

Pray More Healing Retreat - Transcript

Healing from Emotional Wounds

Jonna Schuster

Hi guys. My name is Jonna Schuster, and it is an honor to be with you for this healing retreat. Let's begin in prayer. *In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Lord God, we just thank You for Your presence, we welcome You here, we love You, we honor You, and we invite You to just come and do what You want to do here today. Amen. In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Well, I am with you today to speak on the topic of emotional healing, specifically emotional healing with regards to broken relationships. If you are tuning in for a healing retreat, the odds are pretty good that you've been through some stuff - I think we all have - and are in need of healing - and I think we all are. You know, this is just kind of part of what it means to walk around in a fallen world: we end up hurting each other and getting hurt by one another intentionally, unintentionally. It's just something that is part of this side of heaven. And so I think it's important that we learn how to navigate that in a healthy and holy way.

So, a lot of times when we encounter these painful, broken relationships, we can all walk away with wounds. Things like abandonment, or rejection, betrayal, just pain, and things like that. Shame, fear. That's normal for this side of heaven, again. So I want you to know you're not alone. Your pain matters to God, and your wholeness matters to God. I want to read to you from Isaiah. This is Isaiah 61. It says *The Lord sent Me to bring glad tidings to the lowly, to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and release prisoners, to announce a year of favor from the Lord and a day of vindication by our God, to comfort all who mourn, to place on those who mourn in Zion a crown of diadem instead of ashes, to give them the oil of gladness in place of mourning, a glorious mantle instead of a listless spirit.* So beautiful.

Psalm 147 reads: *He heals the broken-hearted, and binds up their wounds.* Another translation of that is *He heals the wounds of every shattered heart.* That's so beautiful, and that's our Lord. You know, when we say that Jesus is our savior, the word "save" in this context actually has a really comprehensive meaning. So I want to do a little bit of etymology with you to unpack that some more. So the word "save," in the context of Jesus being our savior, that word in the Greek is "Sozo." And the definition is the Greek is translated to mean a variety of things, including "to save, to deliver, protect, heal, preserve, do well, be made whole, keep

Pray More Healing Retreat - Transcript

safe, to free, avenge, defend, deliver, help, preserve, rescue, save, get victory.” This is amazing. This is huge. There is so much in this one word, “to save.”

And so the word “Sozo” is the Greek translation of that word. The word “Yasha” is the Hebrew equivalent of that word. Now, you might see where I’m going with this. You might recognize the word “Yeshua.” Yeshua is the Aramaic derivative of “Yasha.” Yeshua is the name of Jesus. Jesus, His name alone carries this deep, rich meaning of “Sozo,” to save, to heal. That’s who He is, it’s what He does. He saves, He heals, He protects, He delivers, He redeems, all of this. He paid for all of this when He went to the cross. It is His pleasure to offer all of these things to us, it is His joy to offer all of these things to us, and He is fiercely after it. In fact, He wants it more than we do. I’m going to say that again in case you didn’t hear me - He wants our healing more than we do. That’s why He paid for it with such a high price on the cross.

Now, because there are so many facets to the saving work of God, healing for us can come in a variety of different forms. It can come in a radically powerful moment of deliverance, it can come gradually and gently over a duration of time as God pieces things back together for us in our lives, it can come through a sudden victory, or it can come through a deepening of union with God. All of these things are so beautiful. And, you know what? The Lord knows exactly what we need and when we need it, and so we can trust Him in the unfolding of His healing process for us.

Now I know, in the midst of devastating experiences, it can sometimes feel like you’re just enveloped in this cloud that’s blinding and suffocating. And if we’re in it long enough, I think it can have this effect on us where we start to lose hope that there’s even a way out, and we end up spiraling in powerlessness, and desperately looking for just something, some coping mechanism to bring relief to the pain that we’re feeling. I know. I’ve been there and it’s awful. And if that’s you right now, if you feel like that is resonating with you right now, I actually want to be a voice in the darkness for you, to remind you there is a savior who will comb over the earth over and over until He finds you and pulls you into freedom. He will stop at nothing to rescue you, to heal you, to restore what’s been lost.

