

Week Beginning: 19<sup>th</sup> January 2020

Worship Series: #3 in series



living sharing growing

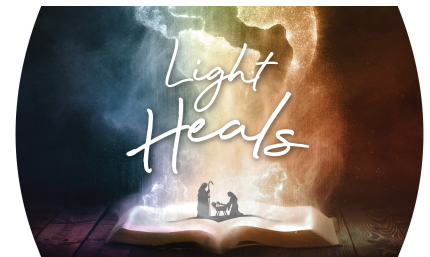


## Theme Verse

I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me. Isaiah 49:15b-16

## Remember This Week

Every pain, every brokenness, every ruin that litters our lives is known by God and dealt with by God. Jesus himself bore our sicknesses, and he carries our pains, that everyday the balm of his love may bring healing that is effective now and continues for eternity.



**But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its rays. And you will go out and frolic like well-fed calves. Malachi 4:2**

Heavenly Father, we know that we are a hurt and broken people. Yet in your mercy you offer healing and strength to those who put their trust in you and your word. Help us, by the Holy Spirit, to know you and your word more deeply as we gather today. In Jesus name, Amen

1. *Share your highs and lows since you last met with one another.*
2. *Share how you went with your living purposefully from last time?*
3. *Have you ever prayed for physical healing for someone? What happened?*
4. *We often talk about different kinds of healing, physical, emotional, etc. What other kinds can you think of and who would you go to to get help in that area of your life?*
5. *On a scale of 1-10 how would you score your spiritual health?*

It's been said that the longest journey in the world is from the head to the heart. Knowing that something is true is one thing, but believing it and living it when our experienced reality is evidence against that truth, is an entirely different matter. We may have heard the promise, 'Never will I leave you or forsake you,' and deep down know it's true, but how do we live in that promise when we feel abandoned, alone, forsaken and forgotten? How do we let God's truth bring an everyday epiphany; a life-changing, heart affecting transformation whatever we experience in the present? Whatever your current reality, it doesn't have to darken your life, for the light shines and the light heals. We'll explore and experience the truth that connects both the head and the heart today.

Read Isaiah 49:7-16

6. *What key words/thoughts/ideas/questions arise for you as you hear this text?*
7. *When you read this passage, do you feel a sense of hope or do you pick up a feeling of despair? Why?*
8. *In verse 13 God says, "the Lord has comforted his people" but in verse 14, Zion (a.k.a the people of Israel) do not seem very comforted. What do you think is happening here?*

The people of Israel took a 40 year journey through the desert before entering the promised land. Yet the journey from the head to the heart was a constant pilgrimage which never seemed to reach its final destination. At times they faithfully carried out the religious festivals, they remembered God in the events of their deliverance from Egypt as they celebrated Passover, they told the stories, they knew the facts. But, over time, memories faded and the stories, beliefs, and practices of other nations crept in and stopped the knowledge of God from taking root in the heart of Israel. When things got bad, when they looked at the realities of what their lives had become, their first response was often to cry out, "the Lord has





forsaken me, the Lord has forgotten me" (v14). Yet throughout the story of Israel, God shows that he never forgets his people, it is usually they who forget him.

9. *When distance begins to develop between two people in a relationship, does it make a difference who moves away first? What does it take to mend that kind of rift?*
10. *How would you choose a doctor? Given a choice, would you choose the one who prescribed the easiest solution, or the one who prescribed the best solution, even if it was unpleasant?*

God's relationship with the people of Israel was always rocky. Not because God ever forgot or abandoned them, but because they were not always pleased with the way God wanted things to go. Although God had proven that he knew what was best for them, the people of Israel often opted for other quicker or easier 'solutions'.

11. *Why do you think we are so often prepared to follow doctors orders when it comes to our physical health but so ready to go against God or seek other 'opinions' when it comes to our spiritual health?*

Read John 8:12-14 & John 11:23-27

Not only do these passage remind us that Jesus is the light of the world who brings healing but Jesus also gives another insight as he explains to the Pharisees why his message and teaching are powerful and effective. It is because Jesus 'knows where he comes from and he knows where he is going' (v14). It is this light, the light of our true identity as sons and daughters of God the Father which heals us. It is this knowledge which, when it travels from our heads and connects with our hearts, powerfully transforms our lives. When we know who we belong to, and how much he loves us, that he has engraved us so deeply on the palms of his hands and will never forget or forsake us, then the obstacles that life brings our way fail to hurt us because we have already been healed and made whole. In the light of the righteousness of Christ we have been remade into the image of him who created us, 100% completely restored.

12. *So much of the pain we experience in life comes from a misinformed or misplaced trust in who we are. How might your identity in Christ bring restoration in your life?*
13. *Some illnesses take time to recover from. Some lay dormant for years only to resurface at a later time. In John 11, Jesus explains that he has completely dealt with death. What does it mean to have life without fear of death? What could this really look like?*



Remembering who and whose we are is not an easy task. We no longer need to fear the death which comes as a result of our sin, but our sin still works at making us forget God's promises and to abandon our lives as his forgiven, redeemed, restored, and healed children.

14. *How could you start taking your spiritual health more seriously in 2020?*

Have you ever tried to self-diagnose a condition using the internet? Doctors report that this often leads to unnecessary anxiety and stress when people jump to wrong conclusions. This can also be true with spiritual health. We can be easily deceived when it comes to our spiritual health - either we are too bad for God to love us or so good we don't need God. We need each other, the people of God to help us.

15. *Who is someone you could check-in with this week and ask, "How are you doing in your life with Jesus?"*



- \* Praise God for making and re-making us in his image through Jesus. Thank Jesus that he has engraved us so deeply into his palm when the nails of sin, fear, death, betrayal and hurt were chiselled into him on the cross. Ask the Holy Spirit to work through you to bring the healing power of Jesus' love into the lives of others.
- \* Pray that God would help your head and heart to grasp more fully the extent of his love and care and healing in you life.
- \* Continue to pray that as we seek to spend more time in God's Word and in prayer, that the light and life of Christ might shine even more brightly through our churches into our communities.

Turn to the person next to you and make the sign of the cross on the palm of their hand or forehead as you say:

*Name, the Lord will never forget you. Amen.*

