

Fil-Am Community Church

Pastor Rolly Estabillo

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“THE HEALING MODEL OF JESUS”
“Introduction to Life’s Healing Choices Series”

Good morning! Today is the start of our spring campaign. This campaign is about Life’s Healing Choices. Now, this eight-part series actually starts next Sunday. Today is an introduction to the series. So, this is the kick-off message. During this series, we’re going to study together, in our home groups a subject matter called “Life’s Healing Choices” from a study guide and a teaching DVD. We’re going to look at how we can be healed from our hurts, habits, and hang-ups.

Let’s look at our verse for today, Psalm 147:3. Let’s read together: *"He heals the brokenhearted and he binds up their wounds."*

Here's why we're going to do Life's Healing Choices in the spring. *"He heals the brokenhearted."* Every one of us has a broken heart. At some point in our lives because of something in our lives our heart has been broken. By some relationship, by some circumstance, by some dream that wasn't realized. We all have broken hearts.

But that verse also says "wounds". We all have wounds. We all have things from our past where someone else has hurt us, something that they've said, something that they've done, some abuse that's come into our lives. We all have wounds.

But the great thing about this verse when you look at it is, the Bible says he heals. Circle "heals". He heals the brokenhearted. God knows that we all have broken hearts and he's willing to come and he's willing to heal your broken heart.

So you don't have to live in the past. You don't have to live with the past in such a way that it paralyzes your future.

The great thing about this verse is it says "*he binds up their wounds.*" He doesn't just look at us and say, I'm sorry that you have wounds.

He's willing to bind up, to apply bandage, in order to make the bleeding stop so healing can take place.

Today we're going to take a few minutes to take a look at an example of how Jesus healed a man who had been paralyzed from birth. You see in your outline that the story of this man is in Matthew and Mark and Luke. Three of the gospels tell the story of this man because it's such an important story of how Jesus Christ can heal us. But it's not just about that man. It's about me. And it's about you. It's about what God wants to do in your life.

What does Jesus do personally in my life when I need to be healed of some past hurt, some habit that's gotten a hold of my life, some hang-up that's come into my life? What does he do? He does these three things.

- First of all he always does this first. **He calms my fears.**

I want you to imagine the scene of what was happening this day when Jesus healed this paralyzed man. Jesus is teaching in a town and some people have found out he's teaching. He's in a small home. They fill up the small home. So many people want to hear Jesus teach they start to look in through the windows. And all of a sudden the small home is filled and around this small home there are crowds of people just straining to hear Jesus speaking inside of the house.

There's a group of four men who have a friend who is paralyzed. They decided that day, "We're going to get our friend to Jesus because we know that he heals people." They put him on a mat and they take him to see Jesus at this house and when they get there there's so many people around the house there's no way they can get in. So they get very creative.

They figure out: there's nobody on the roof. So they go up on the roof and they dig a hole in the roof through the tile and they actually lower the man through the tiles in the roof in front of Jesus.

That would be weird, wouldn't it? Just think right now if all of a sudden stuff started falling down and all of a sudden this person just lowers right in front of me. That would be a different experience. That's what happened that day.

I want you for just a moment to put yourself in the place of that paralyzed man. Here he is. His friends are saying "We're going to get you there. We're going to lower you through the roof." He can't stop them. He's sort of at their mercy in this moment. All of a sudden with this huge crowd of people he's being lowered down.

How would you feel? He had to feel little embarrassed. He had to feel like "I shouldn't be interrupting Jesus." And he had to certainly feel like "Every eye is on me", because every eye was on him in that moment.

Have you ever felt that way? Like I've got a hurt in my life and now every eye is on me. Everybody sees it. Jesus Christ knew exactly how this man felt. The natural reaction of a speaker in that situation - if that happened to me - I'd go "Excuse me! What do you think you're doing? Can you see all these other people here? Why would you be interrupting all these other people?" The natural reaction would be a little irritation.

But not Jesus. Jesus knew this guy's heart. He knows your heart. He knows how we feel when we come to him and we say, I need healing in my life.

So the first thing that Jesus does is he encourages us. Matthew 9:2 *"Some people brought to Jesus a man who was paralyzed and lying on a mat. When Jesus saw the faith of these people, he said to the paralyzed man, 'Be encouraged, son.'"*

That's the way it starts. Be encouraged. The point is if I bring my hurt to Jesus Christ the first thing he's going to do is he's going to encourage me.

Even if that hurt was my own fault somehow. It wasn't for this man. But even if it was my own fault he's going to encourage me.

Jesus says he's got the power to encourage you because he understands exactly what you're going through. He knows your heart.