So I want to give you permission to hope again. I want to give you permission to be expectant of the Lord, to expect that He’s going to come through for you, to dare to believe that God is who He says He is, and He will do what He says He will do. Now, I also want to speak into your pain right now, and I want to say God can fix this. This isn’t the end of your story. This is not how you were meant to live out the remainder of your days, you are not beyond His reach, this is not too big of a problem for Him to solve. It might feel like things are impossible, it might

Pray More Healing Retreat - Transcript

look like things are impossible. But you know what? This is exactly what a savior is for. Our God specializes in the impossible. He's a mender of broken hearts.

So I want to share with you a little bit about myself. I'm not going to be speaking today as someone who is a professional in healing, or emotional health, or a counsellor, anything along those lines. I'm basically just a person who has seen her fair share of broken relationships, had to go through some healing, and came out the other side more whole than when I started. So it's my hope that what I have to share, what I have walked through, could be of help and support to you who are watching right now.

Now, full disclosure, I am 100% in favor of all the things at our disposal in the natural for healing: Counselling, you know, therapy, self-help, all of those sorts of things. And I am also 100% convicted about the supernatural power of God to come in in a moment and just turn our world upside down and set things right. I'm a both/and kind of girl, so I hope it's okay, but I'm going to be sharing from both of those sides, both the natural and the supernatural.

So, what I want to do today is put some tools in your tool belt to equip you with some things that can help you overcome some of the pain of broken relationships. And then I also want to spend some time at the end facilitating a little bit of an encounter with the Lord for you, just to walk through prayer together and give God a chance to come and show up in this moment right now.

So, a little bit of my background. I am from a broken family - my parents divorced when I was about six - and I have a brother, and my brother and I would spend every other weekend at my dad's house. And, apart from that, we really didn't see a whole lot of him. And this was, what I didn't know at the time, was actually sowing some pretty deep seeds of pain and wounding for me. So our relationship, my relationship with my dad, was really patchy throughout the years.

I never knew if I was going to hear from him; I never knew if he was going to show up at my events or not; I never knew if he was going to want to talk to me when he called, or just talk to my brother; I never knew if he would remember my birthday from year to year, he was real inconsistent about that. And so what that ended up doing to me was, by the time I got to college, living in this sort of dynamic of a relationship, it was just eating me alive. It was destroying me. And I found myself wrestling with so many questions and lies about "What's wrong with me? Why do I have to fight for his love? Do I not deserve his love? Is there something that I'm doing?" And, you know, all those sorts of things.

And so I reached a breaking point, and spoke with my spiritual director at the time - I was in a loving community - and got some helpful advice. And I realized "You know what? I need to have just a conversation with my dad. I need to have a

Pray More Healing Retreat - Transcript

healthy confrontation where I share with him what this is doing to me, just his relationship dynamic.” And so I pulled myself together, I went and visited him, we sat down, and I had the most brutally honest conversation of my life with him, where I shared to him just the sort of pain that I was feeling, what his actions and inactions were doing to me, the cycle of hope deferred that I kept finding myself in. And I basically told him “You know what? I’m okay with whatever you choose, but you have to choose. I need you to either be my father, or don’t be my father. Because playing both sides, landing somewhere in the middle, it’s absolutely destroying me, and I can’t do this anymore.”

And so I shared all of this with him, and he was so receptive to it. He was remorseful, and he apologized, and we both cried, and he hugged me, and he said “I’m so sorry. You know, I’ll do better. I will do whatever it takes to make this right. You know, I’m going to be your father from now on.” So I left that encounter with my hopes high and feeling really good about it, and then I never heard from him again. So I might have gotten a phone call or two, it’s a little bit hazy, but it was definitely the last time I saw him, and he was out of my life for good at that point.

Now, as you can imagine, that was terribly distressing and really did some damage to my heart, because it started introducing things like abandonment, and rejection, and lies of shame and that sort of thing. And so I ended up having to go on a really long healing journey to overcome some of those things. And so what I wanted to share with you today is drawing from that experience a little bit. So I’m now at the point where, after using some of the tools that I want to share with you and encountering God in some of the ways that I’m going to share with you, I was able to get to the point of healing where obviously I can talk about it, and it’s not triggering me and bringing up all kinds of pain. I actually get excited about Father’s Day now, and that wasn’t always the case. And so it’s not a point of wounding anymore. So I want to share it with you in hopes that maybe something that I’ve been through can help you.

