suffer needlessly. Used improperly, they delude us into believing unhealthy behaviors are harmless. They dissuade us from healthy but hard activities thinking the painkiller is a substitute. This overuse of painkillers results from our desire for quick and easy, and other's willingness to abuse us for greed. When dealing with our wellbeing, it's wise to know the one treating us.

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♦**Those who gain**: It seems that the whole world offers advice on what to think, buy or do. We know most of these things are not right for us. How do we know to whom we should listen? We need to understand what's in it for them. If "They (Jeremiah 6:14)" are those who gain if we take their advice, be skeptical. Often what is good for us doesn't benefit others. For those who believe they need to take our scarce resources to survive, there is a natural incentive to mislead us.

♦**Hooked for life**: We should also be skeptical of temporary solutions. Painkillers relieve pain for a brief time. Combined with an uncomfortable but permanent treatment, that's great. Used to treat a permanent condition, painkillers primarily serve the greed of the provider. When others "have treated (v14)" our wounds with temporary relief, they are stealing. Drugs and alcohol, so-called retail therapy, magical vacations, all the temporary markers of peace and prosperity are examples. Those who gain benefit most when we are hooked for life.

II) Do Not Heal...

Most of what we are offered is superficial. Ways of temporary relief that do not heal. That's fine for a headache that will go away on its own. It's terrible for deep wounds. These need serious treatment to keep from severe harm or death. We are good at treating most physical wounds, but we continue to deal with emotional and spiritual wounds poorly. We address symptoms, not causes, and focus on pain relief instead of cures. Our culture has decided distraction is better than healing.

♦**That looks bad**: We get scratches and bruises as part of normal life. These heal on their own. Occasionally, we suffer an injury that needs to be treated, or it won't heal properly, if at all. Broken and dislocated bones, gashes, profuse bleeding. These require attention. So, too, does the "wound of my people (v14)." We suffer a wound of our soul that leaves us confused, afraid, angry, and selfish. Unable to function properly, our spirit perceives others as threats and prey. If we could see inside ourselves and look on our hearts, we would say that looks bad and needs immediate attention. But we can't, so we don't.

♦**Rub some dirt on it**: While we all suffer from this spiritual wound, there is no one to deal with it seriously. Anyone in this condition cannot offer the necessary treatment. Needing to feel as though we have done something, we treat it "carelessly (v14)." We treat emotional pain with ice cream. We deal with minor abuses by judging and condemning. We comfort ourselves from injustice with exclusion and hatred. We tell ourselves flesh wounds feel better if we rub some dirt on it. We accept being the walking wounded.

III) They Numb...

The problem with superficial treatments is they numb us. Numbed to pain, we often ignore the underlying cause. Without the signal that our wound is still there needing attention, we act as if it doesn't exist. Just think about all the ways we try to treat our emotional issues. We do things to forget them. What if instead we confronted them? Maybe we would do the hard things that cure the wound. Talk, reconcile, forgive, support each other. No, mostly we numb ourselves into deception.

♦**Forget your worries**: The easiest way to numb ourselves from the spiritual pain of guilt is to tell ourselves we are justified. Forget your worries by excusing them. We build systems to keep ourselves from seeing the harm done to others by our chosen way of life. We don't want to see how the sausage is made, as the saying goes. We like those in power to say "Peace, peace (v14)," so that we can believe it. It's more comfortable than fighting our inner battles. Numbed from guilt and shame, we can ignore all the harm given and received.

♦**It's still there**: It's fine. I'm fine. Things we say to ourselves to numb the pain of our circumstances without addressing them. We can distract ourselves, numb our minds, go away, but through it all, it's still there. Often, the circumstance itself isn't the source of the pain. It's our inability to control our response to it. A lack of peace within due to our spiritual incapacity. Saying peace is useless "when there is no peace (v14)." We need a spiritual healer to tend the wounds of guilt and shame that manifest in our inability to live well. We need more than the world can offer. We need a Savior.