Hebrews 4:15 *"Jesus was able to understand our weaknesses. When he lived on this earth, he was tempted in every way that we are, yet without sin."* That's the difference between Jesus and us. He never sinned. But what's the same is he was tempted in every single way that we are. He understands what you're going through.

He certainly did in this man's life. He didn't just say, "Oh, I'm so sorry that you're paralyzed. Let's all pray for this poor paralyzed man. Go and be encouraged even though you're still paralyzed." No, Jesus Christ made a difference in his life.

The second thing he did to heal his hurt is the second thing he does to heal our hurt.

- **He confronts my faults and failures.**

Jesus goes beneath the surface. He goes beneath the symptoms and he gets to the real problems. He does it in a loving way. He never does it in a way that makes me feel condemned.

In this man's case the problem he was facing was not just his paralysis. He needed to also deal with his guilt. And Jesus knew that. Luke 5:20 *"Then Jesus said, 'Friend, your sins are forgiven.'"* Why did Jesus say that? The guy didn't ask for his sins to be forgiven. He just wanted to be healed of his paralysis. Why did Jesus say that? Because he knew the guy's heart. He knew exactly what he needed. He dealt with the very heart of the issue.

When you have an addiction that you're struggling with in your life, a habit that seems to have a hold of you, Jesus Christ knows that there's something behind that

in your heart and he's going to deal with that. Because if he doesn't deal with that you're never going to get rid of the habit.

When you're stuck in the past, some bitterness, some memory, and you think, I'd just like to forget it, Jesus Christ comes into our hearts and says, I want to show you how to heal. I want to deal with the cause that's behind that. That's what he does in this man's life when he says, "Son, your sins are forgiven." The world is dying to hear those three words: you are forgiven.

So, this guy has a heart problem. He wouldn't admit it. But Jesus knew it. Beyond his physical pain was a pain much deeper. Jesus dealt with that pain first and then he dealt with the other pain. The Bible doesn't tell us whether there's a correlation between his emotional pain and physical pain. Sometimes there is. Doctors tell us if you look at statistics, about half the people that are in the hospital they say are there because of some kind of stress in their lives. And stress is the result of me trying to manage my life on my own many times. Me trying to figure it out without God.

To me part of the great miracle of what happened when this man came to Jesus with his hurt is Jesus was able to put his finger on the real cause. I can't always do that in somebody's life. I can guess. But Jesus always can. That's why you go to him with your hurt. You don't blame others. You don't find solutions from self-help books, from Dr. Phil or whoever. You go to Jesus.

Jesus knew the real problem in this man's life was not his paralysis. It was his guilty conscience. He knew that his past was paralyzing his future. So he told him: You are forgiven.

The awesome thing to me in what Jesus did for this man and what he does in my life and your life is he didn't minimize his guilt. He eliminated it. He says, "Your sins are forgiven." That's the awesome thing that Jesus does.

He confronts my faults and failures. If I'm going to be healed of those faults and failures in my life I need Jesus to confront them. But I also need something else.

The next verse says (James 5:16) "*Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that God can heal you.*" Part of healing is not only saying to Jesus Christ "Will you heal me of this hurt?", but also confessing it to other people. Telling other people about it. Meaning, be open about your hurts and pain. Be transparent. Express how you feel. Don't bottle it up inside you. Don't put a false façade in order to make people see how you got it all together when you're crumbling deep inside. Be open. Tell others about your struggles.

The idea of "Confess your sins to each other" is not to embarrass yourself in front of other people. The idea is just be honest enough to say we've all got problems. We've all sinned. We've all blown it. Praise God that he forgives us. The way to be healed is just to say to other people, "Yeah, me too. Yeah, I struggle too." You will feel a release when you do.

There's a third thing that Jesus does when he heals us, when he heals you of a hurt.

- **He challenges my faith.**

He calms my fears, he confronts my faults, then he challenges my faith.

The way he challenges my faith is he asks me to do something that seems to me to be impossible. *He asks me to do something that seems to me to be impossible.*

That's what he did for this man. The Bible says in Matthew 9 "*Jesus said to the paralytic, 'Get up, take your mat and go home.'*"

Just pause there for a second. The man had to be thinking, "That's impossible. I've tried so many times. I'm not sure but let me try."

Listen to what happened next. *"The man got up and he went home. And when the crowd saw this, they were filled with awe..."* of what God could do in a person's life.

Jesus asks this man to do something he had never done before. He asks us to do something we've never done before.

The Bible says, *"According to your faith it will be done to you."* The Bible says that many times. Jesus says many times to people, *"It is your faith that has healed you."* And faith is something that you do. It's not just something that you think. It starts with a thought but then it's something that you do. When Jesus challenges my faith he asks me to do something that I've never done before. But remember, you don't do it on your own. You do it in God's strength because he gives you the strength to do it. So, God says here's what I want you to do. Then the strength, the assurance, the emotion, the power comes as you take the step of faith. Not *before* you take the step of faith. It comes *as* you take the step of faith.

