

Healing – Renewal – Peace **Hosea 6:1-3**

Bruce Springsteen – silly/serious pop hit:

Got a wife and kids in Baltimore, Jack
I went out for a ride and I never went back
Like a river that don't know where it's flowing
I took a wrong turn and I just kept going

Everybody's got a hungry heart
Everybody's got a hungry heart
Lay down your money and you play your part
Everybody's got a hungry heart

I believe that we live in a culture populated with hungry hearts – people starving for love, meaning, and for a second chance. And for this the Church has been called, because only Jesus fills and satisfies our longings.

Ezekiel 37:11 – “... Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.”

- **Healing** – Verse 1 – “... *he will heal us.*”

For the Gospel a vision for Healing begins with a return – a turning away from the things and people and activities and affections that eventually bring misery – Repentance – when God strikes our hearts with the sense that only He can mend our broken lives.

Our Passage: God brings us to the place of despair and anguish that leads us there, because we are never truly whole unless we are completely His.

The One who rescues us by wounding us, is also our only Healer. True Healing is the work of God – He wounds us – they are Grace wounds – in order to repair us and make us whole.

So our vision begins with a desire for people to meet Jesus the Healer.

- Verse Two – God promises Renewal to His people in the form of revival and restoration.

Habakkuk 3:2 – “LORD, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, O LORD. Renew them in our day, in our time make them known...”

- “*He will revive us*” – in other words He will bring life back to our dead spirits, relationships, churches, and communities.
- “*He will restore us*” – where we are down, He will lift us up.

The Scriptures offer glimpses of the Renewing power of the work of the Gospel:

- **2 Kings 13:21** – Israelites burying a man – throw him into Elijah’s tomb – walks out alive
- **Ezekiel 37** – Valley of Dry Bones
- **John 11** - Lazarus

These are snapshots – of the power of the Gospel on dead hearts and injured relationships and dying people. And this is God’s

calling for the Church – that through its ministry, people who are dead in their sin be made alive in Christ – that communities and cities that are crushed under the weight of sin and oppression and poverty and sorrow and hopelessness are raised up and given life.

1 Kings 17:22 – “The LORD heard Elijah’s cry, and the boy’s life returned to him, and he lived.”

All we have to do is engage in the work and leave the results to God – *‘He will restore us’*....

Verse Two – The last piece of our vision is really the hope of the Gospel – “... *that we may live in his presence*” – This is Peace.

It is the promise of the Gospel that the carnage of sin is stilled by the assurance of Jesus in the hearts of people – and seen in a community that has experienced His Grace.

And its manifestation is people who come together – in Christ – with all their diversities of culture, language, color, and race – and worship and serve and live.

We will walk with each other, We will walk hand in hand
We will walk with each other, We will walk hand in hand
And together we will spread the news that God is in our Land
And they’ll know we are Christians by our Love, by our
Love...

The beautiful thing here is found in verse 3, really – because here we see what all that is promised is based on: **God’s faithfulness.**

As certain as the sun rises (that means every day) and as surely as the winter and spring rains come (that is, every season), God is there, and He is on the Throne, and He will always be what He has

always been, and He is faithful and He is Good – and in Jesus He is ours and we are His – and this is Good.

So... let's 'acknowledge the LORD.'

God says, 'Come.' He invites us to Himself much as Jesus did when He said, "Come to me all you who labor..." – In fact this is the invitation of Jesus.

John Piper – "It means coming to the one who has become everything to us."

And so our Vision is not to be everything the world needs, but to serve as living announcements that in Jesus we have received everything the world needs – because we need – and we want to share it – that the Gospel find its way into the lives of people to the extent that the world they are in – even if a county jail – begins to change because of the presence of Jesus.