

**GOD'S ANTIDOTE TO DAMAGED EMOTIONS**  
**Stressbusters - Part 3**  
**Rick Warren**

"He restores my soul" Ps. 23:3

THE PATH TO EMOTIONAL HEALING

1. LET GOD \_\_\_\_\_ MY \_\_\_\_\_

"My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear... I am bowed down and brought low; all day long I go about mourning." Ps. 38:4+6

"The Lord gave us a mind and a conscience. We cannot hide from ourselves." Pr. 20:27

"All of us have sinned... yet God declares us `not guilty' IF we trust in Jesus Christ, who in mercy freely takes away our sins." Rom 3:23-24 (LB)

"He has forgiven ALL your sins. he has utterly wiped out the evidence of broken commandments which always hung over our heads, and completely annulled it by nailing it to the cross!" Col 2:13-14 (PH)

2. LET GOD \_\_\_\_\_ MY \_\_\_\_\_

"Lord, have mercy, because I am in misery. My eyes are weak from so much crying, and my whole being is tired from grief." Psalm 31:9 (NCV)

3 Things To Do: 2 Sam 12

1. Accept what \_\_\_\_\_

"Then David got up from the ground... He said, `While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept ... But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back to life?" 2 Sam 12:22-23

2. Play \_\_\_\_\_ and Pray \_\_\_\_\_

"After he had washed, put on lotions, and changed his clothes, he went into the house of the Lord and worshipped.

3. Focus on \_\_\_\_\_, not \_\_\_\_\_

"Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba, and he went to her and lay with her. She gave birth to a son, and they named him Solomon." 2 Sam. 12:24

"To all who mourn ... he will give: beauty for ashes; joy instead of mourning; praise instead of heaviness."  
Isa. 61:3 (LB)

3. LET GOD \_\_\_\_\_ MY \_\_\_\_\_

"To worry yourself to death with resentment would be a foolish, senseless thing to do."  
Job 5:2 (GN)

"You are only hurting yourself with your anger." Job 18:4 (GN)

"Dear friends, never avenge yourselves. Leave that to God, for He has said He will repay those who deserve it." Rom. 12:19 (LB)

"Get rid of all bitterness ... forgiving each other just as in Christ God forgave you."  
Eph. 4:31-32

"Put your heart right, reach out to God... then face the world again, firm and courageous. Then all your troubles will fade from your memory, like floods that are past and remembered no more." Job 11:13-16 (GN)

**GOD'S ANTIDOTE TO DAMAGED EMOTIONS**  
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We're continuing in our series through Psalm 23. We're going to look at God's antidote to Damaged Emotions. "He restores my soul" Ps. 23:3 This is good news; we all need to have our soul restored periodically. We get hurt -- life's tough. We get beat up by discouragement, depression, despair. We have fatigue, failure, frustrations, fears. We all have hidden hurts from our past. We carry wounds, battle scars, emotional garbage. God wants to take away your emotional garbage. He wants to restore your soul.

How does He does that? He does that when you allow Him to make three changes in your life:

1. Let God remove my guilt.
2. Let God relieve my grief.
3. Let God replace my grudges.

Guilt, grief, grudges are the three things that keep you in emotional instability.

### **1. LET GOD REMOVE MY GUILT**

Nothing destroys a soul faster than guilt. "Ps. 38:4&6 "My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear... I am bowed down and brought low; all day long I go about mourning." There are two problems with guilt.

1. We all have plenty reasons to feel guilty. We are all imperfect. We all make mistakes. By nature we carry guilt in our lives.
2. We can't get away from it. It's in our mind. Even if we go to a new location we carry a guilty conscious with us.

Prov. 20:27 "The Lord gave us a mind and a conscience. We cannot hide from ourselves."

How do you get rid of guilt? How do you deal with the guilt in your life? There are a lot of options:

You can deny it, pretend it doesn't exist. You can bury the past -- but it doesn't work. If it's still alive it resurrects itself. Just about the time you think it's buried, the feeling comes back into your mind at the most inappropriate time. Denying guilt does not relieve guilt.

You can minimize it. "It was no big deal, not that big of a sin." Then why do you still remember it? Why can't you forget it? Minimizing it doesn't work.

You can compromise it just by lowering your standards. If you feel guilty about something you just say "I don't believe it's wrong anymore. Fortune cookie: Commit a sin twice and it won't seem like a sin anymore." The tenth murder isn't nearly so bad as the first one. It's true. If you keep doing something over and over, your conscious will eventually become seared to it, but that doesn't relieve the guilt.

