

Being Healed
Sept 4, 2011
James 5:13-16

All of us are somewhat, in someway broken, needing healing, failing the fitness challenge.

And we can not heal ourselves.

We go to medical people- physicians, chiropractors, radiologists, and psychologists.

And we go to God- the greatest healer.

It may be for a sick stomach, or a broken heart, or an injured soul

As a nation we are working on recovering from 9/11- anticipating the 10th anniversary services we will have here next Sunday.

What is healing, where do we find it or how do we go about it?

What is healing (video- we may be as unable to express as some of these children)

Read Scripture: James 5

Mrs Hull- to be

Story Mrs Hull 4th grade teacher. What I remember about her is that she told 'BE' stories once a week: be kind, be careful, be good. These were not religious stories, which she probably could have gotten away with in those years, but character forming stories that reflected the ways that as Christians we try to live. Who 'to be'

Notice we want 'to be' to be an event, an occurrence, immediately- not a process. We want 'to be' kind, 'to be' healed. We want it now.

We have scriptural support of that- we read the stories of Jesus- healing the hemorrhaging woman and attributing it to her faith. Casting out demons and healing leprosy.

Jesus says- it happens.

In Scripture we read of both physical and spiritual healing and remember that our physical, spiritual, emotional selves are all one self. Disturbance or destruction in one can disrupt the other.

But we also see some healings as part of a process.

We see a process in some of Jesus healings: Jesus put his hands on the blind mans eyes 2 times before he could truly see clearly.

And then we also read that sometimes people aren't healed.

We read about Paul- a man of great faith, who continued to have a physical impediment even after much prayer.

Though we are sometimes cynical about TV healers, we know that God can heal and God does heal.

God can heal in ways we can't explain- and in ways that we can, as skilled and dedicated people provide treatment.

Think of those people that we know who are 'in the process' of being healed. They are getting chemo or radiation, they are recovering from surgery or an injury.

When are they healed? With the last dose of medication or the last stitch during surgery? With the prayers of the church gathering around.

Or with the pronouncement 5 years later that there are no malignant cells.

When is healing?

Is the pronouncement the time of healing or just the time of relief??

Or are all of those part of being healed- physically, emotionally, spiritually?

Many of you know that I come from a nursing background taking care of sick babies.

There are babies sick from something that didn't form the normal way, from an early delivery, from something that occurred during pregnancy or around delivery, something that occurred as a new born. Sometimes we don't understand why they are sick.

In the nursery I've seen the baby's families- mothers and fathers and grandparents and siblings and friends and church families.

I've seen them visit and pray and bring gifts and read stories at the bedside, but I've also seen families that won't or can't visit, or parents who leave and ignore their baby. I've seen families overwhelmed by grief and financial issues and the responsibility of caring for fragile children.

I have seen joy crushed and hope destroyed.

But I have also seen those, in the midst of the worst times, rise up and go on, finding joy and hope again. Though they don't forget, they find **a way** for healing.

Healing doesn't come in a day, and it is often not easy.

Our scripture today:

Are any of you suffering? Keep praying

Those who have a reason to be thankful- continually sing praises.

Are any of you sick? Call for elders- This doesn't just mean 'older' people- don't let Pastor Bill refer you to the 'older' associate pastor,- but refers to those mature in faith.

Have them pray, anointing in the name of the Lord. Their prayer will heal.

Oil was used sacramentally in the early church, as both a medicine for physical healing,

And as a symbol of the Spirit of God for spiritual healing. Reminding us Jesus is the Lord of body and soul.

In the early Church caring for the sick was a unique contribution of Christianity. Pagans didn't care for the sick in any organized fashion, and the Jewish community cared for their own.

But Jesus, and then the Christian community, offered care for the sick, whether they were Christian or not. And during the following centuries the Church has been the founder of hospitals and medical schools the world over- such as Emory Hospital and University.

This passage goes on:

Confess your sins to each other- your sins will be forgiven,

Pray for each other, so you may be healed.

The earnest prayer of a righteous person (one who is forgiven) is powerful

It is difficult to be healed ‘on our own.’ We need others around us to care for us and treat us and pray for us.

All of us need healing in some way. For each of us has had a wound or a broken relationship or a disruption in our life.

There is a lot that medical science can do, and a lot that it can’t do.
And God is in the middle of all healing.

Thomas Edward John Jr. is a former left-handed pitcher in Major League Baseball. His 288 career victories place him as the 7th highest ranked left handed pitcher in major league history.

But he’s better known for the revolutionary surgery named after him.

In the middle of the 1974 season, the Dodgers were headed towards a National League pennant when Tommy injured a ligament in his pitching arm.

Dr Frank Jobe planned a revolutionary surgery to replace the damaged ligament in his pitching arm with one from his right arm. At the time of surgery, Jobe placed a 1 in a 100 chance of recovery. It was questionable that Tommy would ever be able to pitch again. It took time, 2 years. But with the surgery and a proactive

rehabilitation he went on to a 'miraculous' season in 1976 with a 10-10 record. He won 164 games after his surgery, one fewer than Sandy Koufax won in his entire career.

