

THE HEALING PRESENCE OF GOD PT. II

LOCKBOURNE / OBETZ METHODIST CHURCHES

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SCRIPTURE READING: I Corinthians 12:1, 7-11 NIV

^{1CO 12:1} Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant.

^{1CO 12:4} There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵ There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. ⁶ There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.

^{1CO 12:7} Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. ⁸ To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹ All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.

August is a time of nature's full growth and maturity. Some flowers bloom quickly in the spring, and then fade. Other parts of nature don't come into full maturity until surviving the trying days of summer's droughts. It is a part of God's divine plan for all creation. Everyday you and I can see the restoring presence of God in all of nature, animals and plant life alike.

The healing, restoring presence of God is always at work around us. It does not come and go like a bolt of lightning, but rather it continually moves around us, much like a gentle flow of a breeze on a warm spring day. It is there, but it is up to us to notice and surrender ourselves to the presence of God and not the hustle and bustle of our cultural norms.

Last week we may recall the theme of all Christians having a healing ministry. When we think of us being involved in such a task, we are reminded to place no barriers or distractions in our way, in order to receive. The greatest obstacle to receiving healing is found in ourselves.

For those who would like to review the specific points (because my wife told me last week there were too many) you can review it at our church web site, under "sermons." Like the Ten Commandments, we cannot pick and choose just for simplicity. Each step is there for a specific purpose.

Healing takes place in all various forms available. None is superior to another. From surgeons and physicians, to anointing with prayer or the final cure- all healing is from God.

Today we are going to look at those particular steps toward healing.

In our Scripture reading today, the Apostle Paul offers a summary view of the forms of healing available to the Christian church. Before we look any further, we need to remember that this is not an exhaustive list. It is more of an overall view, for specific questions being asked by the church. In answering these questions, Paul reveals some of the ways God continually works through His people for His people.

The First Word is Relaxation

In the 10th verse of the 46th Psalm, the author writes: *“Be still and know that I am God.”* A better translation is the literal Hebrew words which read, “Relax, and discover that I am God.”

All too often when we hear this passage we think in terms of the physical, and not the spiritual. The author is not treating us like a parent who says to a child, “Sit still and be quiet.” He is telling us to make ourselves comfortable. Pull over from the everyday tasks, the responsibilities or the needs that confront us every day and loosen up. That is what the word relaxation means, *“to be loose again.”* The opposite of relaxation is tension.

When seeking healing, **our body must be relaxed**. It must be free of tension, to focus on God and His healing power. Just as the sky cannot be reflected on troubled waters, so the presence of God cannot be realized by a restless body. We cannot truly contact God except in stillness.

Just as the physical body is relaxed, **the mind must be relaxed** also. For a time, the mind needs to cease to reason. It is a time NOT to think about our problems or afflictions. During these moments of stillness, the mind must focus on eternal affirmations; such as the words from Isaiah that remind us, *“In quietness and in trust shall be your strength.”* (Isaiah 30:15). The process of healing involves strength. In these step exercises we regain strength not just of body, but of mind and soul. In stillness, our spirit opens itself to God.” This

idea of meditation or relaxation is not one that is owned exclusively by Eastern Religions. The words of the 46th Psalm remind us of the essential quality that draws us onto the path of healing: *“Be still and know that I am God.”*

The power of God is in response to the stillness of the soul. Just as a surgeon cannot operate on someone walking around the operating theatre, God seeks for us to hold still; to be loose. To be still and experience the opening of our spirit, which only comes in moments of true stillness of body, mind and soul.

THE SECOND WORD IS PURGING

Purging is not a word we use too often, but it is one that clearly states what needs to happen to us. The mind and the soul cannot move toward health and healing as long as there are poisonous and harmful elements continuing to harm and destroy inside.

Some times when we stand in need of healing, we find that we are emotionally, mentally and physically caught up in focusing on anything and everything except being still and awaiting signs of restoration.

Becoming mentally and spiritually still may become a struggle, like a five year old boy commanded to sit in a chair and not move.