You can rationalize your guilt -- "Everybody does it." In the first place, everybody doesn't do it. Even if they did, justifying it by somebody else's behavior doesn't make it any easier on you. You can always find somebody who is worse than you are. "Rationalize" means "rational lies". Whenever I rationalize my guilt I'm trying to convince my heart about something I know is wrong with my head by saying "it's OK". But your heart always wins out over your head.

You can blame other people. In our mind we have a scales between what I do wrong and what you do wrong to me. We balance it -- I feel bad about this so I'll blame you for that. When you're blaming other people it doesn't make it any easier on you.

Most of us beat ourselves up. We self administer punishment. Inside we know that somebody has got to pay for the wrong in my life. Subconsciously we set ourselves up to pay for our sin. Can guilt make you sick? You bet it can. Can guilt cause depression? Absolutely. Can guilt cause you to set yourself up for failure? Without a doubt. How many successful people go along fine and then cave in? Why? There is a little guilty feeling: you don't deserve to succeed.

None of these things work. There is only one solution to your guilt. You've got to give it to God. He's the only one who can remove it.

Romans 3:23-24 "All of us have sinned... yet God declares us `not guilty` IF we trust in Jesus Christ, who in mercy freely takes away our sins." The most basic truth of Christianity is Jesus Christ has already paid for all of your sins. Everything you've ever done wrong has already been paid for. Everything you've already committed, the stuff you're going to do later, all of the sins, mistakes, regrets in your future have already been paid for. You just need to ask God to forgive you and accept what Jesus Christ did for you on the Cross where He already paid for all of your sins. Just accept it. That's how your guilt will be removed. No other way. No psychologist can remove your guilt; they don't have the power to forgive you. You didn't hurt them. But the Creator of the universe does have the power to forgive you. I don't know what you've done but it doesn't matter because your forgiveness is not based on how bad you've been, but how good God is. What matters is not what you've done, but what Jesus Christ has already done for you.

"If we trust in Jesus Christ". How do you get forgiveness from God? Trust. You don't beg God. You don't bribe God. You don't bargain with God. Just believe. Trust. Accept Jesus Christ's free gift. That's why it's such good news: it's a free gift. I can wipe my slate clean, start over, have a clear conscious.

But you've asked God to forgive you many times and you still feel guilty. No matter how many times you ask, you still feel guilty. That means you don't understand how God forgives, how it is immediate, free, complete, unconditional, how it wipes out the guilt the first time you ask. If you keep asking God to forgive something you've already asked Him, you're saying you don't believe He forgave you the first time -- that's sin. If you feel guilty about a sin you've already confessed to God and still feel guilty about it, that guilt is not from God, it's from the devil. He wants you to feel bad, to continue to feel uptight. Before you commit a sin, Satan minimizes the sin -- "It's no big deal". After you commit the sin he says, "This sin is so big, God could never forgive you!"

How does God forgive? Col. 2:13-14 "He has forgiven ALL your sins. He has utterly wiped out the evidence of broken commandments which always hung over our hearts, and completely annulled it by nailing it to the cross!" ALL your sins. WIPED OUT the evidence. COMPLETELY annulled it. When God forgives, He forgives completely. He takes your sins, throws them in the deepest part of the ocean, puts up a "No fishing" sign and says "forget it!"

Some of you confess a sin to God and keep bringing it back to Him. When you get to Heaven, you'll find that it was forgiven the first time you asked. God not only forgives, He forgets. That's one of the most amazing things in the Bible -- that the creator of the universe who made you and me can actually forget. Not that He can, but that He chooses to. He chooses to forget sin that has been confessed and forgiven. He wipes it out. That means never to be brought up again. God's not going to bring it up again. He says He completely annulled it. That means it has been paid for.

When you pay a bill do you still worry about it? No. The moment you pay a bill you stop sweating over it. Jesus, on the Cross, said "It's finished. I've paid for your sins". So what are you worried about? If God forgets confessed sin, shouldn't you? Why keep beating yourself up over something God isn't beating you up over? If you don't really feel forgiven, every time something goes wrong in your life you're going to think, "God's getting even

with me!" He's not. If you've put your faith in Christ, God's not going to get even with you because all of your punishment was taken by Jesus Christ. Why punish you when He's already punished Christ. Jesus voluntarily took it. He paid the penalty so you wouldn't have to. Jesus was nailed to the cross so you can stop nailing yourself to the cross. Let God remove your guilt.

