

Healing the Mother & Father Wounds

Jake Khym

Hi, my name is Jake Khym, thanks for joining me for this session on our retreat here, that we'll be reflecting on healing from mother and father wounds and family wounds.

Opening Prayer

I'll start with a prayer. Name of the father, the son, and the Holy Spirit, Amen. Holy Spirit, we ask that you would come and be with us. We acknowledge that our hearts are in great need of restoration and healing, and we want to have a life that's full and free. And we know that we need you for that. I pray that you would bless us as we reflect and ponder on the trues of our creation as well as the ways that you restore our hearts. So come Holy Spirit, lead and guide us, I pray especially that you would keep us safe and our heart safe as we reflect on these ideas and that as we step into these areas, that Holy Spirit it would be in you that we do that. So come Holy Spirit, Jesus in your name we pray, Amen. In the name of the father, the son, and the Holy Spirit, Amen.

A Sacred Relationship

I'm a parent of three kids and I have some really good days as a parent, and I have some bad days as a parent. If you're a parent, you probably know the same. You probably know and have experienced the good days and the bad days. I'm also a son. I have parents and I was born and raised in a family, a Catholic family, we lived in the United States, I now live in British Columbia, Canada, but I grew up in the Tennessee, in Tennessee and Alabama, quite a change, that's another story. And my mom and my dad had good days, and they had bad days. It would take me much longer than the time that we have right now for me to be able to share all the stories that I could share with you and all the things I would want to share with you about the restoration and healing that comes in and through family wounds and how God desires to restore that.

But I just want to approach the subject with sensitivity. It's a delicate thing, it's a delicate dynamic. And when we dive into these areas about healing, acknowledging wounds from our family, I really encourage you to do that with a great reverence and respect as much as possible. We're not perfect, this reflection is not about throwing anybody under the bus or parents or other people. It's not about throwing ourselves under the bus. This is not about condemnation. It is very possible to honor thy father and mother, as well as acknowledge the wounds that we've potentially suffered from them, as well as the wounds that we have inflicted on our children.

And so, as we dive into these familial type wounds, especially mother and father wounds, I just want to start us off on that foot. I have a speaking ministry and two podcasts and various work that I do, and I have gotten to the point with my parents, because as well as speaking, I'm also a clinical counselor and have done a lot of my own personal counseling. And my mom and dad are great people. They're imperfect people, and I'm smiling because I'm somebody who I don't keep things behind closed doors. The skeletons in our family's closet are well on display. And I just

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want to tell you kind of a bit about what's possible because I've been very honest about my mom and dad's shortcomings and how it impacted me. And I haven't shared that publicly because I desire for them to be thrown under the bus or have people speak or see them poorly. It's because all of us suffer, and as I started to do this, I asked my parents this is something I'm believing that I should do, and I asked her permission if it was okay to be honest. And they had just an incredible response. And they, I said, "If our brokenness and pain can help other people, absolutely, you talk about it." And that was so courageous. And it was so bold of them, and it was healing because in that moment they acknowledged that, yeah, it's not been perfect, but we're not going to keep the door closed to maybe somebody else being blessed by our story of pain. They've said more recently, which I find even more funny. Well, that last part wasn't funny, but this is the part that is funny is now they tease me and say, "Well, Jake, if we had not made so many mistakes, you wouldn't be a career." And I think that's a really fun way to look at it that my mom and dad had just taken a different perspective on it.

So, I reference them, and I invite you to do the same as you reflect on these areas, we can be pretty flippant with this stuff and not treat it with the reverence that it's needed. No matter what your upbringing was like, and no matter what kind of parent you are, the relationship between parent and child is one of the most sacred things on the face of the planet. God infused so much of himself as we bear that image, there's a lot of God in that beautiful intimate relationship. And so because of that, and because of the reality of the world that we live in, we are in a fallen world, a world at war, in the spiritual realm against principalities and powers that seek to destroy what is good and holy and so anything that has a lot of God in it, you can expect it to be really assaulted.

The First Representatives of God

I mean, and the third kind of secret and the revelations from our lady to Lucia and Fatima, she talked about the final battle being around marriage and family, and that's these things so let's just have a bit of context as we think about that, that this isn't only about bad people doing bad things. There's a much larger story that we have to acknowledge as we press into these things. And at the same time, we need to press into these things.

One of the things I've encountered as a clinical counselor has been the dynamic where people don't want to talk about these dynamics because they don't want to throw anybody under the bus. They don't want to be mean to their parents. That's not the goal. The point is not to be mean to people, the point is to acknowledge what's happened, how we've been impacted by that and grow because these kinds of dynamics impact us deeply and healing can be found there. That's the motivation. That's the desire behind it because God wants to see our hearts restored.