So what I want to say first is healing is a process. You know, God can do a lot in a single moment, but oftentimes I find that He works more gently and over a duration of time, especially when there are a lot of layers of pain involved. You know, He doesn’t want us to get destroyed by the healing process itself. And He likes to be thorough, He wants to have this healing process to come to completion in us. And so He won’t leave that job half done, which is why it can often take a duration of time. So, as you’re pursuing healing for yourself, I just want to encourage you to embrace being in process. It’s going to be a little bit messy on the inside for a while most likely, but I think it’s important that we learn to extend grace and mercy and patience toward ourselves while we’re in that process.

Pray More Healing Retreat - Transcript

There's nothing to be ashamed of or impatient about as we're pursuing this healing.

So, the tools that I want to put in your tool belt. Number 1: Feel what you're feeling. I feel like this shouldn't even have to be said, but in the world that we live I think pain can be a really tricky thing to navigate. You know, our culture has taught us, in a lot of ways, to value stoicism, or being emotionally unaffected by things. You know, you hear things like "Just power through," and "I'm going to do this," and "Rah!" And even on the level of faith, I think those of us who are pursuing holiness, sometimes we can feel like "Oh my gosh, if I react in a strong emotion, does God think that I'm not trusting of Him, or that I'm not being faithful, or that I'm not holy?" And we don't want to come across that way to the Lord. But that sometimes can be at the detriment of really experiencing the emotions that are authentically happening within us.

So I want to say that feeling and processing our emotions and holiness are not mutually-exclusive. In fact, I think holiness really requires us to go into the depths of our heart with the Lord and sort through what's going on in there, and bring that before Him and allow Him to work through it. And if we don't, let's just be honest. If we have emotions that we choose to not process in the moment, they don't just disappear, right. They kind of just go into hiding somewhere inside of us and then resurface later, usually more strongly than when they originated, and usually directed at someone who doesn't deserve it, right? I think we've all been there, right?

But, apart from that, our emotions can even start manifesting in our bodies in a physical way through stress and anxiety, illness, fatigue. You know, this is kind of a medical reality that happens. And oftentimes, those repressed emotions that we are holding in can sometimes also become the breeding ground for other more toxic things to start to grow, like hatred, and bitterness, and anger, resentment, that sort of thing. And we don't want to create space for that sort of stuff to be growing within us.

So I highly recommend that you create some space to just feel what you're feeling. I recommend doing it alone, privately, and do it with the Lord. Invite Him into this process with you. Your emotions are not black and white. They're going to be messy, and that's okay. I just really encourage you to be completely unfiltered with the Lord, be completely honest about what you're experiencing. Put words to them if you can - if you can put a name on it, you know, like "Lord, I just feel so angry. I feel so hurt. I feel so betrayed." You know, King David is the most beautiful biblical example of this that we have. He just poured out his heart in the Psalms just, like, expressing to the Lord "This is what I feel, and my enemies are

Pray More Healing Retreat - Transcript

surrounding me, and ah!" And I just there is something so healthy about that that we should learn from in our own processing of our emotions.

I also recommend giving our emotions some kind of physical release. Whether that's crying - I'm a crier. Whatever emotion it is, it's going to be crying. I just cry for everything. But I have a friend who went through something hard, and then went off to the woods and just screamed at the top of his lungs and just got it out, and that worked for him. So you can cry, yell, sing, exercise, create, write, you know, whatever it takes. Just do your body the favor and just, like, get it out of inside. And I just say don't be afraid to be vulnerable before the Lord. You know, this is where God can just beautifully show up as comforter, and we get to encounter Him, in our vulnerability, as comforter. So that's tool number one in your tool belt: Feel what you're feeling.

Tool number two: Forgiveness. This is huge. This is probably one of the most powerful tools that we have at our disposal to experience emotional healing and freedom. Now, there are a few ways that I think forgiveness can be misunderstood, so I do want to walk through it a little bit with you. Forgiveness, you've probably heard this, forgiveness is for my sake, not for the sake of my offender. So I'm going to... hopefully as I flesh this out it's going to become a little bit clearer what that means.