## 2. LET GOD RELIEVE MY GRIEF

Not all of the things in life that damage us are things I bring upon myself. Sometimes I have grief because of things that are done to me. Sometimes I have grief over seeing other people hurt. The fact is you will be hurt in life, you will experience loneliness in life. This is not heaven, this is earth. It's imperfect down here. Some days you're going to be lonely. Some days your heart will be broken. Some days you're going to feel in despair. Some days you're going to feel all alone. Some days you'll experience sorrow, loss, grief.

Letter:

Dear Pastor, Last year my marriage fell apart after twenty years. I really fought hard to save it, but it was of no use. Now I'm divorced and unwanted. I'm writing to you because I don't know anybody else to share my feelings with. I feel so bad, so much of the time and I feel hopeless about the future. Rejection is a pain nobody should have to feel. My grief is overwhelming and my heart aches with loneliness. I often go home from work to an empty house and just sit and cry. But there is no one to hold me when I cry. Everybody else is too busy with their own lives to care. Life goes on for everybody else but for me it drags on minute by torturous minute. I feel so emotionally crippled and helpless to change. I can't bring back the past or redo it as much as I'd like to. My situation seems to be beyond my control. Pastor, please, please help me mend my broken heart.

If you identify with those emotions I want to say to you today I'm sorry you hurt and I want you to know God knows what you're going through. God hurts with you and He cares about your hurt. The people in this church want to be your family in this crisis. Only Jesus Christ can fill that emptiness in your heart.

What do you do when your heart is breaking? What do you do when the grief overwhelms you in life? Throw a giant pity party? Play the "if only" game? Withdraw into a shell, hide in a cave, isolate yourself from humanity and say "I'll never let another man hurt me!" Do you just pull back and resign from life and be miserable the rest of your life? There are other options. You can let Jesus restore your soul.

David, in the Bible, was very acquainted with grief. He understood how much it damages our soul when we hurt. Psalm 31:9 "Lord, have mercy, because I am in misery. My eyes are weak from so much crying, and my whole being is tired from grief." He is saying he knows how it damages the soul.

Sometimes we grieve because of our own stupid actions. We do stupid things and make serious mistakes and get ourselves into all kinds of trouble. We grieve over that. Sometimes we grieve because we see people we love hurting. Sometimes we grieve because of a loss. Sometimes we grieve because we're innocent and somebody has victimized us or hurt us.

David, in II Samuel 12, gives us some tips on how to handle grief. David had committed adultery with Bathsheba and had her husband killed. He carried guilt over that but confessed it to God in Psalm 51. If you're carrying guilt, read Psalm 51 and find restoration. But then he felt grief. Bathsheba bore a child and from that illicit union they had a baby. When the baby was born it was very sick and David grieved over that. He got on his knees, prayed, fasted. He said, "God, this baby hasn't done anything wrong. I'm the one who blew it. I'm the one who made the mistake. I'm the one who's affected everyone else's life in this negative way. Save the baby. He's done nothing wrong." But the baby died anyway.

What did David do with his grief then? He did three things. These are the things you need to do if God is going to restore your soul.

1. Accept what cannot be changed.

"Then David got up from the ground... He said, `While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept... But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back to life?'"  
2 Sam 12:22-23.

You've been hurt by parents, partners, peers. All of the grieving in the world is not going to change the past. The first step to emotional health, healing, restoring your soul is acceptance. Accept what cannot be changed. I cannot change my background. I cannot change the hurts I've experienced and neither can you. Acceptance is the first step to healing the mind, will, emotions. This is the first key to peace of mind: Accept what cannot be changed.

2. Play it down and Pray it up

Don't exaggerate it, dedicate it. Give it to God. You're going to be hurt in life. Pain is inevitable, but misery is optional. The Bible says, "Blessed are those that mourn," but too long we take our mourning and hold onto it and turn it into moaning. The Bible says, play it down and give it up. Give it to God. Psalm 37, "Commit your way unto the Lord." Instead of saying, "This is devastating to me!" say, "God, help me make it through this situation!"

"After he had washed, put on lotions, and changed his clothes, he went into the house of the Lord and worshipped." He went to church. At church he worshipped God, which gave him a new perspective and the strength to carry on.

3. Focus on what's left not what's lost.

2 Sam. 12:24 "Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba, and he went to her and lay with her. She gave birth to a son, and they named him Solomon."