He may grip the chair as long as he can, to keep from moving, but eventually he will begin to sway and bend, and stretch in ways that would clearly demonstrate that while he may technically still be in the chair, he is far from being still.

If we were physically poisoned, our body would move quickly to expel the elements, or purge the body of those things which can cause harm. The body will not experience relief, or feel a hint of health, until all the venom has been removed.

In some cases, the venom may clearly be specific deeds, thoughts and words that block us from God. To truly “be still” and focus on God, we need forgiveness. The conscious mind and soul must be forgiven of all wrong doing and all relationships. God’s healing power works only in accord with those who are living in the boundaries of His love. I John 1:7 says, *“If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin.”*

The subconscious mind must be cleared of all negative emotions and acts of ill will. Matthew 5:8 says, “**Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.**” One seeking healing must rid themselves of anything and everything that keeps God from working effectively in his life.

If one consumes every piece of fried food and chocolate that passes their way, then they cannot assume that a single act of taking a diet pill every day will make them thin. We must cooperate in all the instructions. And so it is, with the steps of healing.

The next three steps work in continual concert with one another. They are:

Clarification
Consecration and
Anticipation.

In the 20th chapter of Matthew Jesus calls out to a group of men who were obviously blind, “**What do you want me to do for you?**” The response of the blind men was immediate and specific. They did not say, “Anything you would like to do for us,” or “Help us to have a good feeling, “ or, “Just bless us Lord. They answered to the point of their deepest physical need. We cannot be vague or general about what we seek when we are asking for God’s intervention. Those blind men answered, “**Let our eyes be opened.**” We must know and clearly identify what we seek.

Some people today are not sick, they are only tired. They need rest. Other people are not sick, they only think they’re sick. This is the person who will put on their tombstone, “I told you I was sick.” Some people live in a chronic state of talking only about illness, either for themselves or the people in their life circle. They need to redirect their thought away from illness to a focal point of wholeness. If we seek or focus on anything long enough, chances are greater that we will get it. By the same token, if we constantly focus on every movement or response in our bodies and worry as to what that could be, then we perpetuate ill health , mentally, physically, behaviorally and emotionally.

When we seek healing, we need to be specific, sharing exactly what is needed. Some people continually cry out, “help me,” but never identify “what.” The Bible says, “You do not have because you have not asked. Ask.”

The second word, **CONSECRATION** is one that relates to specifically relinquishing our life to the will of God. Romans 14:8 says, “Whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s.” One of the conditions of divine healing is a spiritual attitude of absolute surrender of our will and our life to the will of God.

An alcoholic who seeks a liver transplant with the expectation of immediately going back to drinking after the surgical procedure should not expect to be healed. An intention of seeking to repeat ones previous mistakes is not a mindset for receiving what God has to offer, for God’s healing is more than a single area or issue of our life. If God heals a certain area, we must continually do what is necessary to maintain the healing in our life. Healing, when received, cannot be hoarded selfishly. Restored health and renewed strength are to be dedicated to God for the blessing and the service of others.

In the 14th chapter of John Jesus says, “If you ask anything in my name, I will do it.” So when we pray for healing, we must not make any reservations by adding, “If it be thy will...” Jesus never taught that the will of God was ever against healing. But He did teach that unbelief could stand in the way of healing. Therefore, all ifs, must be excluded from our prayer life.

ANTICIPATION

Our last step this morning is the strategic step of anticipation. This step is anticipatory faith. Faith is “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Seeking a healing must be accompanied by expectancy, an attitude of active faith. One who actively thinks in terms of failure, aims their focus toward a different goal. We cannot claim the healing presence, if inward we have damaging doubts.

When these first five steps of relaxation, purging, clarification, consecration and anticipatory faith are actively taken, then, we have created the proper climate for healing.”

Tomatoes usually won't grow out in the snow and cold of winter. Likewise, healing does not manifest itself without the proper climate conditions.

These are the foundational conditions necessary for a Biblical approach to healing. But for today, the final thing we need to always remember is; “All healing is from God.” God uses many instruments, elements, skills and persons, to make that healing a reality.

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