

No 5. Healing Our Lives

KEY BIBLE READING: “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole SPIRIT, SOUL, and BODY be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you *is* faithful, who also will do *it*.” 1 Thess 5:23-24.

One of the troublesome questions that confront people seeking healing is - **why isn't it happening?** Or **why is it taking so long?**

Whereas our minds are set on what is happening to our bodies, God looks at our whole being, body, soul, and spirit, and the wellbeing of the whole man. For instance it is often the case that disorders of the soul, or the manner of our living, are a major cause of the sickness of our bodies. God's concern is for the welfare of our whole being, and our relationship and commitment to the Lord. In many cases the healing of our inner being and our commitment to God must occur before the healing of our bodies can be attained. This is often the reason why healing may be prolonged.

Before proceeding further, let us make a very brief review of the components that make up our being.

THE BODY is the medium through which we make contact with material and physical things. The appeasement of bodily desires may overshadow and hinder our spiritual growth.

THE SPIRIT is that part of us that enables us to understand spiritual things, and have communion with God. One of its components is the conscience, which enables us to know what is right and wrong, and to make decisions that are in God's will.

THE SOUL is the base of self awareness and emotions, the home of self desire, self satisfaction, and self centeredness. It is the medium through which our personalities are expressed.

Of these three, the spirit is the highest part of man, being constantly connected to God.

THE HEART is the indicator of the settled state of our wills -- what we have willed forms the settled direction of our lives. In this light the state of our heart is an indicator of our standing before God.

In healing our whole being, body, soul, and spirit, are brought into a right balance and relationship with each other so that the settled state of our hearts is in God's will. If there is an imbalance, such as our bodily desires dominating our whole being, we are out of tune with God and His life giving Spirit. In a perfect balance of the members of our being, the spirit holds sway over the body and soul, and our lives are kept in God's will.

Unfortunately the desires of the soul and body are so strong and dominating that we bow to their power, and without God's intervention they will retain their control over us. That is why Paul wrote, “**For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do... For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice... So then, with the mind [in this case the will] I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.**” Rom 7:15-25.

What Paul was saying was that our willpower is not strong enough for us to overcome the power of fleshly desire. Our help comes from believing and receiving what the Lord achieved for us by His death and resurrection. In the Sixth chapter of Romans, Paul says, **“knowing this, that our old man [under the power of the flesh] was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.”** Rom 6:6. Our **“old man”** is the body of carnal desire that holds us captive. Paul says that the old man was incorporated in Christ’s death on the cross, and that we have been raised with Him as new creations. **“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”** 2 Cor 5:17-18.

The crucifixion of our old man is not a physical, but a spiritual happening. But if by faith we testify to what the Scriptures say, the Holy Spirit responds by undertaking a work that puts to death the demanding appetites of the flesh that hold us in bondage. **“Therefore, brethren, we are debtors — not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”** Rom 8:13.

This work of overcoming the power of the flesh may take a number of years, but the initial act of the will of declaring our old man crucified with Christ is the one thing needed in this case for healing to commence.

Of course Paul was starting off from a right heart attitude. His will was set to be rid of the power of the flesh that was dogging his Christian walk. And that is the crucial starting point for anyone that is battling the power of fleshly desire. Unless we have a similar heart attitude that resists the power of the flesh, God can only do a work that changes the set of our wills. Only suffering can turn a man’s will away from sinful fleshly desire and back to God’s righteousness. This is affirmed by Peter:

“Therefore, since Christ suffered for us* in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for HE WHO HAS SUFFERED IN THE FLESH HAS CEASED [in his heart] FROM SIN, that he no longer should live the rest of *his* time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.” 1 Peter 4:1-3.

A type of suffering that God often allows to inflict us to break the power of wilful flesh is **SICKNESS**. The reason why so many people are not healed straight away is that God is undertaking a work that is turning a heart away from fleshly indulgence, and towards a proper commitment to Him and His righteousness and holiness.

God is continually working in the lives of those **who seek His will for them**. For this reason it is important not to enter into a healing ministry that may be interfering with God’s working in another person. We should wait on God’s leading and peace to ensure that a healing ministry is in His will. Paul warns us, **“Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people’s sins; keep yourself pure.”** 1 Tim 5:22.

Examine Yourself

When faced with prolonged sickness that is not responding to medicinal therapy and/or prayer, we should examine ourselves, body, soul, and spirit, to see how they are related to

each other and to God. **“For if we would judge [examine] ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.”** 1 Cor 11:31-32.

THE STATE OF OUR SOULS

Unfortunately, in our living, more often than not we are controlled by our self orientated soul, and our bodily desires. But at the moment **we totally surrender** our lives into God’s refining hands, He undertakes a long and profound work that reverses the controlling forces in our being, so that the spirit gets stronger and stronger, and our soulish desires become weaker, until eventually we are mostly governed by our spirits. We “walk after the spirit” and not the flesh. To be growing in the Lord, we must be a work of God in progress. **“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”** Eph 2:8-10.