Some of you are going through some grief right now. God is not finished with your life. He's not through with you. This is not the end. It hurts. But it does not have to devastate you if you'll open your life up to Christ and let Him heal your emotions. Ask God, "Remove my guilt and relieve my grief." If you're still alive, God is not through with you. And the rest of your life can be the best of your life.

Isaiah 61:3 "To all who mourn... he will give: beauty for ashes; joy instead of mourning; praise instead of heaviness." You don't have to remain a prisoner of your pain. It's a choice.

### 3. LET GOD REPLACE MY GRUDGES

Grudges come from what other people do to me. I feel guilty for what I've done to others, but I feel grudges about what others have done to me. You're going to be hurt in life; that's a fact of life. Life isn't fair. People will hurt you. Sometimes intentionally, sometimes unintentionally. Either way, it still hurts. How you handle the resentments of life determine whether you are a bitter person or a better person. The difference between bitter and better is the letter "I". I make the choice. I can choose whether the circumstance will devastate me or direct me on to a new path. Whether it will make me bitter or better.

What do I do with all the hurts that have piled up, all the emotional garbage that I still resent, and when those people come to mind it just tightens my stomach up? What do I do?

Job 5:2 "To worry yourself to death with resentment would be a foolish, senseless thing to do." Why? Resentment never hurts the other person. It only hurts you. The other person might be totally oblivious that you're even thinking about them. They've gone on with their life. Some of you are continuing to allow people from your past

to hurt you *now!* And that's stupid! Your past is past. They cannot hurt you anymore unless you keep rehearsing it in your mind. Every time you rehearse that resentment they'll hurt you again. They may even be dead and they're still hurting you from the grave. That is dumb! You don't hurt them by resenting. Holding onto a hurt, only hurts you.

"You're only hurting yourself with your anger." Job 18:4

What do you do with your grudges? the resentments of people that have hurt you?

Romans 12:19 "Dear friends, never avenge yourselves. Leave that to God, for He has said He will repay those who deserve it." Because of sin in this world, life is unfair. God never said life was fair. This is earth, not heaven where God's will is always done. Sometimes innocent people suffer. And sometimes guilty and evil people prosper. Justice is not always served in this world. This is a sinful world. But God has said one day He is going to settle the score. One day He's going to call it into account, right the wrongs, settle the issues that were left unsettled here -- the crimes, the injustice, the prejudice, the racism, the sexism, the rapes, murders, hurts, abuse. One day God is going to settle the score. In the meantime, the Bible says, don't avenge yourself. It will eat you up. What do you do instead?

"Get rid of all bitterness ... forgiving each other just as in Christ God forgave you." There is a real heaven and a real hell. One day God is going to settle the score. In the meantime He says, get rid of all bitterness, forgive each other as God forgave you. If you've been forgiven, God expects you to be forgiving. You will never have to forgive another person more than God has already forgiven you.

One of the greatest things that Martin Luther King said, "Bitterness is blindness." If I allow you and your hurt to make me bitter it blinds me. It blinds me to the truth, to all that's good in the world and all I can see is the bad, evil, prejudice, sin. It blinds me to what God wants to do in my life. God wants to even take the negative, harmful, hurtful and turn it around and use it for good and make me a better person. I can't see that when I'm bitter.

You will never be healed from your hurt until you accept God's forgiveness through Jesus Christ and then you offer that same forgiveness to other people. What is it you still feel guilty about? When I start talking about guilt it pops into your mind and still haunts you and bugs you? All the minimizing and rationalizing and compromising and blaming and beating up yourself doesn't work. Jesus Christ can remove that guilt and nobody else can. He specializes in new beginnings. It's called being born again. He can wipe the slate clean. There is no reason in the world for you to go on with a guilty conscious when He offers forgiveness. Just accept it. Stop punishing yourself for the past.

You don't need a self-help book. You need a Shepherd. You need a Savior. Only a Savior can forgive that guilt.

How about your grief? Are you still holding onto it and moaning instead of mourning? Are you looking at what's left instead of what's lost? Are you playing it down and praying it up? Are you letting that grief incapacitate you, keeping you in a prison -- a self imposed prison. Nobody locked the door -- you locked it yourself. Say, "God relieve my grief."

How about your grudges? Are you still allowing people in your past to continue to hurt you in the present? Stop! Don't let them hurt you anymore. They cannot hurt you without your permission. The past is past. Give God your grief, guilt, grudges.