Today the surgery named after Tommy: Tommy John Surgery it is an accepted surgery with a complete recovery > 85%: Tommy John surgery- has been done for athletes John Smoltz and Deion Sanders as well as scores of other professional and amateurs athletes.

Miraculous? It was considered so at the time it was first done.
Miracles are rare and unusual- or they would not be miracles.

Where was God in this? God who created also equips people with skill and knowledge and passions.

In the book *The Healing Power of Prayer*:

We should not categorize healing as either strictly due to medicine or strictly due to faith. All healing is divine, all healing required faith and all healing is miraculous in that people are made whole again.”

We rejoice in healing, even more so when it seems miraculous or is a surprise.

But we don't always have the 'perfect' kind of healing that we want.

This can be difficult for us, knowing that God can do anything.

When people are suffering, dying- in our prayers for healing we say 'why?' Why are people sick, why is there death- why doesn't an all powerful God make things 'right?' especially for good people?

Why?

The answer- there are many things we don't understand. We know that we live in a fallen world- where there is sickness and death. Though humans were created as perfect, things have gone haywire.

We know that God can heal but doesn't always heal the way we want.

We know that God is with us in however healing takes place.

There are some essentials to acknowledge as we consider being healed.

First: God is all powerful and immutable- unchanging

Second: We participate in our illness and healing- by our faith, our practices and decisions

Third: Prayer makes a difference- it allows us to be open to the healing God is doing

When we pray, often our hope is that God's will will become our will, instead of our will becoming God's.

Sometimes it is hard to pray for God's will to be done.

We should not pray to change the mind of God, to cajole God or to pacify God.

We can claim healing, but we can't determine exactly what the will look like

In the end- healing comes according to God's will and grace- we don't deserve it, we don't earn it, we can't buy it or create it or will it. It is from God-[and when we come to this table, we acknowledge that.]

When we find our confidence in God and our strength in God, healing can begin.

Charisma writer Larry Keefauver says "Faith is not holding on for your healing but holding on to the God who can do the impossible."

*Faith is not holding on for your healing but holding on to the God who can do the impossible

There are things that we do that interfere with Being healed:

Some of the things we choose to do with our bodies: Overeating, not exercising, smoking, inappropriate use of drugs, not following good health practices, not getting enough sleep.

There are also ways we feel or act that interfere with healing:

Stress: Excessive stress can interfere with the immune system and with healing

Anger: Anger can destroy, overtake you, and ruin you. Anger can poison your relationships with others and God.

Bitterness: You probably have already realized that life isn't fair. You don't always get a fair shake. Bitterness can create a deep wound. Bitterness turns your thoughts to yourself, and a way from others.

Unforgiveness- who is it you can't forgive? Someone else or yourself? Jesus has told us to love our neighbor as ourselves. That means we need to love ourselves. We have been created by God who loves us in spite of our shortcomings. Let that be a witness about how we should love ourselves and each other, forgiving others as Jesus forgives us..

Hopelessness- when the current day closes around us and we can see no joy for the future.

There are 2 kinds of hope: that the desired outcome occurs, that which we hope- will really happen.

The other is that we will be alright if the desired outcome does not occur. And in that we need our faith in God.

We may need healing from fear and anxiety.

We may need healing from events of the past so we can move on into the future.

We likely will not 'be healed' as an event. It will be a process and there are things that we can do to promote healing.

Develop our relationship with God.

Stop and hit the 'pause' button for a moment.

Look for evidence of God's blessings in the world around.

For healing, pray for God's strength to go on and to make God's will your will, maintain your perspective, - love God through the pain, be willing to ask others for encouragement

Here's an example:

Missy Jenkins has just released an extraordinary book, 'I Choose to Be Happy' In 1997, a 14-year-old classmate of Missy's shot her and others at school- killing 3 students and injuring 5. Missy's injuries caused her to become paralyzed and placed her in a wheel chair. In her book, *I Choose to be Happy*, she tells of forgiving her attacker.

What gave her the courage to forgive? She attributes it to her faith. She believes that the forgiving lead to her healing. In an interview promoting the book, she said of forgiveness, "It released me from being angry. Being angry holds you down. It causes you to be tired. ... So I just chose to be happy and move on with my life. I thought it was the best way to help me heal, physically and emotionally."

Though she remains in a wheelchair- her faith sustains her, her choice is **happiness**

Are you willing to allow God to heal. Are you willing to turn towards God, and pray in faith, while you pursue the means for healing?

We are not promised a life without pain and anguish.

Lev11.45 be holy as I am holy, not 'Be happy as I am happy'

Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes taught "What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies in us."

Being good, being kind, being honest.

Being healed as God wills- body, mind, soul.

What lies within us- and the One that has made that within us- is the One that heals

During Jesus' life, for disciples the worst things that could happen to Jesus would be his death. But from that 'worst' thing came resurrection and salvation

Frederick Buechner says: "Resurrection means the worst thing is never the last thing."

“Resurrection means the worst thing is never the last thing.”

Revelation 21.3-4 Tells us of the end times, when the kingdom of heaven comes to earth.

“ See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more, mourning and dying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.”

Until that time we walk in faith, we pray, we trust God

We trust God- that we are being healed.

So today- I invite you to begin or continue being healed

God will be with you.

III John 1.2 Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, just as it is well with your soul.