Our responsibility in the healing of our souls is to set and maintain our hearts against the carnal desires of the flesh that war against our spirits. In this respect Peter advises, **“Beloved, I beg *you* as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts WHICH WAR AGAINST THE SOUL.”** 1 Peter 2:11-12.

OUR BODIES

Our Bodies should be Sanctified or set apart to Christ

Our bodies were purchased by Christ at the cost of His own sacrificed body and shed blood. We should consider them to be His property, created for His purposes.

“Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.” 1 Cor 6:19-20.

As Christ surrendered His own body and life to the death of the cross, our response should be to set our bodies apart for His service.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service.” Rom 12:1-2.

Pursue Holiness

In examining the spiritual rightness of our bodies, we should take note of the things that entice us to regularly sin.

Jesus warned, **“But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast *it* from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast *it* from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.”** Matt 5:28-30.

The language in this reading is obviously figurative. e.g.

“If your right eye causes you to sin” -- Your “right eye” is that aspect of looking that is constantly causing you to sin. For instance, adulterous and lustful looking, or covetous, idolatrous, or contemptuous looking.

“pluck it out and cast *it* from you”: -- Set your will against it, reject it fully in your heart, and put it on the cross to be put to death by the Spirit. In setting his will, King David says, **“I will set nothing wicked before my eyes..”** Ps 101:3.

Similarly,

“if your right hand causes you to sin” -- Your right hand is **the** activity that is **causing you to continually sin**.

“cut it off and cast it from you.” -- Set your will against that activity, reject it fully with your whole heart, and put the desire for it on the cross, that it is put to death by the Spirit.

“But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds,” Col 3:8-9

Rejecting it fully in your hearts means to reject it in its entirety, not clinging on to part of it. God and the Holy Spirit will not be satisfied with a partial rejection of sin.

OUR SPIRITS

Just as the body needs exercise to keep it strong and healthy, so does the spirit, but whereas the body needs physical exercise, the spirit needs to engage in spiritual activity. e.g. praying regularly, reading and meditating on the Scriptures, meeting together to offer worship, praise, and thanksgiving to God, and using the gifts of the Spirit.

“Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual *gifts*, let it be for the edification [strengthening in Spirit] of the church *that you seek to excel.*” 1 Cor 14:12.

“But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.” Jude 20-21.

“Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord *is*. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit...” Eph 5:17.

“And those *who are Christ's* have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” Gal 5:24-26.

HEALING OUR LIVES

Before understanding how our lives must be healed, it is necessary to understand God’s purpose for our lives. Why were we created? Why did God seek us out and provide the truth and spiritual enlightenment to receive our salvation? What does God want and

expect of us personally? When we examine our lives in the light of these questions, we may begin to see where we are out of order or falling short, and how our lives need to be changed.

We Were Created in Christ for Good Works

Of course our bodies are the vehicle through which we experience many of the blessings God has provided for us here on earth. But the higher purpose for our bodies is that they are instruments set apart to God for works that He has preordained.

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” Eph 2:10.

“Our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.” Titus 2:13-14.

We are Recipients and Manifesters of Christ’s Life

We were created in order that we might contain the Spirit of Christ, so that His life might be manifested in us and through us to others.

“I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.” John 10:10.

“I am the true vine...Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.” John 15:1-6.

Collectively, We are a Spiritual Temple Indwelt by God

Collectively, we were created as “spiritual stones fitted and joined together by spiritual gifts and ministries, to form a temple for Christ to dwell in our midst.

“...Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.” Eph 2:19-22.

“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.” Heb 10:24-25.

“...but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head – Christ – from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.” Eph 4:15-16.

NOT DISCERNING THE BODY

Paul uses the analogy of the human body to describe the nature of the membership of the Church, and the need to love and care for one another.

“For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also *is* Christ.... If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body *were* an eye, where *would be* the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing, where *would be* the smelling? But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. And if they *were* all one member, where *would* the body *be*?

But now indeed *there are* many members, yet one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. And those *members* of the body which we think to be less honourable, on these we bestow greater honour; and our unpresentable *parts* have greater modesty, but our presentable *parts* have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honour to that *part* which lacks it, that there should be no schism in the body, but *that* the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with *it*; or if one member is honoured, all the members rejoice with *it*." 1 Cor 12:12-26.

Further, Paul warns that not having due care and love for each other endangers their own physical health.

“Now in giving these instructions I do not praise *you*, since you come together not for the better but for the worse. For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it.... Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper. For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of *others*; and one is hungry and another is drunk.... Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks *this* cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood* of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner* eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's* body. For this reason many *are* weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.” 1 Cor 11:17-31.

This study focuses on setting our lives in order. We should examine every part of our living experience to see if there is any aspect that may provide a hindrance to our healing and health, and seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit to set every part of our lives in order.