THE PROBLEM AND POWER OF PAIN
WEEK 5 • DAILY BRIEFING 1 • FAITHFUL WOUNDS

WEEKLY MEMORY VERSE

Ecclesiastes 8:11

Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed speedily, the heart of the children of man is fully set to do evil.

This week follows Sunday's sermon, "Restrain or Pain." You can watch or listen to the sermon at 1mso.church or on the One Missoula app.

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You that You love me enough to tell me the truth. Give me the humility to receive Your hard words when You bring them through other people who love me. Give me the courage to speak hard words to people I love in order to keep them from harm. Make me a faithful friend and not an approval-seeking flatterer. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

TODAY'S TEACHING

On Sunday we said that authority that won't restrain evil multiplies pain, and we looked at how that plays out in families, churches, and governments. Most of us are not judges or pastors, and plenty of us are not raising kids right now. But every one of us has people in our lives who are headed somewhere painful. This week's principle applies to all of us: sometimes love causes a small amount of pain now in order to prevent a much bigger pain later. Our memory verse this week warns that when wrong goes unaddressed, people become "fully set to do evil."

Think about a surgeon. If you have a tumor, a good surgeon is going to cut you open. It will hurt, and you will be sore for weeks, but nobody leaves the hospital angry that the surgeon didn't leave the tumor alone. A surgeon who refuses to operate because he doesn't want you to be uncomfortable is not kind. He is dangerous. We live in a culture that treats every uncomfortable conversation as harm. Your buddy is drinking himself into a divorce, or your sister is hiding a spending problem from her husband, and the "kind" thing to do is supposedly to say nothing. That is not kindness. It is leaving the tumor in.

Today's first passage comes from Proverbs, a book of short wisdom sayings, most of them from King Solomon, who ruled Israel roughly 950 years before Jesus. Proverbs often teaches by putting two things side by side and asking you to see the difference. One detail will help you read it. In the ancient Middle East, a kiss on the cheek was a normal greeting between friends and family, the way a handshake or a hug works today.

The second passage comes from Leviticus, part of the law God gave Israel through Moses more than a thousand years before Jesus. Chapter 19 is a list of commands about how God's people are supposed to treat one another. It contains a line Jesus later called the second greatest commandment: "you shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18). Pay attention to the verse right before it, because it shows what that love looks like when your neighbor is doing wrong.

READ & MEDITATE

Proverbs 27:5–6

Better is open rebuke than hidden love. [6]Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy.

Leviticus 19:17–18

You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him. [18]You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.

As you read, notice what each passage treats as love and what it treats as the opposite of love.

REFLECT

Answer these honestly. This is between you and God, and nobody else needs to see what you write.

Proverbs 27:5 compares two things, and the comparison is surprising.

1. Fill in the blank from Proverbs 27:5: “Better is open _____ than hidden love.”

Why would love that stays hidden be worse than a rebuke?

Verse 6 compares what a friend gives you with what an enemy gives you.

2. According to Proverbs 27:6, what does a friend give you, and what does an enemy give you?

A kiss feels like affection, and that is exactly why it is dangerous coming from an enemy. The Bible tells of a general named Joab who wanted to kill a rival. He greeted him with “Is it well with you, my brother?” and took him by the beard to kiss him while a sword was in his hand (2 Samuel 20:9–10). Judas betrayed Jesus the same way, and Jesus asked him, “Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?” (Luke 22:48). Flattery feels warm, but it can walk you straight into disaster.

Leviticus 19:17 sets two responses to a neighbor’s sin against each other.

3. Fill in the blank from Leviticus 19:17: “You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall _____ frankly with your neighbor.”

According to this verse, what happens to you if you stay silent?

God puts silence on the same side as hatred. When you watch someone you love walk toward destruction and say nothing, you “incur sin because of him,” which means you share in the guilt. The very next verse commands you to “love your neighbor as yourself.” In God’s mind, speaking up is part of loving your neighbor, not an exception to it.

Many of us can remember a hard conversation that we resented at the time.

4. Who once told you a hard truth you needed to hear, and how did it help you, even though it hurt?

Proverbs says, “Whoever rebukes a man will afterward find more favor than he who flatters with his tongue” (Proverbs 28:23). The key word is “afterward.” Faithful wounds rarely feel good in the moment, but they are usually the ones we thank people for later. Notice also that the verse says the wounds come from a “friend.” A faithful wound comes from someone who wants your good. If your goal is to win an argument or blow off steam, that is not a faithful wound.

Most of us know someone who is headed toward avoidable pain right now.

5. Who in your life might need a faithful wound from you?

What has kept you quiet so far?

PRAYER

Bring what you just wrote to God. Write your prayer or pray out loud.

MEMORY VERSE

Write or recite Ecclesiastes 8:11 from memory.