You might be thinking, I don't feel like this whole Life's Healing Choices thing is going to work for me. It just doesn't feel right. I'm a little scared of it. I don't feel like God wants me to get involved in this. Yet something in you knows that he wants to heal you. God says take the step. He tells you what to do and then you take the step. He challenges my faith.

In many ways this paralyzed man represents all of us - men and women both. All of us at some place in my life, some place in your life, you're handicapped. You're paralyzed in some area. Maybe it's by worry. Maybe it's by doubt. Maybe it's by indecision, depression or anger or envy. There's something in your life, something in your past. For most of us that's what paralyzes us.

Some experience, some word that somebody said, something that happened, something that didn't work out, some relationship that went wrong. Something that somebody did to us, or that I did to somebody else, something in my past. Now

I'm paralyzed. We all carry regrets and guilt and shame and painful memories of failures and hurts. The result is I cannot get on with the present because I'm stuck in the past. I need healing. The good news is that today Jesus Christ wants to set you free. He says I want you to take a step of faith. Because I can heal you. But you've got to take a step of faith.

There are a lot of people wanting all kind of things that never happen in their life. Unless I take a step of faith and say, "Jesus Christ I'm going to trust you with this rather than trust in me. I'm going to do something about this", then nothing's going to change.

This man got up and he walked. What if he hadn't? What if he'd just said, "Jesus, I can't. I've tried so many times." The miracle wouldn't have happened.

Regardless of who you are, regardless of what's been done to you or regardless of what you have done, Jesus Christ can heal you. That's why he came into this world.

Now, I want you to note something very important here. This man, this paralyzed man did not get to Jesus Christ on his own. He had four friends who helped him to get there. If you feel like you're stuck and you've been stuck for a long time and you've tried and tried again and you can't get there, your friends can help you get unstuck. We all need other people to help. I'm going to talk in just a minute about how other people help. If you have a friend and you feel like that friend is stuck, you've talked to them again and again and they can't get out of this, maybe they need the right friends around them.

That's what happened with this man. Part of Life's Healing Choices for him was not just having an encounter with Jesus but having friends who helped him have an experience with Jesus Christ. He had four friends who looked at their friend and said, "We're going to get him to Jesus Christ. Jesus is in town. We

know that Jesus heals. We know that our friend needs healing. We're going to get him to Jesus Christ."

As you look at what these friends do, I just want to walk through this quickly, six things that friends can do for each other, that a small group, in our case, a home group can do for each other to encourage healing.

Seven marks of a small group that bring healing.

1. Compassion.

What is compassion? Compassion is noticing other people's needs. That's why God says he loves us, because he notices every need in our lives. He has compassion on us. If you care you'll be aware of people's needs.

The Bible says this in Romans 15:2 *"We should all be concerned about our neighbor and the good things that will build his faith."* So you're concerned about someone else. The Bible says also in 1 Corinthians 10:24 *"People should be concerned about others..."* Then it ends by saying *"and not just about themselves."*

How do you care for other people? You see what their needs are and you try to meet that need. When we just moved to Sterling, after a few weeks, the grass has grown tall both in the frontyard and backyard. When Swen and Tita Cindy came over to visit us, they noticed that and the next day, Swen brought his lawn mower and lent it to us. So, I mowed our lawn, believe it or not, and had a long-overdue exercise in the process. A few days later I bought our own lawn mower. And Nanay Monet has been using it ever since. She had compassion for me knowing I work too hard in the office.

The point is, compassion is feeling what others feel so that you are moved to take action to help them in whatever way. Which brings us to the second mark of a group that brings healing.

2. Action.

This group of four men didn't just pray for their paralyzed friend. They took action and took their friend to see Jesus. Sometime if there's a hurting person and we say, Let's just have a prayer meeting, that's an excuse rather than a prayer. Sometimes prayers are just excuses for not acting.

Prayer should be a motivation to act. I should pray but when I pray it should motivate me to do the thing that God wants to do next. So because they cared about their friend, Matthew 9:2 says "*They brought to Jesus a man who was paralyzed on a mat.*" God wanted them to act so they acted.

What action are you going to take during Life's Healing Choices? So that not only you can experience God's healing but also other people can experience the healing of Jesus Christ in their heart and their soul.

I want to give you a few ideas in just a minute. But there's a third thing that these men show us that you and I can do in a group that we can't do all by ourselves, to encourage faith and to find healing.

3. **Persistence.**

They didn't let the difficulties discourage them. They were persistent together. They got there and there was this crowd there and they couldn't get in.

