

“GOD’S HOME REMEDIES: HEALING”
“GOD’S HEALING POWER”

Mark Twain once said, “The only way to keep your health is to eat what you don’t want, drink what you don’t like, and do what you’d rather not.” For many years now I have had an interest in health. And what I have discovered is that you really can enjoy eating what is good for you and doing what is healthy for you. I have also developed a growing interest in healing.

When God created the earth and everything in the earth, including man and woman, he created it good. The creation story says upon the completion of creating each thing, “*And God saw that it was good.*” He created us good and whole and complete. Sin and sickness, disease and viruses are aberrations from what he created. They came later. They are distortions from what he created and what he wanted and desired. Healing is part of the restoration of creation. God is in the restoration business. God is involved in restoring creation and restoring us. He restores us both spiritually and physically. He created us body and soul. His concern is always with body and soul for they are vitally connected.

Here are some things we need to know about healing. One is that sickness and pain and suffering are universal. T.D Jakes wrote a little book called, “Loose That Man and Let Him Go.” In one of his devotions he made the statement, “In any church service you are in, there’s somebody close to you who is lying on a ‘stretcher’ on the inside. They may act as if they have their life together, but they know they’re putting on a façade. They know they have a need, but they may have trouble telling you about it. They may be hurting. They may be out of control. They may be paralyzed in some way.”

Jakes is right. In every pew there is a bleeding heart. Close to you there is someone who is hurting in some way. It may be you. Pain, suffering, hurt, sickness, these things are universal. We live in a broken world.

The second thing we need to know about healing is that it was a major issue for Jesus and it came to be an important ministry for the early church. The Bible says that, “*Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people,*” (Matthew 4:23). These were the three main aspects of his ministry: teaching, preaching and healing. Teaching showed Jesus’ concern for understanding. Preaching showed his concern for change and commitment. And healing showed his concern for wholeness in people’s lives. The gospels are literally filled with stories of Jesus healing people.

A third thing we need to know about healing is it can be a part of a church’s total ministry today. We know that Jesus gave the ministry of healing to his disciples. “*He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness,*” (Matthew 10:1). He gave the same power to the seventy as he sent them out in pairs into the towns and cities. And we know he gave this power and ministry to the early church. “*Nevertheless, more and more men and women*

believed in the Lord and were added to their number. As a result, people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by. Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those tormented by evil spirits, and all of them were healed, " (Acts 5:14-16).

But God is also giving churches a ministry of healing today as well. The prophecy God gave the prophet Isaiah was not only claimed by Jesus years later, but is also being fulfilled in churches today. *"The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners,"* (Isaiah 61:1-2).

A fourth thing about healing is it has many forms. There are many different kinds of healing. The Psalmist wrote, *"He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds,"* (Psalm 147:3). We are created body, mind and spirit. And each of these areas can become broken. Our bodies get sick or fall apart in some area. Our minds can become confused or mixed up. There are times when we need counseling. Our emotions can become messed up. We have bouts with depression or prolonged grief. And we can often need spiritual healing. God created us as complex human beings. And each of the various parts of the human being is all connected. You can never separate one from the other. And each one affects the other. Spiritual problems can affect us physically sometimes. And so can mental and emotional problems. Sometimes prolonged physical issues can end up affecting us spiritually if we are not careful.

Jesus understood the makeup of body, mind and spirit. But he also understood that the spiritual part of the person is always the most important. The spiritual was always his first priority. In the healing of the paralytic, the four men took their friend and lowered him through a roof of a house in order to get to Jesus who was surrounded by a large crowd of people. Jesus disregarded the physical ailment momentarily and concentrated first on his spiritual condition. *"Some men brought to him a paralytic, lying on a mat. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, 'Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven,'* (Matthew 9:2). Only after a conversation with some who questioned his authority to forgive people's sins, did Jesus finally heal him commanding him to *"take up his mat and walk!"*

A fifth thing to know about healing is that sometimes it has a relationship with confession and forgiveness of sin. Again, in the healing of the paralytic, the first thing Jesus did was forgive his sins. *"When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, 'Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven,'* (Mt. 9:2). Later on he gave the command that indicated he had also been healed. *"But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins...'Then he said to the paralytic, 'Get up, take your mat and go home. And the man got up and went home,'* (Mt. 9:6-7).

