

New Hope Sermon Our Healing God

Our theme verse today is Ps. 30:2 “*Lord, my God, I called to you for help and You healed me.* It’s a great testimony of the truth of our text.

One of the important aspects of shalom is receiving health from the Lord in our bodies, souls and minds. Shalom means God’s presence and wholeness and that is the foundation of health. But, just as shalom was many layers, so does the health God wants to provide. Health is physical; It is emotional, (healing of our felt needs, our sense of belonging and value and being loved); It is spiritual, (when God heals us of our guilt and shame), and it is mental (because how we think directly affects our bodies, our emotions and our relationship with God). This is why Rom. 12:1-2 is God’s timeless prescription, way ahead of the psychological and spiritual thinking of its time. Here it is in the Passion Translation:

12 Beloved friends, what should be our proper response to God’s marvelous mercies? I encourage you to surrender yourselves to God to be his sacred, living sacrifices. And live in holiness, experiencing all that delights his heart. For this becomes your genuine expression of worship. ² Stop imitating the ideals and opinions of the culture around you,^[a] but be inwardly transformed by the Holy Spirit through a total reformation of how you think. This will empower you to discern God’s will as you live a beautiful life, satisfying and perfect in his eyes.

It’s this “total reformation of how you think” that is our lens today to understand healing in the Old and New Testament.

First, the Old Testament. God is introduced as *Jehovah Rapha* as early as Exodus 15. That name means *The Lord our Healer*. Note the context: God had just miraculously brought the Israelites across the Red Sea, out of their captivity to the Egyptians and now they found themselves in the Desert of Shur. The murmuring against God began when there was no drinkable water. God did a miracle and the water turned from bitter to sweet but then God gave a provision for how those miracles would continue: “²⁶ *He said, “If you will listen carefully to the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in his sight, obeying his commands and keeping all his decrees, then I will not make you suffer any of the diseases I sent on the Egyptians; for I am the LORD who heals you.”* So, as is often true in Scripture, this promise had an accompanying condition – our part affects God’s part.

David trusted God for this and the Psalms are full of his cries for healing – both mental and physical.) One of my favorites is Ps. 40: *I waited patiently for the LORD to help me,*

and he turned to me and heard my cry.² He lifted me out of the pit of despair, out of the mud and the mire. He set my feet on solid ground and steadied me as I walked along.

³ He has given me a new song to sing, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see what he has done and be amazed. They will put their trust in the LORD.

I think that miry bog and pit of despair is a picture of depression or the times when we feel hopeless and trapped in a negative thought cycle and set of circumstances. We can’t climb out by ourselves but, as we cry out to the Lord, He lifts us out and sets our feet upon a rock and reestablishes our correct ways to walk and to think. I’ve experienced that as have millions of others down through the ages.

Jeremiah also speaks of God’s promised healing to the Israelites – this time in the analogy of restoration- Jer. 30:17: *But I will restore you to health and heal your wounds,’ declares the LORD,*

'because you are called an outcast, Zion for whom no one cares.' Notice the promised healing is both physical and emotional. The wounds of rejection and shame need healing.

But then we come to Jesus's healing ministry. George Malone notes: "Nearly 1/5th of the entire Gospels is devoted to Jesus' healing and the discussions occasioned by it...Forty-one distinct instances of mental and physical healing are recorded in the four Gospels, but this by no means represents the total. Many of these references summarize the healings of large numbers of persons." (George Malone, *Those Controversial Gifts*, IVP, 1983, p. 1070). In most instances Jesus' healing was holistic – healing the body, the emotions, the spirit and the mind and it arose not only out of compassion but as an evidence of God's anointing on him, confirming his message with signs and wonders.

I was interested to see how James Moore, in his book *Healing Where It Hurts*, describes Jesus' healing of the two Emmaus disciples after Christ's crucifixion. He names them as Cleopas and Simon and pictures them with "a stress-fractured spirit... disappointed, disillusioned, defeated and heartbroken... Their hopes for the future have been dashed" and they are returning home weary and walking wounded. "But, he adds, "that's not the end of the story. No! The risen Lord comes to them. He walks with them. He talks with them. He opens the scriptures to them. He breaks bread with them – and as they experience the resurrected Christ, look what happens – they too are resurrected! They are healed! They find new life! And they rush – no more trudging, no more limping – they run back to Jerusalem to share the good news with the other disciples....So we learn 3 lessons from that story:

1. Jesus comes to us in a special way when we are hurting.
2. Jesus has the power to heal our hurts
3. He gives us His resurrection life."(j. Moore, Abingdon Press, 2008, pp. 9-10, 12.)

And I would add a fourth lesson: because they welcomed His presence and believed Him, they received His healing.

This is a very brief summary of some O.T. and N.T. highlights on healing. From these scripture passages let me offer four applications, beloved:

First, Christ's healing is critical because so many are walking wounded. The depression statistics alone for millennials are very sobering:

The National Survey on Drug Use and Health surveyed over 600,000 American youth and young adults and found:

-From 2009 to 2017, major depression among 20-21-year-olds more than doubled, rising from 7 percent to 15 percent.

-Depression surged 69 percent among 16-17-year-olds.

-Serious psychological distress, which includes feelings of anxiety and hopelessness, jumped 71 percent among 18-25-year-olds from 2008 to 2017.

