

Whole in Jesus

Adventist Single Adult Ministries (ASAM) Sabbath Program



Introduction: In a world that is “couples oriented” single adults can feel isolated. And often that carries over into church life. Every church needs to care for its members, whatever their situation, and feed them spiritually and socially. Church experiences need to be meaningful and relevant to them.

Goals: The purpose of Adventist Single Adult Ministries (ASAM) Sabbath is to focus on inclusiveness – to help everyone feel accepted, wanted, included, heard and involved. Adventist Single Adult Ministries (ASAM) Sabbath is an opportunity to listen to the desires and dreams of all members and explore together how your church can facilitate their realization.

Planning Ahead: Several weeks in advance, prepare a short video or PowerPoint presentation based on interviewing single adult (or spiritually single adult) members as they discuss their dreams for their church. Show this during the service on Adventist Single Adult Ministries (ASAM) Sabbath if time allows. Alternately, show it in the foyer area of the church or after the service in the fellowship room before the special dinner you have prepared.

You may also want to create a display in the foyer or another part of the church featuring “Our Dreams for Our Church.” This will help encourage the church board to take these suggestions seriously and consider how they may be implemented.

Suggested Order of Service



Welcome: Make it inclusive.

Praise and Worship Time: If you have single adults with musical talents, ask them to lead. Hymns especially suited include:

#322 Nothing Between My Soul and the Savior

330 Take My Life and Let it Be

#473 Nearer My God to Thee

#574 Let Me Walk With Thee

Call to Worship: Make it active by preparing a responsive reading from the Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal. Suggested numbers from which to choose are 724, 789, 796, 800 and 801.

Congregational Prayer: (involve as many single adults as possible in the service)

Opening Hymn: Suggested numbers are 462 (Blessed Assurance) or 499 (What a Friend He Have in Jesus).

Offering:

Children's Story: (sample included on p. 11)

Special Music: Try to keep with the theme of being "Whole in Jesus."

Scripture: The text for the sample sermon is Acts 9:34. Since this verse is quite short, you may want to choose any of the stories of Christ's healing power for the Scripture reading. If you have a drama team the story could be acted out. If not, several individuals could read the different parts.

Sermon: (sample included on p. 4)

Closing Song: He Touched Me (not in the Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal) or another song listed above.

Benediction/Blessing: “May the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful and he will do it. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.” Amen. (1 Thess. 5:23, 24 RSV)

Sample Sermon



Text: "...Jesus Christ makes you whole..." Acts 9:34

Theme: Being whole in Jesus makes a profound difference every day in my thoughts, my words and my actions.

Outline:

INTRODUCTION

PART ONE: A FRAMEWORK OF FACTS

1. Where We Were vs. Where We Are
2. Jesus' Healing Power
 - Physical
 - Spiritual
3. The Healing Process
 - Forgiveness
 - Restoration
4. Benefits of Wholeness

PART TWO: PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS AND APPLICATIONS

5. For My Thoughts
6. For My Words
7. For My Actions

CONCLUSION

Summary

For Those Who Are Suffering

Appeal to Action

BENEDICTION/BLESSING

Sample Sermon

“Whole In Jesus”



INTRODUCTION: Have you ever tried to refinish a piece of antique furniture? First you want to know what it looked like originally, don't you? So you do some research – read, look at pictures, become familiar with the work of the designer. Then you begin to develop a vision of what the piece could look like again.

When you're ready to start working, the first step is usually some serious cleaning, followed by removal of old stain or paint or torn upholstery. Sometimes you have to fix a broken piece or find a new one to replace it. Restoration is a process that requires commitment. But the results can be absolutely stunning. (BRING A VISUAL EXAMPLE TO GAIN THE ATTENTION OF YOUR AUDIENCE.)

When something is restored to its original state, it is made whole. It's complete. Nothing is missing; nothing is broken; nothing is damaged. It's all there and it's all in good shape.

Today we're focusing on being whole in Jesus. This is not only possible – it is highly desirable because it makes an incredible difference in our lives every day. Being whole profoundly influences our thoughts, our words, and our actions – especially in relating to other people.

