

Mended Spirit – Shattered Soul

Jim Stephens

Title: Mended Spirit – Shattered Soul

Text: Nehemiah 1:1 – 2:9

Thesis: As Christians we may be living defeated, powerless lives. We may be vulnerable to the attacks of the enemy of our souls and our defenses against sin may be broken down. We may have never experienced the wholeness God intends for us and may be unaware of our condition and our potential. Awareness of our condition drives us to prayer and God's Spirit begins to show us his plan for our restoration.

Hayford book – Chapters 5-7

- Explain spirit, soul and body – the human makeup
- Focus on the soul
- How the Holy Spirit helps us pray
- The Holy Spirit develops the nature (holiness) of God in us
- It takes time (Nehemiah asked for 12 years)

Brief review of Ken's previous message and mention series overview

1 These are the memoirs of Nehemiah son of Hacaliah. In late autumn of the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes' reign, I was at the fortress of Susa. 2 Hanani, one of my brothers, came to visit me with some other men who had just arrived from Judah. I asked them about the Jews who had survived the captivity and about how things were going in Jerusalem. 3 They said to me, "Things are not going well for those who returned to the province of Judah. They are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem has been torn down, and the gates have been burned." 4 When I heard this, I sat down and wept. In fact, for days I mourned, fasted, and prayed to the God of heaven. (Nehemiah 1:1-4 NLT) (Nehemiah 1:3 NLT)

Introduction:

Many Christians would have to answer the question, "How's it going – really?" with something like Hanani's answer to his brother Nehemiah's question, "How are things going in Jerusalem?"

"Things are not going all that well. They are in trouble. They are disgraced in many ways. The walls are broken down and the gates are burned up. They can't really control what comes in and what goes out. They're pretty much defenseless against the stuff that threatens them."

Think about this:

- Among married born again Christians, 35% have experienced a divorce. That figure is identical to the outcome among married adults who are not born again: 35%.

- Christians are no less likely to be in debt than non-Christians.
- Some Christians can't control how much alcohol we consume or how much food we eat. It's an addiction.
- Some Christians can't control their consumption of pornographic images on the internet or in videos they watch.
- Sometimes we find we can't control what comes in (our ears - gossip) and what comes out (our mouths – criticism and hurtful talk).
- Some Christians can't control their temper. We're sometimes completely under the control of anyone who can make us angry.

How then can we rationalize that we are born-again, Holy Spirit-indwelt, Bible-believing and church-attending people and yet we're not experiencing a substantially different (better?) life than non-Christians?

Is there something wrong with our salvation? Have we mis-read what the Bible says about life – about the Christian life?

For an answer to that question let's look at something we need to know and understand about ourselves:

That **We are created by God as a three-part being – spirit, soul, and body.**

Hebrews 4:12

*For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing **soul and spirit**, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.* (Hebrews 4:12 NIV)

Luke 1:46-47

*46 And Mary said: "My **soul** glorifies the Lord 47 and my **spirit** rejoices in God my Savior,* (Luke 1:46-47 NIV)

1 Thessalonians 5:23

*May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole **spirit, soul and body** be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.* (1 Thessalonians 5:23 NIV)

Did you notice that the Bible makes a clear distinction not just between our body and soul but also between our soul and our spirit?

One of the clearest pictures of this three-part nature (Spirit, Soul, Body) we were created with is in Genesis 2:7. Let's take a look at this:

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. (Genesis 2:7 KJV)

And the Lord God formed a man's body from the dust of the ground and breathed into it the breath of life. And the man became a living person. (Genesis 2:7 NLT)

God made the man (his body), then breathed God's own breath (spirit) into him and he became a living soul (a person). Body + spirit = soul = person.

God reveals the structure of our being – the way he made us in his image – in his Word, the Bible. Because he wants to accomplish distinct things in each part of us, he wants us to understand about each part of us – from his Word.

Spirit – Soul – Body

- Spirit – the God-conscious part of me.
- Soul – the world-conscious part of me.
- Body – the self-conscious part of me.

We're talking now about the Soul – that part of us that is our personality and identity.

The soul of man is made up of three parts:

- Mind
- Will
- Emotions

So let's sum up this part about the three-part nature of man:

- God created man in his own image and likeness. He made a body, breathed spirit into the body, and a person came into being – a living soul.
- Genesis 3: These people were created for and enjoyed a personal relationship with God – daily fellowship with their creator. Every day they walked with God, they enjoyed being with him.

The Fall into Sin and out of Relationship With God

Then sin came. Satan tempted the man and woman to sin and they heard wrong information, thought wrong thoughts, made a wrong decision, performed a wrong action – and the die was cast, the course was set, the damage was done. They

stopped enjoying being with God every day, in fact they “hid themselves” from God. They were afraid of him!