The church acknowledges that parents aren't perfect, and that healing is necessary, and it comes in and through God, I want to read from you a paragraph out of the catechism paragraph 239 follow along with me, here's what it says. *"The language of faith thus draws on the human experience of parents, who are in a way, the first representatives of God for man, the language of faith, again, draws on the human experience of parents. In other words, we think about the faith, we're drawing on the experiences with our parents who are in a way, the first representatives of God for man."*

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The church right here, and in this section, the Catechism is actually referencing the document familiar as consortium about the family. And so that simple line is so powerful and important that the first representatives of God that we had were our parents.

And so right there the Church is making a really critical, interesting, really important distinction and drawing our awareness to something that your relationship with your parents has and is influencing your relationship with God for better or for worse or both. That's why pressing into this matters is because as humans, the experiences that we've had inform us and shape us to expect what we'll get in the next relationship and in the next experience, that's how humans work.

Schema Therapy

There's this idea that's called schema therapy. It's something that I use in my practice. And it's this really awesome simplified idea of what I'm talking about. It basically goes something like this., every human being has core human desires in their heart. I add on that God put there on purpose. That's what it means to be human. For example, to be loved, to be safe, to be seen, to be affirmed, to be blessed, to be cared for and cherished all these things are put there by God, because that's how we were made in His image and likeness for relationship.

And so, in that when we have these dynamics and have these desires in our hearts, then we're looking and hungry when we go about our everyday life. And so what schema therapy acknowledges is that when you're going through life, you're hungry for something. You're trying to find the things that you're looking for, but you're also making meaning of the experiences that happen to you. And so, what the word schema comes from is when you're doing life, what we as human beings do is we have experience after experience, after experience. And we're putting meaning to that.

So, let's say that maybe as a kid, your mom or dad was late to pick you up from school. And maybe you had to sit on the curb for quite a long time, and in that experience, you have desires for safety and desires to be comforted and to be loved and be important. But as an experience happens, we are making meaning of it. We're trying to make sense of why mom or dad is late. And it's right there where we develop beliefs about why they were late, and in those beliefs and experiences, if they're repeated, if they feel similar, they all get pulled together and create a schema. A way that we look through the world. It's almost like a pair of glasses that you see the world through. That's like the schemas that you look through.

So, you're looking through it and it's being influenced by the experiences that you've had. And the way that we look out, and these lenses that we look at they change our view of God. That's pretty powerful. That's why the healing of the lenses, the fixing of our sight and our heart is so important because it influences where we think we'll find happiness, where we'll go for when we are sad, it influences how we pray. It influences if we'll even approach God and our need, how we handle shame, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. There's a lot of implications here.

In other words, the church is acknowledging that our parents have a critical role in our relationship with God. The church goes on to say, "*But this experience,*" the same paragraph, but

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this experience what experience? The human experience of parents, *"Also tells us that human parents are fallible and can disfigure fatherhood and motherhood."* Parents are fallible and can disfigure fatherhood and motherhood.

That's the lenses, it's when your prescription's wrong, and the thing that you're looking at changes, because you don't see it clearly anymore, because the prescription's wrong, that's what experiences over and over and over the schemas do, when we've had a lot of wounds from our parents, we can't see God and other people clearly anymore.

A Personal Experience

I know this in my personal life, you know, in my story, my mom had a lot of trauma that she suffered in her life. And because of that, when I was very young, my mom had to get some help for her emotions when I was very, very little, very young, still an infant. And that wounded me, it left me with a wound of abandonment where I didn't know it at the time cause I didn't have the words for it, but in my soul and in my heart, I was afraid of not being cared for not being loved. And then that became a normal thing for me to look at life through. And I experienced other times where that happened because of my mom or dad's just imperfection. And then the schema developed, and then when I started to approach my relationship with God, I thought he's not going to be there. He won't follow through. He won't do what he says he's going to do. I'll be let down. That's a significant influence on my relationship with God coming from the wounds of my family. I want to share a practical example that we can maybe unpack a little bit more to help you get a sense of, how do I go about with the healing of these wounds?

So, my daughter Maria, she was probably about six or seven and she's in the backseat of the car, in her car seat, and it's just me and her, and she's having her after-school snack and we're driving home. And as she's eating her apple, she's eating the apple and she like breaks the apple and the apple juice kind of flies on the window. And then she takes the apple and starts drawing on the window and I'm in the front seat. And I wasn't so happy that the window was becoming her coloring book. And so, I said to her, and not in appropriate tone, "Maria, what are you doing? why are you doing that?" And she put her head down, and got really quiet. I felt ashamed, and I said, "Maria, I'm sorry, can you tell me what's wrong, what happened, I'm sorry." And she said, "You think I'm a baby and I can never do anything right."