This truth, like all others, will be meaningful only when we relate it to our everyday lives. So the goal today is to think deep thoughts, yet express them simply and apply them in practical ways.

PART ONE: A FRAMEWORK OF FACTS

1. WHERE WE WERE vs. WHERE WE ARE: Human beings were created perfect in the Garden of Eden. From the beginning we were meant to be whole. The first face Adam saw was God's. He and Eve were created for fellowship with God in a personal relationship of completeness. But the entrance of sin broke that completeness. Being separated from God has damaged us and

caused us to be incomplete. “All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one” (Psalm 14:3 NIV). “Man is born to trouble as surely as sparks fly upward” (Job. 5:7 NIV).

2. JESUS’ HEALING POWER: Most of the examples recorded in the New Testament of Jesus making people whole are physical healings that produced great change in people’s lives. We can only imagine what it was like for Bartimaeus to receive his sight, or for the woman who had spent all her money on doctors to be instantly healed from her bleeding. And think about the man who lay every day by the Pool of Bethesda waiting for the waters to be stirred. Imagine him suddenly able to walk, to run, to work for a living! These were complete and spectacular life changes for the individuals involved.

Unfortunately, I cannot promise you physical healing today. I wish I could. But the reality is that God may or may not make you whole physically on this earth. We cannot see the end from the beginning as He does. Nor can we understand His ways. “‘For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,’ declares the Lord. ‘As the heavens are higher than the earth so are my ways higher than your ways’” (Isaiah 55:8-9 NIV).

But Jesus Christ does promise spiritual wholeness for every person who asks in faith. He is both able and eager to make you whole. “A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you” (Jer. 36:26 RSV).

You can have spiritual wholeness in a broken body. You can have spiritual wholeness in spite of seemingly impossible circumstances. Pure white water lilies can bloom in polluted ponds if their roots are established in good soil. Being connected to Christ always results in wholeness.

Jesus received everyone who came to Him in faith. He even helped those whose faith was weak. He spoke to them about the kingdom of God. Then He healed them all. Matthew 14:36 says that everyone who even touched the hem of His garment was made whole.

At the touch of faith, healing power (or virtue) went out from Jesus. It is faith that enables us to receive that power. The Samaritan leper who returned to thank Jesus for healing him heard the words, “Your faith has made you whole” (Luke 17:19).

Money cannot obtain wholeness. Intellect cannot procure it. You can never hope by your own efforts to secure it. But God offers it to you as a gift. It is yours if you will reach out your hand and grasp it (Steps to Christ p. 49).

3. THE HEALING PROCESS: Being made whole includes both forgiveness (which happens instantly when we confess our sins) and being restored (which is a process). The book Steps to Christ clearly outlines the progression of experiencing wholeness in chapter 6. Many of you no doubt are familiar with this:

1. Recognize your need.
2. Repent and confess your sins.

3. Acknowledge God as the only source of true healing.
4. Ask in faith that God will make you whole.
5. Receive His healing and wholeness into your heart day by day.

Being made whole is not some kind of reward for only the strongest, smartest or bravest. We don't have to complete elaborate or difficult feats to receive wholeness. At the Pool of Bethesda only one person could be healed each time the waters were stirred. How thankful we can be today that no one who asks is excluded from being made whole! Anyone who goes through these five steps can say with absolute confidence, "I am made whole in Christ through His power."

There is significance in the fact that several of Jesus' healings occurred on the Sabbath. He could have healed the man with the withered hand on any other day of the week. But Jesus was making a point that the Sabbath is for healing, for restoring, for making whole. The Sabbath is one of God's favorite ways for continually restoring us to wholeness (Seventh-day Bible Commentary on Luke 6).

4. **BENEFITS OF WHOLENESS:** Because I know that spiritual wholeness is God's plan for my life, I can know for certain that when I trust in Him, He is guiding me and protecting me. He gives me joy and hope for the future when I will see Him face to face and enter a whole new realm of relationship.

As we grow and mature into all that God has planned, love replaces bitterness and joy replaces sadness. Instead of heartache we experience peace. Instead of pride we display patience. This is the result of trusting God to meet all our needs.