When Jesus was explaining how it is when people harden their hearts against God he said, quoting Isaiah, *"For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear*

with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them,” (Mt. 13:15). Some of us need to confess the sin in our lives and receive God’s forgiveness in order to open us up to receive the healing we are in need of.

Another thing about healing is that there is much that we don’t understand! There is and always will be much that is simply mysterious about it. We don’t understand why some are healed and some are not. At least not on this side of heaven. Paul prayed many times to be healed of what he described as a “thorn in his flesh.” What God gave Paul instead of a particular kind of healing that Paul wanted, was an extra amount of grace. What God showed him was that His grace was always sufficient. We don’t understand why some healing takes place through prayer alone and other healing may be a combination of prayer and medicine or the assistance of surgery or perhaps even a combination of love and prayer and medicine.

It has never really bothered me how God chooses to heal a person. I have always been grateful and even amazed at any and every healing regardless of how it came about. Here are some of the different ways God heals people. Sometimes he heals people through His word. The Psalmist wrote, *“Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. He sent forth his word and healed them,”* (Psalm 107:19-20). Sometimes our words to each other heals us. Proverbs says, *“The words of the wicked lie in wait for blood, but the speech of the upright rescues them,”* (Proverbs 12:6). *“Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing,”* (Proverbs 12:18). Words are very powerful. Words can bring blessing. Sons and daughters long to be blessed by their parents. If you have never been blessed by your father, then there is most likely a longing in your heart for this. We have the opportunity to bring healing and blessing to a person’s life by our words.

Healing can also come about simply by one’s presence. Another Proverb reads, *“A wicked messenger falls into trouble, but a trustworthy envoy brings healing,”* (Proverbs 13:17). That’s what we are: envoys. We are God’s messengers. We convey the message of hope and love. And sometimes you don’t need to say a word. All you have to do is be present. There’s an old quote (I don’t remember who first said it). It goes, *“Preach the word at all times and only if necessary, use words.”* Our mere presence offering the presence of Christ within us, offering our love and compassion and God’s grace, offering a listening ear, offering a smile or a caring heart often brings the exact kind of healing a person needs. It rekindles hope.

Faith is also a source of healing. Faith and healing seem to go together. Again and again Jesus would say something like, *“Your faith has healed you.” “Your faith has made you whole.” “Your faith has made you well.” “If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for.”* The Bible even says that on one occasion Jesus could do no miracles among the people because of their lack of faith.

Prayer is also a source of healing. James reminds us, *“Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name*

of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise (them) up,”(James 5:14-15).

God also gives individuals gifts of healing. Doctors have been given the gift of healing. Certain members in the “Body of Christ” (the church) have been given the gift of healing. Paul said, *“Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good...to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit,”* (I Corinthians 12:7,9). The spiritual gift of healing is one of the gifts that God gives to certain people in the body of Christ.

The Bible is also equally clear that regardless of the method or means of the healing or the agent of the healing, ultimately it is always God who heals. On one occasion Peter and John were on their way to the temple to pray. And they met a man who had been crippled from birth. “Silver and gold have we none,” they said, “but such as we have, give we thee. In the name of Jesus Christ, rise up and walk.” And the man was healed. This caused such a ruckus among the people. They had never seen anything like this. They were starting to believe that Peter and John were gods. And Peter spoke up and said, *“By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus’ name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see,”* Acts 3:16). It is never us. It is never **our** prayers or **our** faith. It is not even **our** words or **our** presence. It is always God who brings the “increase.” It is God who brings about the healing. It is God who heals.

Perhaps the most critical aspect of any teaching on healing is the foundational belief that God wants us to be whole. God wants us to be complete. God wants us to be healed. Our complete physical healing may only come in the resurrection. But God is also concerned about our lives here in this life. God always wants the best for his sons and daughters. And just like an earthly parent always wants the best for their children, God wants His sons and daughter to be whole and well, spiritually, physically and emotionally. John wrote, *“Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well,”* (III John 2).

We are going to give you the opportunity to receive prayer for healing of any kind this morning. I would like for those who are willing to pray for others to come first and gather on the inside of the altar rail. Then if you would like to receive prayer for any area of your life or for someone else you know, come and kneel at the altar.

While this is going on, I invite you to pray quietly at your seat. Pray for those you know of that need healing in their life. Pray for your own healing, body, mind and spirit.