So, three things that forgiveness is. Number one, forgiveness is acknowledging the harm that was done. It's basically saying "This thing, it happened, it hurt, and it mattered. It happened, it hurt, and it mattered." You know, we can sometimes be tempted to, when we experience something hard, say "You know what? It's fine. It's fine. I didn't need that thing. You know, I am fine without it. It doesn't matter, I'm moving on." And I think there's something that is getting suppressed when we do that that shouldn't be suppressed, you know.

If I were to say "It's fine, I didn't need a dad growing up anyway. Who needs a dad? I'm fine without one. I didn't need the love and affection of a father figure growing up, I didn't need that kind of attention. It's fine." I think we would all say that's not the healthiest attitude to have, because that's saying basically that this desire in me is not worth having. And if God puts a holy desire in us, He means for it to be fulfilled, and we shouldn't reject it and we shouldn't shut it down. So acknowledge what was done, acknowledge the hurt, acknowledge that it mattered.

Number two, forgiveness is releasing the other from debt. So it's basically saying "Yes, this person did this thing, and they actually owed me something - they owed me an apology, they owed me a safe environment growing up, they owed me love and affection, they owed me truth and honesty and trust, and they didn't give it to me. They owed it and they didn't deliver. But I am choosing to release them from

Pray More Healing Retreat - Transcript

the debt of what they owed. They no longer owe that to me. I'm not going to look to them anymore to fulfill that, that desire that I had."

I think if we end up skipping this stage of the forgiveness process, this is where resentment can start to seep in and grow. And if we were to hold on to resentment in that case, what that's basically saying is "I'm going to allow this thing that happened to me to continue wounding me over and over and over." And we deserve better than that. And so this is the importance of releasing our offenders from debt.

And then the third step of forgiveness is speaking blessing over the person. And I'm going to be honest, I think this is the hardest stage, at least for me, is to say "You know what Lord? I am not holding on to anything, I don't have a grudge, I don't have any ill will towards them, I wish them well, I pray blessings over them. Everything they need, God, I pray that You would provide for them, that You would prosper them." And, you know, speaking words of life over them, which is hard to do. But I think there is just something really spiritually important about doing that.

Okay, so that's what forgiveness is. Three things forgiveness is not. Forgiveness is not a feeling, it's a choice. You know, a lot of times we feel like "Oh, but I don't feel like I've forgiven them. I don't think I can forgive them until I feel like I have because it's disingenuous, or it's not honest if I do that." And I want to say this is a little bit of a paradox, because it's kind of like a principle of God's kingdom, where actually choosing to forgive first is what makes it possible for our emotions to catch up to that reality.

There's a little bit of an element of mystery involved in that, but the way I like to think of it is almost like if you are holding on to this person who has hurt you, and everything that's wrapped up with that experience - all of the pain and the betrayal and all of that - and you're trying to heal at the same time, you still have a connection to that stuff. But when you forgive, it's like you snip that connection, and that can, you know, distance itself from our lives. And then you can give space for your emotions to just heal and catch up to the reality of forgiveness. And so I hope that explains that a little bit, but forgiveness is a choice first and foremost, not a feeling.

Forgiveness, number two, is not always a one-time thing. Sometimes, feelings will reemerge, and you'll need to make that choice over and over again to forgive. Sometimes you'll uncover new layers of things that need forgiving. You know, it's almost like if we walk through something hard, pain can kind of get into the crevices of our heart and just kind of, like, hide there. And it's almost like we walk through forgiveness and all of that, and we clear off one layer, but at some point in

Pray More Healing Retreat - Transcript

the future maybe some pain kind of sneaks out and comes to the surface again, or maybe there is something that we didn't realize was inside of us and it needs forgiving. There's nothing wrong with that, that's just part of the process. And so when that happens, God just is surfacing it so that we can heal from it. So just walking through that forgiveness process over again, it's totally normal to do this.

And then thirdly, forgiveness is not the same as reconciliation. You know, sometimes forgiveness can be misunderstood as something that we extend to our offender once that broken situation has been made right, so to speak, either through their apology, or through justice being met, or when the offender seemingly deserves to be forgiven. And that's actually not forgiveness that we're describing there, that's actually more like reconciliation. Those are two separate things.