Malachi 4:2 says that Christ, the Son of Righteousness, brings spiritual light and healing. And in "the day of the Lord" the redeemed will leap for joy at the final outcome of God's justice and love. Like springtime calves released from their stalls, we will be wild with joy!

PART TWO: PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

That day will be indescribably wonderful! But we're not there yet. So what does being whole look like today – right now? How does it practically affect the sum of who I am – my thoughts, my words and my actions?

5. **MANAGING MY MIND:** Let's start with my mind. Wholeness always starts in the mind. If I truly believe God is making me whole and complete, my perception is reality! If I haven't accepted this, nothing else we talk about today will matter.

Wholeness means having peace of mind because I know God is in charge of everything that is happening in my life. And that makes it o.k. even if I don't understand it. Wholeness means I am constantly in a prayerful mindset of surrender and acceptance. As we said, being whole always starts in the mind. If you haven't already done so, please, please, go through the steps of

receiving wholeness today. Then review the facts as often as you need to in order to keep in mind your state of wholeness.

6. TRAINING MY TONGUE: Next I must consider my words. Being whole means I will train myself to say thoughtful and encouraging things to people around me. The apostle James says in chapter 3 of his book that taming the tongue is crucial because even though the tongue is a small part of the body, it sets the course of one's life in the same way a small rudder determines the path of a boat. Pure speech, uncluttered with criticism, gossip, envy or deceit, is a sure result of wholeness in Christ.

7. DOING MY DEEDS: And finally, being whole also influences my actions. I want to read the Scriptures every day because they are my connection with Jesus. I want to maintain our relationship by continually praying. Jesus said that the greatest commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart and mind and soul and your neighbor as yourself (Matt 22:37-40). Therefore, wholeness also means a deep love for people in my home, my church, my community and around the world.

Unity and inclusiveness are integral aspects of wholeness. We are all woven together in the great web of humanity. God did not create us to be lonely in separateness from one another.

One of the ways God wants to bless us is by providing, within the church, siblings, parents, children – a family we may not find in our own homes. The church is our spiritual family. When we are born again into Jesus' family we sometimes find the spiritual ties to be stronger and deeper than the link of blood relationships.

However, if I fall into the trap of relying on people or places or possessions or positions for my sense of identity or security, I am not whole in Jesus. True lasting happiness and wholeness come only through my relationship with Jesus. He is the only One who can meet the needs of my soul and fill the longing in my heart for completeness.

CONCLUSION:

SUMMARY: Let's summarize what we've talked about today: In order to experience wholeness, I must believe Jesus is able and eager to restore me. I must desire Him to do so. I must confess my sin, ask His forgiveness and accept it. I must believe God is making me whole. Then I must choose to participate fully in the process of healing and restoration by 1) Managing my mind in thinking restored thoughts. 2) Training my tongue in saying restored words. 3) Confirming my beliefs through doing restored deeds.

Remember, it's not my actions that make me whole – they only confirm that I am whole. When I believe I am accepted, forgiven and made whole in Jesus, the evidence of my wholeness will be seen in my life. I will cherish my relationship with Jesus. I will value people as God does. I will control my tongue. I will be considerate and helpful and nurturing because I desire others to also experience wholeness in Christ Jesus.

FOR THOSE WHO ARE SUFFERING: Right now some of you may be thinking, "This is not where I am!" Perhaps you are struggling with physical brokenness that is choking your desire

for Christ. You may be reeling from the results of bitter relationships and social brokenness. You may be suffering with mental or emotional injuries that seem like they can never be healed.

You may feel that God has abandoned you, or even purposefully hurt you. Maybe you're with Jeremiah in chapter 17 where he laments, "I cannot stop my crying...no peace has come...there is only terror and trouble everywhere" (verses 17 and 19 Living Bible).

To you I would only say, Jesus knows. He knows where you are and what you're experiencing. And He cares...deeply. He gave His life for you, to make wholeness possible for you. Jesus declares, "I have bought you with my blood. You are mine! My grace will strengthen you. There is power in My presence."