Now, let's just pause for a sec. I never said she was a baby. I never said she can't do anything right. I said, what are you doing? Notice the interpretation. She put meaning to things and came to a conclusion that's pretty powerful. Now, let's just play this out. Let's say that she keeps experiencing that because of my brokenness or maybe because of that interpretation. And she keeps believing that I can never do anything right. "I can never do anything right. I can never do anything right."

How confident do you think she would be in a future situation? Maybe to a volunteer at class, or at school, to go up front and read out of a book? Or how confident would she be maybe to disagree with her friends because there's this belief rolling around, she could never do anything right? And it came out of an experience she had with me then in the grand scheme of things is pretty minor. But if that experience doesn't get addressed and corrected and something be done

with it, it can totally change the course of her life. See again, experiences are the building blocks and that's an experience, and one by itself, not a big deal, a whole bunch of those that can change a person.

Types of Wounds

I want to give you a couple of categories of how wounds happen. And then I want to walk with you through what goes on within a wound. We're going to use Maria's story as an example. And then we're going to talk a little bit about how to experience healing from those wounds. So, there are two basic kinds of wounds that we suffer, again, so let's take the parental wounds with mom and dad. There's what I call a type A and a type B wound, a type A is the absence of something, A stands for absence. The absence of something that should have been there but wasn't it's like neglect. It's the potentially the parents got divorced and mom or dad should've been there, but they left. That would be an absence wound that will get interpreted, and then we will react to that, and that creates that schema or those dynamics that then impact us for the rest of our lives. That's why it matters. And especially impacts our relationship with God.

Type A, now type B wounds, B stands for bad things. So, a type B wound is something that happened to us that shouldn't have happened. It's kind of the inverse of the type A wound. This is your classic stuff like childhood sexual abuse or things like that, that's a type B wound. Notice how the wounds are different. One is the absence of something that needed to be there, the other is the presence of something that shouldn't have been there. The Church actually praise this, every time we go to mass, we actually pray in the Confiteor right, we ask for forgiveness for the things that we've done and failed to do.

This dynamic is written into the DNA of what it means to be humans. Again, I'm setting the stage here because when you start to dive in, when you'd maybe have the courage or feel called by the spirit to zoom in a little bit about a particular wound. Now, for a moment, how might this happen? You could be in a conversation. You could be talking to your spouse, you could be parenting your kids, you could be on the drive to work, all the various things that happen. And what often happens is something like we get triggered. And what a trigger is, is an emotional reaction in the moment, it has a second part, but the emotional reaction in the moment.

So, let's say that you're having a conversation with your spouse and they're doing something and not looking at you while you're talking to them. Let's use that as an example. And when they're not looking at you while you're talking to them and you all of a sudden get emotional. When you get emotional, you might just go, "Oh, this is wrong, look, see what they're doing. "See what they're doing is wrong." And this is where a lot of marital conflict comes from, but what might not be aware of, and this is what I'm inviting you into, is to ask the question of what does this remind me of? Another way to put it is, "When have I felt like this before?"

Because I've seen so many situations, especially with adults that the dilemma can never stop. It seems to be perpetual because the real issue is never being addressed because it's deeper down, it's below the surface, it's prior to that situation. And so, the trigger is this emotional dynamic, but the part two is that the intense energy around that experience, someone not looking at you when they're talking to, actually is connected to a prior event, and moms and dads have the most

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usually, the most impact on us as we're growing up. And so, because we have these various wounds that happen, the absence of something that should have been there, or the presence of something that shouldn't have been there, we get triggered and to heal that, we want to step a little bit further into and ask the questions of "When have I felt like this before?" Now, we're going places that can actually transform and heal a dynamic, often what you'll bump into, and it's very normal, is to bump into places where you were impacted as a kid, often by moms and dads.

It's the primary relationship. It's the first representative of God. That's a pretty important thing. And so you get triggered, and then you have these potentially you ask that question and then maybe all of a sudden you pause for a second and say, "My goodness, this reminds me so much of the time when I would walk in and my dad, it was in his office, and he had a home office, and I would walk in and try to tell him about my day after the end of school, and he would never turn and acknowledge me. He just kept looking and working on his computer." And maybe you remember that as a kid or he kept writing on his notepad, or he would never get off the phone or something. And you felt the pain as a little kid, and now it's being reminded, you're being reminded of it now in the present.

That dynamic is the wound that's underneath the surface that came from your parents. And there's ways to address that wound, there's ways to heal that wound. And I'm going to zoom right in on one that's very important. And it has to do with the renewal of our mind, it has to do with that schema therapy idea as well.

