

Thompson Road Baptist Church
The Wounded Healer: Ministry to a Hopeless Man

1. Introduction
 - a. Proposition: Only by entering into communion with human suffering can relief be found
2. Opportunities for Ministry
 - a. Churches can create events and organize specific outreaches, but the greatest opportunity you'll have for ministry is in your day to day interactions with other people
 - i. Learning how to do ministry at this level trains us how to do ministry on a larger scale
 - b. We must understand that most people feel alone in this world
3. The Condition of Man
 - a. An Impersonal Existence
 - i. Circumstances often leave people feeling anonymous and stripped of their identity
 1. Example: Conversation with student whose girlfriend got an abortion
 - b. The Paradox of Life and Death
 - i. Because of this feeling of anonymity, people get stuck in a place where they are both afraid to live and afraid to die
 1. Example: Experiences with drug addicts and alcoholics
4. The Possibilities for Hope
 - a. To provide answers, we must be willing to step into the painful condition of our fellow man
 - b. A Personal Response
 - i. When a person feels the world has ignored them, even one exception to this can be lifesaving
 - ii. Our response must be personal and compassionate, not just a recitation of talking points
 1. "What use can an illiterate man in the hour of agony make of the words, explanations, exhortations and arguments of a theology student?"
 2. 1 John 3.18, "Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth."
 - c. Waiting in Life and Death
 - i. Beyond a personal response, we must also make the reality of fellowship visible. As Christians, fellowship is ours to give—both in life through the church, and in death through the gathering of the redeemed
 - a. Acts 2.42-44, "And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and

many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common.”

- b. Revelation 7.9-10, “After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’”

5. Principles for Christian Ministry

a. Personal Concern

- i. Doing ministry cannot simply be an act of obedience; it must be an act of compassion for those who are in need of the same grace and mercy that we’ve been shown
 - 1. “The great illusion of leadership is to think that man can be led out of the desert by someone who has never been there.” (Nouwen)
 - 2. Ephesians 2.1-3, “And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.”
- ii. We show personal concern by valuing the life of one person over all else; cf. Parables of lost sheep, coin and son in Luke 15

b. Faith in the Value and Meaning of Life

- i. As Christians and believers in God’s word, we know the meaning and purpose of life, and have the opportunity to unveil it for others; cf. Genesis 1.26 and the idea of being made in God’s image
 - 1. This is the impetus behind the pro-life movement, and is no less true for the rest of God’s creation

c. Hope

- i. Hope allows us to look past our present sufferings and see the promises made to in Scripture; cf. Romans 8.18, “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”
 - 1. This hope makes our ministry distinctly Christian because it is based in the Christ event—that God lived and died as a man to free man from his sins; cf. Hebrews 2.17-18