Kathy:

I'd like to share with you a little about how God has restored my soul and healed my damaged emotions. God has taken some very painful events in my life and turned them into a good work. Today I truly understand Romans 8:28 "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him and have been

called according to His purpose." The key in this verse is "all" -- everything. My guilt and grief at one point almost destroyed me. I was overwhelmed by it. It was too much and too big for me. I couldn't hide from my shame, my own self-built prison, and I had a grudge with God. There is no way I could possibly share my whole story with you in just a few moments. But I do want you to understand how my seeking God's forgiveness and accepting His healing has changed my life and tore down that wall I had built around myself. In 1957 a girl gave birth to a baby. The baby was born an alcoholic. She was me. When my birth mother was released from the hospital she took me and set me on the doorstep of the nurse that had brought me into the world. The nurse gave me to an aunt and uncle. The aunt and uncle gave me to my grandmother. From the very beginning I felt very unloved and unwanted. Over the next five years of my life, I was abused a lot by drunken uncles and their friends, giving me a quarter or a candy bar in return for their abuse. When I was five I was hurt badly by one of those uncles and I was taken to the hospital. The nurse had to report the incident to social services and this began my life in the foster care system. I lived in 27 different homes, group homes, juvenile hall... When I was twelve I met my birth mother again. I ran away from the foster home I was in to be with her. We ended up in Sunflower, Mississippi and I was abandoned once again in a hotel room with no one. My birth mother died shortly after that. She was 32 years old. The lack of a stable environment growing up produced a lot of grief, guilt, grudges and fears in my life. One of my biggest fears growing up was the night time -- never knowing what was going to happen. I remember lying there and pretending. It was easier to pretend than to deal with the pain. That pretending became a part of my life. As the abuse increased, so did my guilt. By the time I made it to high school, I was an emotional mess. God truly did have a plan for me. As I approached graduation I realized I had no where to go. My time would be up at the group home I was living in, my bed would be needed to give to a paying customer. This is where my grief really took a hold of me. I didn't know what to do with my life or how to relieve my pain so I decided to join the army. But I flunked the test. Then I tried college. I thought this would be my answer. But my second year in college I was kicked out. I was arrested for grand theft. I spent four days and nights in a jail. This time my pain and grief were almost unbearable. It was in this jail cell I realized how alone I was. I had no one to call to come and help me, no one to call to come get me out or save me and no one would even know that I was missing. No one would even have looked for me. But I was wrong. God was there even before I knew Him He was with me. When I went to court, the judge dropped all the charges and that had to have been God. In 1982 I met my husband to be, Sal, who I'm proud to say was and still is a police officer. As you can imagine, most of my friends at that time were some of his best cases. It was Sal's strong belief in God that taught me about God's love for me. I had for the first time in my life, met a man that said "no" to me. Because of his faith, Sal saw good in me that I couldn't see in myself. In 1983 Sal took me to a Billy Graham crusade at Anaheim stadium and there we walked down onto the field and committed our life to the Lord. At this time I realized I had two decisions to make. One, I could give my life to Christ and let Him begin my healing. Or I could say "no" and continue to live with my damaged emotions for the rest of my life. I choose God that night and He immediately began a healing process in me. The guilt that I felt growing up, both true and false, has been removed by God's forgiveness and grace. God has restored my joy through my own children. My grief was relieved through a simple prayer that I learned through my recovery, "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things that I can, and the wisdom to understand." Replacing my grudges was a little bit harder. It took more time. I tried to get it fixed through therapists. And they did help with some of the head stuff. But it was my heart that I had the problem with. When I truly surrendered it all to the Lord, I felt the pain in my heart disappear. I don't have that pain deep down in my heart any more. Instead, I have the Lord there who will never forsake me or leave me alone ever. Today I know that God does not give us anything that we cannot handle. Instead, He gives us life experiences that we can go out and help others that need us. If you're experiencing guilt or grief or grudges because of hurtful experiences in your life I urge you to please let Jesus Christ do for you what He's done for me and still doing for me. He will do it for you. My favorite verse in the Bible is Jeremiah 29:11 "For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord. They are plans to prosper you, not harm you. Plans to give you a hope and a future." My future is in the Lord.

Jesus Christ wants to heal your damaged emotions. He will restore your soul if you'll let Him.

