PREACHING & TEACHING

Sermon on Healing

Preaching notes on healing, written around the people in the room who were not healed. Three texts, the Paul problem, and why the single most damaging sentence in this subject is one most preachers would never say deliberately.

topic notes · 4 segments

Topic notes. Movement two is the reason to be careful with this subject at all.

BEFORE YOU RECORD

- Everyone in the room who has a chronic condition is listening for one thing: whether you are about to say this is their fault. Settle that early and they can hear the rest.
- If your church prays for healing, say plainly what happens when it does not come, because the people who were prayed for and did not improve are usually the ones who stop coming and nobody notices why.

01. Three texts, three costs

choose one

[2 Corinthians 12 is the one that keeps you honest]

Mark 5:25-34. The woman with the haemorrhage. Twelve years, all her money spent on physicians, and a healing she takes rather than receives. Also note that he stops the whole procession to have a conversation with her, which is the part worth preaching.

James 5:13-16. The practical passage: call the elders, pray, anoint. Commits you to saying what your church actually does, which is a good discipline.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10. Paul asks three times and is told no. Costs you the triumphant sermon and is the single most important text for anyone in your congregation living with something permanent.

02. The sentence not to say

the essential movement

[it arrives by implication more often than by statement]

That they were not healed because they did not have enough faith. Almost nobody says it outright. It arrives by implication, in a sermon where every example ends well and no time is given to the ones that did not.

Paul had as much faith as anyone in the New Testament and was not healed. Say that, early, and a great deal of harm is prevented for very little cost.

03. The trap

avoid this

[the survivorship problem]

Testimonies are almost always from the people it worked for. A healing service where only the healed speak teaches a very clear lesson to everyone else in the room, and it is not the lesson intended.

04. An angle worth taking

if you want it

[what the word covers]

In the gospels healing is repeatedly as much about restoration to a community as about a body. The leper, the woman in Mark 5, the demoniac: in each case the physical change is what allows them back into a village, a household, a synagogue. That reading gives a congregation something to do about the people it has, rather than only something to pray for.

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