

Part 2 – The Land of the Emotions **BRUISED & BITTER**

Introduction:

Let's take a few moments in prayer before we go any further, because I mean with the aid of the Holy Spirit, to lay some of us, if not all of us, bare this morning. Some of us are bound in our emotions by bitterness. We may not recognize it or be willing to admit it, but the damage is there, and we operate out of it. It is time for you to be free. It is time to release the bound of bitterness and have victory in the land of your emotions.

Many Christians are like the apple that is dropped and bruised. When first dropped there is usually no sign of damage for several days. But then there appears a dark spot that turns into a rotten spot and then spoils. If left unhindered it will not only ruin the apple itself but the whole barrel of apples. This is the way that bitterness works after the bruising of emotional hurt.

Hebrews 12:15 (NAS) says, *"¹⁵ See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled"*

The enemy is dwelling in the land of the emotions, because of bitterness. If you remember last week, we said that, "sin is not always the way in which Satan occupies a place in our lives. He can and will set up his shop in our lives through the pain of bruising."

1. Bitterness is poison to the soul.

a. Bitterness is:

- i.** To exhibit intense animosity or hostility
- ii.** To be harshly reproachful, critical, judgmental or disapproving
- iii.** Marked by cynicism and hostility
- iv.** We often think of bitterness just as a feeling within ourselves, but bitterness spews the rot of our wounding and wounds those around us.

b. Bitterness comes from the bruising of hurt. It brings division and disunity. The greatest hurts and most powerful works of bitterness stem from broken relationships. Disappointment, betrayal, rejection in relationships all cause bruising. If we do not forgive and heal, these bruising will devolve into bitterness.

i. Hurts from parent-child relationship

ii. Hurts from husband-wife relationship

1. I single out these two types of relationships because they are our closest relationships. They are relationships which come with the most expectations, privileges and responsibilities. As such, they have the greatest dynamic power for good or evil. Many have been wounded, bruised and become embittered by them.
2. We must honestly ask ourselves if we have suffered a wound through a relationship if we have truly forgiven and healed the area of damage. I am not talking about just having “moved on”. Many, who, have just “moved on” and are tugging their bruise with them. As a result, they are bitter, and it affects negatively not only their lives but those around them.
3. Here is a hit: If your thoughts are captivated by the wound then you have not forgiven, and you are not healed. You may have moved on, but you are not well. And deep inside you know it.

c. Bitterness pollutes the whole person. We think we can manage our pain and handle our anger; after all we are entitled to be hurt or angry because of what they did. That is the greatest deception of the ages. The truth is that bitterness causes us to retain and relive the hurt time and time again. Each time the wound festers a little deeper.

i. **The pollution of bitterness comes out in a person’s:** Speech, Actions, Attitudes and Can even break a person down physically.

d. Your bitterness in: Speech, Actions, and Attitudes pollute those around you. Most of whom have nothing to do with the hurt that you are acting out of. Like a wounded animal backed into a corner you lash out and impose wounds on others.

- e. Bitterness builds walls of isolation.** I do not care how well you speak the Christian lingo, “Praise the Lord, Glory to God, Hallelujah”. I do not care how many times you tell me, “Oh, I hold nothing against them. If Jesus could say from the cross, ‘Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.’ Then who am I to say anything different?” I do not care how many times you tell me, “Oh, that was so long ago... I have just moved on past it.” If you are living in isolation, it is because bitterness has built walls taller and thicker than those of Jericho around you and you have convinced yourself that you are happy with “just Jesus and me”. You will find other projects or interests to isolate yourself, from the Body of Christ, and then convince yourself that you are doing the Lord’s work. But those are walls and you are in prison because you operate in:
- i. Fear of further hurt**
 - ii. Fear and distrust of people**
 - iii. Fear of inner hurts and weaknesses being exposed**
 - iv. And you operate in loneliness**
 - v. BUT God has not given you a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind (2 Timothy 1:7).**
- f. Bitterness always results in broken relationships.** In fact, you will sabotage good and healthy relationships because of your emotional bruising. When bitterness is allowed to have its work in you, you will always experience unhealthy, broken and destructive relationships. And the problem is not “all them”. Get ready for a moment of brutal honesty: “It’s not them, it is you!” Just let that settle for a minute. There are some very healthy born again, Spirit filled brothers and sisters trying to be open the door of friendship with you, but you choose to keep them at distance. You choose to reject good and wise input from mature believers because you have allowed bruises to turn to bitterness. So, you:
- i. Cut the right people out of your life and the wrong people in.**
 - ii. Develop a critical attitude toward others and then find other critical people to solidify your wrong attitude.**

2. The damage of broken relationships. (1 John 2:9-11) ⁹ He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. ¹⁰ He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. ¹¹ But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

a. Broken relationships cause blind spots.

- i. Blind spots cause you to act in the darkness of hatred rather than the light of Godly love.**
- ii. Blind spots cause you to act unwisely (stupidly).**
- iii. Blind spots stop you from seeing yourself correctly.**
- iv. Blind spots stop you from seeing others as they really are.**
- v. Blind spots stop you from seeing God as He really is.**

b. Broken relationships cause insensitivity.