You're always going to have difficulties on the way to healing. There's always going to be some obstacle in the way. But being in a group will help you to be encouraged. I don't know about you but I need other people in my life to remind me to be persistent, to remind me to not give up. That's what a group can do for each other. You're not meant to do this thing on your own, this life of faith, this life of healing. We help each other to be persistent.

4. A fourth word is the word **innovation.**

These guys dared to do something different. There are many times when in a group we can dare to do something different than we'd ever have done on our own. When they couldn't find a way in because of the crowd, Luke 5:19 says "*They went*

up on the roof, they removed some tiles, and they let him down right in the middle of everyone, right in front of Jesus."

Here's the question in that verse for you and me. When is the last time you went through the roof for somebody?

Hebrews 10:24 says *"Let's see how inventive we can be in encouraging love and helping out."* So you find some inventive way to do it. You be inventive and you find out how God works. That's what we can do together that we could never do alone.

5. Cooperation.

That's what groups can do, cooperation. Just think this through with me, the math of this. You've got four friends. And you've got a mat. And it's got four corners. And it's got to be lowered down. If you've got four friends and four corners of a mat, how many people does it take to lower the mat down? Four!

In my life and in your life sometimes it takes four, sometimes it takes six, sometimes it takes more. The cooperation of us together can get done more than anyone could get done on their own. You are not meant to go through life alone because life is too heavy for any of us alone to carry. That's why we do it together. That's why it's important we do this together.

So what can you do? If you're already involved in a home group, commit to attending your home group meeting at least for the next four months. This is an eight-part series which begins next week. However, our home groups will continue to meet even after the series is over because first, some of our groups meet only twice a month, and even if you meet more frequently than that, you may find that some of the sessions should be broken up into two.

The important thing, however, is to make it a point to be there when your home group meets. People in your group need you and you need them too. Besides, the things you'll learn from the study guides and the DVD's will be so invaluable.

What if you don't belong to a home group? Then, belong to one obviously.

There are currently four groups we have, the Woodbridge Home Group, the Alexandria Home Group, the Burke Home Group, the Loudoun/Fairfax Home Group. If you need help, please approach Pastor Dave who can direct you to a home group that may be closest to you.

Or you may want to start a new home group. You may want to be a host. You have friends or loved ones you're trying to reach out and they'd be more comfortable being with others they know.

Let me tell you what a host is. Some of you have heard this before. Host -- h-o-s-t. What does it mean to host a group of people who are going to talk about God's truth?

H stands for Heart for people. You care enough for people to invite them.

O means Open your home. You give them a place to meet.

S means Serve them some coffee or some lemonade and snacks.

T means Turn on the TV, because you're going to watch together a teaching through a DVD.

I have to tell you one more thing that a group can encourage us in.

6. Sacrifice.

The truth of the matter is someone has to pay for that roof. At some point the owner of that house had to say, "Who's going to pay for the roof?" And he had to look at those four men who ripped the roof off. You think they pointed fingers? No, I'm sure they chipped in to repair that roof. That was a sacrifice for their friend.

The principle here is there's always a cost to bringing somebody to faith. There's always a cost to healing. Jesus Christ has paid the greatest cost - he went to the cross. He gave his life for us. But you and I, there's the cost of our time, there's the cost of our energy, there's the cost of our giving up a night that we don't

want to give up, there's the cost of us putting ourselves out there and somebody might say no to us. There is a cost. There is a sacrifice. But it's worth it.

The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 3:9 *"We work together as partners who belong to God."* Part of that partnership is making that sacrifice. But joy follows sacrifice.

Those of you who are married, have you ever had to make a sacrifice for your spouse? Maybe give up your favorite game on TV to accompany her to the grocery store? Those of you who are parents, ever have to make a sacrifice for your children? You don't really want to be driving that minivan do you? But you are. You didn't really want to go to McDonald's for dinner, did you? But you did. Is it worth it? Absolutely. It's where the joy comes from. In the moment the sacrifice is difficult. But at the end of the sacrifice there is always the joy. The greatest joy in life comes out of the greatest sacrifices of life.

I just imagine the day when this man stood up and walked. I just imagine the joy on his face. All his life he had looked forward to this moment that he is able to stand up and walk. But I can't help but imagine over on the other side these four men standing there who had brought their friend to Jesus, who had believed in the fact that Jesus Christ could heal him. Watching their friend stand up and walk. Can you see the joy on their face? That is the joy of sacrifice.

When you and I make a decision of faith for Life's Healing Choices it's not just about what God wants to do in my life. But it's also what God wants to do in us, and how God wants to work in our lives. I'd like to take just a moment as we close to talk to God about it. Would you pray with me?