The man was a living soul, but his spirit, God’s gift of himself to the man, was cut off from its source.

Now man was increasingly driven and controlled by the body and the soul.

Man became:

- Emotion-driven
- Mind-driven
- Flesh-driven

God sent his Son to give life – so we could be born again. This is spiritual rebirth – re-breath of God into the spiritually dead person.

3 Jesus replied, "I assure you, unless you are born again, you can never see the Kingdom of God." 4 "What do you mean?" exclaimed Nicodemus. "How can an old man go back into his mother's womb and be born again?" 5 Jesus replied, "The truth is, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. 6 Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives new life from heaven. (John 3:3-6 NLT)

16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. 17 God did not send his Son into the world to condemn it, but to save it. (John 3:16-17 NLT)

So now we have a spiritually reborn person who still has a damaged soul. **Mended Spirit – Shattered, Damaged Soul.** Understanding about this damaged soul is one of the keys to understanding why we who are born-again and filled with God’s Spirit still struggle with so many things in our lives.

Look at these words from Nehemiah 1:3

They said to me, "Things are not going well for those who returned to the province of Judah. They are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem has been torn down, and the gates have been burned." (Nehemiah 1:3 NLT)

These were people who were restored to the city of Jerusalem. They were no longer captives living in a foreign land. They had returned to God’s city, they were identified as God’s people, they worshiped at God’s temple, but they were just not making it. They weren’t living victorious, overcoming lives.

Paul wrote to the Christians in the church at Ephesus:

And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he is the one who has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption. (Ephesians 4:30 NLT)

Ephesians 4:17-32 deals with behavior issues. It's about how Christians should behave in relationships with each other and in the world.

Paul points out to them that even though their spirit had been reborn through faith in Jesus Christ (a parallel with the Jews who had returned to Jerusalem), they were living in a way that made them completely vulnerable to attack, to sin, and to the accompanying shame it brought. They were "soul driven" and their souls were not healthy.

The Human Soul is made up of our Mind, Will, and Emotions.

- I want to talk about the consequences of living with a damaged soul. Consequences that affect our:
 - Relationships
 - Self-image
 - Lead to poor decisions
 - Cause destructive behavior
- Let's look at what can happen to the mind, to the will, to the emotions to cause a wounded, damaged soul.

Mind – A Muddled Mind:

- Wrong information
- Wrong conclusions
- Wrong thinking
- Confusion
- Thought processes – take thoughts captive (2 Corinthians 10:5) See verses 3-5 Your mind is a battleground.

We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:5 NIV)

3 For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. 4 The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. (2 Corinthians 10:3-4 NIV)

- Think on these things – Philippians 4:8

And now, dear brothers and sisters, let me say one more thing as I close this letter. Fix your thoughts on what is true and honorable and right. Think about things that are pure and lovely and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. (Philippians 4:8 NLT)

Will – A Warped Will:

- Stubbornness
- Self-will
- Pride
- Indecisiveness
- Uncommitted

Emotions – Fractured Feelings:

- Hurts
- Anger – resentment – bitterness
- Pleasure seeking

What does God want to do for us to help us with our Muddled Mind, our Warped Will, and our Fractured Feelings?

He Restores My Shattered Soul - Psalm 23

1 The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, 3 he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. (Psalm 23:1-3 NIV)

How does God restore my soul? Points from Psalm 23.

Even after he has become my shepherd (I'm born again, spiritually alive, following Jesus), I still need to have my soul restored. He has a way to do that.

- **He shepherds me – His Authority.** (I'm secure and protected under his authority)
- **He makes me lie down in green pastures – His Word.** (He feeds my spirit, makes me grow spiritually stronger)
- **He leads me by quiet waters – His Spirit.** (Breathing his life into me every day)

Daily quiet time.

Submit to God:

- Submission to God makes your will pliable. Start by submitting your will to God (Attitude). Then learn to obey him (Action). Submission is an attitude, obedience is an action.
- Submission to God takes the authority from your flesh/body and gives it to God.
- Submission to God aligns you with God's purpose.
- Submission to God involves submission to people – Community.

Pray:

- God awareness strengthens our spirit – the God-conscious part of each of us.
- Praying is like exercising muscles – the more we exercise God-Consciousness the stronger our spirit becomes.
- Prayer reinforces our dependence on God – makes our spirit stronger.

Read God's Word and Journal:

- God's Word re-programs your mental computer.
- God's Word cleanses your mind and soul.
- God's Word feeds and strengthens your God-Consciousness.

Conclusion:

There's hope for me and you! Paul "wrote the book" on living a mature and victorious Christian life. And he struggled with his recalcitrant humanity all the way through.

This will take time. How much time? How much time do you have? Exactly the rest of your life.