Our Beliefs are Powerful

One of the most powerful things that goes on in our hearts is our beliefs. What we believe, whether we realize it or not, we're operating based on what we believe all the time. You choose this or that based on what you believe about it. And so, addressing beliefs is something that's very important. Now, a belief that isn't true is a lie. We've believed a lie, some kind of thought or statement that isn't true.

So just like Maria in the car, "you think I can't do anything right." That's not true at all. And if she believes that, and that gets lodged into her heart, that's going to affect where she goes in her life. It's going to go all over the place like that could really impact her from an experience that we had. And again, often these dynamics come from our moms and dads because we're around them so much. So, if you're following with me, we're walking down this path of going, I was triggered. I asked, when did I feel this before? I've now recalled maybe something about when I felt that before, and now I'm aware in that moment with my dad, as this example where he didn't pay attention to me. Sorry, I'm mixing the stories a little bit. So, I'm triggered in the moment, or my spouse won't look at me, and then I've recalled that my dad, when I was little, my dad wouldn't look at me. So, it's almost identical, it's right there.

But we need to do something more, awareness is great but it's not enough. Being aware of the wound, isn't enough. There's more steps we have to go through. And I want to give you three very practical steps.

Three Practical Steps

I call them the three R's. So, when we're looking to heal from wounds, especially parental wounds, there's three words that start with the letter R. The first one is repent. Now you might say repent. "I didn't do anything wrong; I was the kid. My dad wouldn't look at me," right? Maria might say, "I didn't do anything wrong, I was just being a kid, "I was just, eating my snack, not a big deal."

Right, but repentance doesn't just mean a shaming thing. Repentance literally comes from the word metanoia and that's Jesus when he said, "Repent the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He's literally saying metanoia, which is a Greek word. Meta means change, noia means your mind or your thoughts. So, what repentance actually means is to change your mind, change your thoughts about something, change the way you see life, change the prescription. Consciously just go in. And so, for that person it might be, I believe that I'm not good enough that's why nobody looks at me. Is it actually true that I'm not good enough? Well, I'm going to repent from that thought. I'm going to turn away from that thought because Jesus says that's not the truth. And so, the first R is repentance a turning away, a changing our mind, metanoia about the beliefs that are present in those wounds very important. And you actually have to choose to do it. That's what it means to be human, will is involved.

Number two, the second R is renounce. And what renounced means is we're acknowledging the spiritual realm. When a lie comes into us, there are dynamics that are there, and the enemy likes it. Like did you know that temptation is basically the devil and his minions, the demonic, putting a thought in your mind, that's temptation. They can put thoughts in your mind. That's what happens often in the wound, they take advantage of the vulnerable situation, suggest thoughts that seem true but it's actually a temptation to believe something that isn't true and we agree with a lie. And then it changes the perception.

The renouncing part is acknowledging that we've agreed with something that isn't true, and so we say, "No, I don't want to agree with that anymore." And we literally do that. We literally pray "in the name of Jesus, in the name of Jesus I renounce the lie that I'm not good enough," to use that example.

And then the third R is receive. In other words, the repent and renounce have almost tried to clear out a bit of those dynamics to where now we're in a space hopefully where we can receive the love of God. And ideally, it's a space where we're just there to be loved, not to perform, not to do something right, but just to be loved, authentic love is where healing comes from.

The problem is that we're often closed to love because of the beliefs that we've had, and the ways that we've reacted to the wounds that we've suffered. God is always speaking; He wants to communicate to you. He wants to tell you His love for you and his care for you. It can be hard to hear because there's other voices in the way, voices like lies from the wounds, and healing these wounds are so important because God wants to be our Father.

And so our moms and our dads, as the church says, give us an image of God, and God wants to redeem that so our relationship with him can thrive and grow. And so, addressing the wounds,

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following the trigger back to the wound, doing the three R's and really staying in that last R receive, there's a simple process and a step for healing.

Now, there is so much more that I wish I could unpack with you, but this is just a taste. If you're wanting to learn more and dive more into this, I would really encourage you to check out a book and a podcast. The book is called, "Be Devoted." Sorry, the book is called "Be Healed." "Be Devoted" is a second book by the author, Dr. Bob Schuschts "Be Healed." It's the basics of all of this stuff that I'm talking about, and the podcast is called "Restore the Glory." It's a podcast that Dr. Bob and I do together about healing. That podcast and that book they'll help take you a lot further in these areas, but I'd like to close us in a prayer.

Closing Prayer

Holy Spirit, there's areas in our hearts that where we believe lies and we need healing and the truth, please make us sensitive to when we're triggered about where things are actually coming from so that we can experience your healing, so that we can have our images of you redeemed as we heal from the wounds of our mother and our father. Holy Spirit we trust you, Jesus in your name we pray, Amen.