Psalm 42 David prays, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul. Hope thou in God." Why is my soul cast down? Do you have a cast down soul? David is using a term every shepherd would understand when he talks about being cast down. It is a position sheep get themselves in and they can't get out of. Sheep are built in such a way, that if they fall over on their side and then on over on their back with their legs sticking straight up in the air, they cannot get out of that position themselves. They are helpless to get back up on their feet again. The position is called a cast down sheep. It's frightening when a sheep falls down on its side and then its back. It kicks and flails in the air. It bleats, cries out. It knows it is open to attack. Any animal could come and attack it and it is helpless. It's a very serious condition. When sheep lay on their back, gas begins to collect in their stomach. It hardens the stomach, cuts off the air passage and they suffocate in a matter of hours. Not only that, their legs go numb in that position. On a hot day a sheep in a cast down position can die in just a matter of hours. They can't do anything about it. They need a shepherd who restores their soul.

When a shepherd restores a cast down sheep, it doesn't just happen immediately. It takes time to restore a cast down sheep. First a shepherd will come to the sheep laying on its back with its legs sticking straight up in the air. The first thing the shepherd does is lovingly massage the four legs to get some circulation back up in the four legs. Then he begins to talk in a reassuring tone to the sheep, "You're going to make it." Then he gently turns the sheep over, puts his hand under the sheep's belly and lifts it up because it cannot stand up on its own because of its wobbly feet. He will lift up the sheep and hold it there while the sheep begins to get some equilibrium. The blood begins to flow in the legs again and it begins to get some stability. When the shepherd realizes and can feel that the sheep can stand on its own feet that it's got its equilibrium back, then that shepherd will lovingly and gently let the sheep go.

What a picture of what God wants to do for you! When you're on your back and flailing around and the grief, guilt, or grudges are overwhelming you and you think you're going to die in that position, the Lord is your Shepherd. He lovingly comes with reassuring words and tender hands, picks up His little lamb, sets him up straight until he can get on his own feet again and carries it until it's got that stability back. Jesus Christ wants to restore your soul. If you've been cast down for any reason, He's the only one who can help you get back up on your feet again. When He restores your soul, He restores your confidence and your joy and peace and strength. We can restore a lot of things -- cars, paintings, sound recordings, buildings -- but only God can restore a soul.

Another letter:

Dear Pastor Rick, A year ago this past Sunday I walked into a funny looking tent at Saddleback a broken person. My heart and my spirit were crushed as a result of an unwanted divorce from a fifteen year marriage. I shared my personal circumstance with a business client who invited me to attend Saddleback. As I approached that first Sunday, I joined in the traffic jam, turned on my headlights and pulled into the first-time visitor parking. This was to be an emotional day for me since it was the first Sunday in fifteen years I had been without my wife. I had three overwhelming impressions as I approached the tent doors. First, although a complete stranger to Saddleback, I somehow felt welcomed. Second, I had the quiet confidence in my spirit that I was where I was supposed to be. And for the first time in many weeks I did not feel lost or out of place. As I made my way into the tent and searched for a seat my third impression arose. This place is weird. Nice, but weird. I took my seat, pondered my current life situation and asked God to give me the strength to get through the difficult months ahead. As soon as my quiet prayer was offered, music began playing and everyone around me became alive with anticipation. Before finishing the first stanza of the opening song, I was crying like a baby. I had no handkerchief or tissues so I just kept wiping my tears with my fingers. By the third stanza several people nearby had given me a week's supply of tissues. I said thank you and continued crying. I was flooded with mixed emotions. My tears were tears of joy mixed with tears of sorrow. Within sixty seconds of the opening song I knew I had found a church home and I was ecstatic. Somehow I knew before the end of that first song, Saddleback was a place of healing. After the service, I visited around the different ministry tables located outside the tent entrance. I took one of everything they had. I went home and read every single piece of literature I collected. I got down on my knees and thanked the Lord for leading me to Saddleback church. To make a long story short, I walked into Saddleback of 1994 a broken person, full of doubts, full of fears, and wounded beyond repair so I thought. Today as Palm Sunday, 1995, I will again walk through the doors of a funny looking tent located next to a cement factory. But today, on this

Palm Sunday, thanks to the various ministries of Saddleback, I will enter the same tent one year later not in doubt or fear or defeat but in confidence and grace and victory. May God bless our church.

Jesus Christ wants to heal your soul. How does He do it? "Put your heart right, reach out to God... then face the world again, firm and courageous. Then all your troubles will face from your memory, like floods that are past and remembered no more." Job. 11:13-16. Jesus will restore your soul. Let Him be your Shepherd and your Savior.