- i. Your life becomes me-centered and selfish.**
- ii. You lose proper regard for the needs of others; especially the lost.**

c. Broken relationships cause immaturity.

- i. Emotional growth stops at the time of the wounding.** Personality traits do not mature even though the physical attributes do. Thus, we have young college age men and women, some that are older too, crying, coloring, and playing with play dough, unable to go to class or take an exam because they did not like the outcome of an election. We have 30 and 40-year-old men living in their parent's basement playing video games while their elderly parents work two jobs in retirement. Of course, these examples are meant to be lighthearted in the midst of a painful reality. The point is that you have not developed appropriately, and it is time for you to grow up into the fullness of Christ, along with the rest of the Body!
- ii. Depending on the severity of the bruise and how you deal with or ignore it will determine the depth of impact it will have on your emotional development.** It is easy to feel that you function in most aspects of life: maybe you hold a job, you attend church, you try to do good, etc. but you know that you are bound, you long to be free, but you are not. You want your thinking or actions to change in a certain area, but they just do not. That is an emotional immaturity. You have been hindered by a bruise of Satan.

- iii. **If you were born again 30 years ago, yet have not matured;** if you are not able to discern sound doctrine from false, if you are not able to make a distinction between the sacred and secular or the Table of the Lord and the altar of demons, if you pay greater homage to family than to the Lord, if some earthly cause demands and receives your greater affection than the cause of the Kingdom there is but one reason: You are a 3 year old babe trying to walk in the shoes of a 30 year old warrior. Your soul's development has been hindered by the bruises of Satan and you are immature. Your emotions are immature and carnal. You are not free as the Son intends you to be. Satan has a road of domination and oppression into your soul, you need to cut the supply line.
- iv. **Emotional growth, the development of your soul, can only resume when you find healing and release of hurt and bitterness.** Release only comes through forgiveness: of self and of others.

3. The destruction of Unforgiveness. While it is true that there is a benefit to the offending party when you choose to forgive their wrong actions; it is just as true that there is benefit for you when you choose to forgive. It has been said that, "Unforgiveness is like drinking poison and expecting the other guy to die." Drinking of unforgiveness poisons and destroys your soul.

- a. **Unforgiveness fosters the growth of resentment.**
- b. **Resentment fosters the growth of bitterness.**
- c. **Bitterness fosters the growth of blame.**
- d. **Blame fosters the growth of hatred.**
- e. **Hatred fosters the growth of deception**
- f. **Deception fosters the growth of perversion.**
- g. **And perversion prevents you from being in a growing, maturing, healthy relationship with the Body and its Head.**

4. Conclusion:

I think of the book of Ruth (Read it, it's only 4 chapters). Naomi goes with her husband and two sons to Moab. While living there her husband dies. She raises the two boys; they marry and then they die. One day she hears that the Lord is providing food for His people and she decides to return to the land of Judah. They set out on the road and Naomi tells her two daughters-in-law that they should return to their parents and find new husbands, so that they will be taken care of.

The two ladies refuse but at Naomi's urging one relents and returns to her parents. The other, Ruth, stays and pledges undying love to Naomi, her people and her God. (Completely off topic for a moment: Here is where many liberal commentators and modern churches will tell you that this is an example of a God approved, sanctioned and instructive lesbian relationship. No! There is absolutely no possible way to honestly draw that conclusion from the narrative of this text. Naomi constantly directs Ruth to find a husband, build a life with him and be taken care of by him. These are the actions of a loving mother figure not a lesbian lover. Any other reading is dishonest and forces upon the text a self-serving conclusion. OK back on topic.)

Naomi has experienced some hardship and loss over the years. It is devastating to lose your husband and unimaginable to lose your two sons. When Naomi returns home, not surprisingly, the people say, "Naomi's back." Her name means pleasant, but she replies, "Don't call me Naomi, call me Mara." Interestingly, Mara means bitter. Then she adds that the Lord has done this to me. Remember, that I said earlier that bitterness will cause blind spots and you will see and perceive things and even the Lord improperly because of them?

Unforgiveness causes bruises. Hurt, pain, loss, disappointment, rejection are all bruises. Unhealed bruises will produce bitterness and will always imprison.

Ruth catches the attention of Boaz, a foreshadow of Christ. He becomes the kinsman redeemer and both Ruth and Naomi are provided for. Jesus is your kinsman redeemer and He offers His saving, providing and healing provision to all who would but come.

Unforgiveness, Resentment, Bitterness, Blame, Hatred, Deception and Perversion are the seed bed and fertilizer for every demonic work. They will destroy you, Christian. The safeguard against it is to remain in a spirit of forgiveness. When Satan comes to bruise, do not receive the hurt; regardless of how tempting it may be. Immediately release it through forgiveness. Take your hurts, wounds, anger, disappointment, unforgiveness, to the cross and let them die there that you might live abundantly!