-Twice as many 22-23-year-olds attempted suicide in 2017 compared with 2008, and 55 percent more had suicidal thoughts. The increases were more pronounced among girls and young women. Suicide also jumped during the period. For example, the suicide rate among 18-19-year-olds climbed 56 percent from 2008 to 2017.

-By 2017, one out of five 12-17-year-old girls had experienced major depression in the previous year.

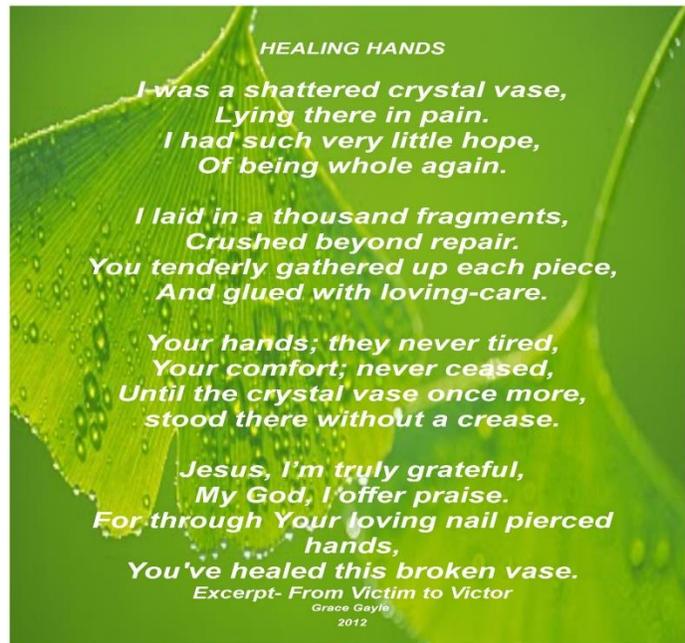
-Other behaviors related to depression have also increased, including emergency department admissions for self-harm, such as cutting, as well as hospital admissions for suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts. Jean Twenge, "The Mental Health Crisis Among America's Youth is Real—and Staggering," IFStudies.org (3-18-19) Another study reported that nearly a third of all university students (not just those who seek counseling) reported that in the last 12 months they've been so depressed that it's difficult to function. (The American College Counseling association 2010)

So God's healing is a message this generation needs to hear. I like this poem which describes God's work in healing: (see graphic) This is what God's healing touch looks like – God restores, comforts, recreates, and puts us back together when we feel broken beyond repair. Shalom is God's wholeness that He brings when He puts us back together – and as Ps. 40 says "*sets our feet on a rock, establishes our goings and puts a new song in our mouth of praise to our God*" – Jehovah Rapha.

Second, Jesus sent the (pp.) Holy Spirit after his ascension so His followers can duplicate His healing around the world. His is the Breath of God "like a fresh wind that renews us. Frail and weak as we are, we have hope. We find healing". The many examples of the Holy Spirit's work in healing are another whole sermon !:)

Third, the Apostle Paul lists the gift of healing as one of the spiritual gifts in I Cor. 12. But in that list the word "healing" used there is actually plural – "healings," indicating the many different ways God enables His people to bring others into wholeness physically, emotionally mentally and/or spiritually. Our Sam has healing prayer gifts and that is why we have a healing service once a month. This is a vital part of maintaining a healthy community of faith.

And #4: (pp.) Scripture is clear – God can heal – whether a disease, an infirmity, a broken heart, but we have a part to play: you have to give him all the pieces. That means you have to surrender all the issues that may be the cause of our sickness or the obstacles to our faith to receive Christ's healing. When Jesus is Lord, healing is part of His gift to those who choose to live under His Lordship day by day.



What helps you sing in...



When we do then we can become like this little child – sitting delightedly under a big umbrella while it pours rain around her.

So, what, indeed, does help you sing in April showers?

So many of God's people throughout the past centuries say: Jesus. His presence. His touch. His love. His forgiveness. His mercy. His life. His healing. What a beautiful name it is. Let's sing this song of response in faith as we open our hearts to Christ's healing ministry.

What a beautiful Name it Is – the name of Jesus Christ our King.

You were the Word at the beginning, One with God most high.

Your hidden glory in Creation, now revealed in You our Christ.

What a beautiful name it is, What a beautiful name it is, the name of Jesus Christ my King

Nothing compares to this what a beautiful name it is, the name of Jesus.

You didn't want heaven without us so Jesus You brought heaven down.

Our sin was great, Your love was greater, who can separate us now?

What a wonderful name it is. What a wonderful name it is. The name of Jesus Christ my King.

What a wonderful name it is. What a wonderful name it is. The name of Jesus.

Death could not hold You, the veil tore before You.

You silenced the boast of sin and grave. The heavens are roaring the praise of Your glory.

For You are raised to life again.

What a powerful name it is, what a powerful name it is, the name of Jesus Christ my King.

What a powerful name it is, what a powerful name it is, the name of Jesus.

You have no rival; you have no equal, now and forever, God, You reign.

Yours is the kingdom, Yours is the glory, Yours is the Name above all Names

What a powerful name it is, what a powerful name it is, the name of Jesus.

(Hillsong Worship)

This is the Jesus we serve and bless for being our healer. Hallelujah! Amen.

Dr. M.L. Codman-Wilson 7/14/19