And it is possible and, in fact, really important that we learn to exercise forgiveness without any promise of reconciliation. Reconciliation is the restoration of relationship. This requires trust, it requires action to be taken on both sides from both parties, it requires both people to be involved. It takes two people to reconcile, but it only takes one person to forgive. So this is why it's important that we learn to walk through forgiveness, even if reconciliation isn't part of the picture yet.

And sometimes, that person might never be reconciled to us. Forgiveness does not mean that you have to give access, to give that person access to you again. There are plenty of examples of situations where our offenders are not safe people to have in our lives. They're, you know, likely to hurt us again, or it's just a bad situation, and that doesn't mean that we can't forgive them though. We can get the freedom of forgiveness without the pressure of reconciliation.

Okay. So, tool number one: Feel what you're feeling. Tool number two: Forgiveness. Tool number three, this is what I'm calling "The divine exchange." Sometimes, I've noticed that, in my faith journey, when... in the moments when I've lost something or, like, something's been taken from me, or I hand something over to the Lord, like my pain or my burdens, He's actually been really quick to come in and replace that with something better. So this is why I'm calling it the divine exchange. It's the beauty for ashes kind of exchange.

So I can say 100% that the deepest moments of healing in my life have come in this exchange, in hearing God speak directly into my situation, into my heart, telling me His heart towards me, reminding me of truth. There is just nothing like the power of His voice. So, after walking through handing over our pain and emotions to the Lord, handing over our offenders to the Lord through forgiveness, the third step that I recommend is turning to the Lord and saying "Okay Lord, what do You have for me in return?" And then wait and see what He says.

Pray More Healing Retreat - Transcript

Okay, I know I just fire hosed you like crazy, and we're short on time, but I do want to make a little bit of space right now to just walk through prayer with you, and invite God to come and show up and bring some healing on that level in whatever way you need it. So let's recalibrate a little and just enter into a moment of prayer. Let us remember we are in the holy presence of God right now.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. I just invite you to call to mind one area of your heart that you feel like needs healing right now. It could be from a broken relationship, it could be just something that's hurting and you're not sure where it's coming from, but something that you want to present to the Lord and invite His healing. So God, I just want to lift up the pain that we're feeling, the emotions that we're feeling, any kind of anger, betrayal, all the things that have been weighing us down, this burden. God, we lift this up to You. We know that it matters to You. It matters, our pain matters to You God. Thank You for caring about our pain, thank You for caring about our experiences, thank You for wanting us to experience healing and freedom.

God, I just want to declare, in Jesus' name, that these things that we carry, these pains that we've experienced, they do not define who we are, You define who we are. They do not write our story, You write our story. Lord, we hand it all over to You right now, we give You all of our pain, all of our emotion, and we hand over to You the people who've offended us, who've hurt us, who've caused us these wounds, Lord, and we speak forgiveness in Jesus' name over these people. God, we acknowledge that they owed us something and they didn't deliver, and we release them from that debt right now in Jesus' name. And Lord, we turn to You to fill the void that is left, to fill the void that they could not fill for us.

Lord, we speak blessing over them, we harbor no ill will towards them, and we invite Your grace and Your mercy to be upon them in Jesus' name. And God, we just invite You in right now in this moment. Lord, we receive Your grace right now, we receive Your truth, Your revelation right now, we receive Your love right now. And God, we invite You to speak right now, straight from Your heart into our heart. What is it that You want to give us in return? What is the truth that You want us to receive in this moment right now?

God, we thank You for Your Word, we thank You for Your presence, we thank You for Your heart, we thank You for Your power to heal, to set us free. We receive every good gift that You have for us, we receive every form of healing that You have for us, we embrace the freedom that You offer to us, we thank You for the price that You paid, Jesus on the cross. Yeah God. And I just pray that You would build upon this experience, that You would seal the work that You've done in our hearts today, that You would build upon it as we walk forward in the

Pray More Healing Retreat - Transcript

upcoming days, and that You would just walk us from glory to glory, freedom to freedom in the mighty name of Jesus. Amen. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. God bless you guys.