APPEAL TO ACTION: Jesus desires you "not only to touch His garments, but to walk with Him in constant communion...He will lead you step by step. Place your hand in His, and let Him guide you" (Ministry of Healing p. 85-6).

Will you do that today? Will you begin the process of restoration? Will you reach out and touch the hem of Jesus' garment? If you do, you will be able to say with the apostle Paul, "the old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Cor. 5:17 NIV)

And if you are already being made whole in Jesus, will you commit to a higher level of restoration? Will you pledge through the power of Jesus Christ to continually guard your thoughts, your words and your actions so that in every aspect of your life you will honor God by experiencing wholeness in Him?

BENEDICTION/BLESSING: "May the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful and he will do it. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you." Amen. (1 Thess. 5:23, 24 RSV)

SOURCES:

The Holy Bible

The Ministry of Healing

Steps to Christ

Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary Vol. 5

"Creating a Singles Ministry in a Couples Church" by Christy R. Robinson, *Adventist Review*, November 21, 1996, p. 17

Children's Story



Theme: Jesus can fill the hole in my heart.

Title: Whole in Jesus (with apologies to Rob Evans, the Donut Man)

Note: If you can get someone to sing his catchy little song it will help to reinforce the point of this story. Go to www.donutman.com for more information.

Preparation: Bring Cheerios and a bagel in a clear bag so the children can see them. Print the picture of a heart with a hole in the middle (or draw your own). You also need two large pieces of paper, one with the word HOLE and the other with WHOLE printed or written on them.

After the children are settled and you have greeted them, begin with the following:

Question: What do these three things have in common: Cheerios, bagels and your heart?

Answer: They all have a hole in the middle! We can easily see the hole in the middle of Cheerios and bagels, but where's the hole in your heart? Is it really there? Oh yes! Of course, some people don't realize they have a hole in their heart. But the truth is that everyone has a hole in his or her heart that is exactly the shape of God. So only God can fit there and fill up that hole.

Now, people who don't know this try to fill the hole with all kinds of other things, such as fancy new toys or bicycles or pretty dresses or _____ (insert whatever is appealing to your group of children).

Those things might seem to fill up part of the hole in your heart. But they can't stay in place because they don't really fit the hole. They can't ever fill the hole because they just aren't the right shape. Only God knows the exact shape of the hole in your heart, so only God can fill it.

There are many stories in the Bible about Jesus filling the holes in people's hearts. I'm thinking right now about Zacchaeus. He was trying to fill the hole in his heart with lots of money and a nice house. But he was not happy and people didn't like him. Do you remember why? That's

right! He had cheated a lot of people. But when Zacchaeus invited Jesus to his house and they talked, Jesus forgave him and filled his heart up with kindness so Zacchaeus wanted to make things right.

And what about Queen Esther when she knew she had to go before the king to ask for the lives of her people? Do you think she was scared? Of course! But after she and her friends prayed, Jesus filled up her heart with courage. She wasn't depending on any other person or anything she owned to help her. No, her strength came only from Jesus.

Now, some of you know that there are two different meanings for the word hole. This kind of HOLE (hold up paper with word) means an empty space. Like the middle of the bagel. There's nothing there. (Stick your finger through the bagel.) The other kind of WHOLE that you will hear a lot about today (show other paper) means complete. If something is whole, it is not broken or damaged. No parts are missing. When something is called WHOLE it's all there and it's all in good shape.

That's what we are talking about when we say God can make you whole. I think it's kind of neat that God makes you WHOLE (point to that one) by filling the HOLE (point to other one) in your heart!

So whenever you eat Cheerios or bagels or donuts, remember there's a hole in your heart, too. And whenever you feel sad or scared or lonely, ask Jesus to fill that hole. We know He wants to do that for us because the Bible says in the book of Revelation that He is standing close by and knocking on the door of our hearts. (If your group has older children ask for a volunteer to read Rev. 3:20. Hand him or her a Bible open to the verse.) He really wants to come in and fill up the HOLE in our hearts with happiness and make us perfectly WHOLE.

Let's ask Him to do that right now, shall we? (Ask for volunteers to pray or offer a brief prayer yourself.)