

The Man who heals (2 Kings 5; Mark 1:29-44)

A BAPTIST PREACHER AND HIS WIFE decided to get a new dog. Ever mindful of the congregation, they knew the dog must also be a Baptist.

They visited kennel after kennel and explained their needs. Finally, they found a kennel whose owner assured them he had just the dog they wanted. The owner brought the dog to meet the pastor and his wife.

"Fetch the Bible," he commanded. The dog bounded to the bookshelf, scrutinized the books, located the Bible, and brought it to the owner.

"Now find Psalm 23," he commanded.

The dog dropped the Bible to the floor, and showing marvellous dexterity with his paws, leafed through and finding the correct passage, pointed to it with his paw.

The pastor and his wife were very impressed and purchased the dog.

That evening, a group of church members came to visit. The pastor and his wife began to show off the dog, having him locate several Bible verses. The visitors were very impressed.

One man asked, "Can he do regular dog tricks, too?"

"I haven't tried yet," the pastor replied.

He pointed his finger at the dog. "Heel!" the pastor commanded.

The dog immediately jumped on a chair, placed one paw on the pastor's forehead and began to howl.

The pastor looked at his wife in shock and said, "Good Lord! He's Pentecostal!"

TODAY WE LOOK AT JESUS AS THE MAN WHO HEALS. This is the most misunderstood and most perplexing characteristic of Jesus as many have sought Jesus for healing. Some have been healed. Many have left disappointed. Some are quite angry that Jesus did not heal them. Some even give up on God.

Yet for Mark, this is one of the most important characteristics of Jesus. So much so that nearly 70% of the material from Mark is about healing by Jesus of people with chronic physical illness, with some mental illness and with demonic oppression.

It seems that people would come from far and wide, seeking Jesus and the healing that he would offer.

Mark begins with Jesus teaching in the synagogue. The way he taught and spoke exposed a person who had been possessed by an evil spirit.

IN THE N. T. POSSESSED ARE PERSONS afflicted with especially severe diseases, either bodily or mental (such as paralysis, blindness, deafness, loss of speech, epilepsy, melancholy, insanity, etc.), whose bodies in the opinion of the Jews, demons had entered, and so held possession of them as not only to afflict them with ills, but also to dethrone the reason and take its place themselves; accordingly, the possessed were accustomed to express the mind and consciousness of the demons dwelling in them; and their cure was thought to require the expulsion of the demon.

The Greek word used in the N.T. (demonizomai-demonized) does not define the extent of the influence. It becomes clearer from the nature of the person's problem.

POSSESSION OR "CONTROL" is not common unless a person has given themselves totally to Satan. Most of the time "control" is temporary when the demon seizes the person. A Christian cannot be demon "possessed" because it implies ownership. Christians are born of God and have His Spirit living within us.

"Affliction", "Oppression", "Bondage", "Stronghold", "Foothold" are words to describe demonization. This implies varying degrees of demonic influence in **certain areas** of a person's life. This can be likened to a military invasion of a city where friendly forces may occupy and control the city, isolated areas can remain under enemy domination. Christians can be demonized at these levels if they allow themselves to be. (1 Corinthians 10:20-22; 2 Corinthians 10:3-6; Ephesians 4:26,27; 1 Timothy 4:1-3)

LAST WEEK I SAID THAT IF you first deal with the legal right viz the sin or the lie that has been believed about themselves and/or God's lack of care, then Satan has no might. But if you hold on to the sin or believe the lie that you must be bad because of what is happening to you, then the demon stays.

Thus for Jesus to heal the person of their "sickness", the demon must be cast out that is causing the sickness. But modern medicine struggles to give credence to the reality that some sicknesses are caused by demons or have become a demonic hold because of the chronic nature of the sickness or lack of understanding by the individual.

MARK THEN GIVES US A NUMBER OF ACCOUNTS OF HEALING BY JESUS. It begins with the healing of Peter's mother from a fever. The word gets around and that evening the whole town gathered at the door. Note that Mark reports that Jesus healed many who had various diseases. Not everyone. In other accounts it is reported that Jesus healed all who came to him. Jesus also drove out many demons but would not allow them to reveal who he was.

In all the accounts of healing in the gospels, we get clear evidence that most people are healed

but not everyone. We see Jesus singling out certain people for healing like the Gadarene demoniac and the man at the pool of Bethesda in John 5. Later Paul asks for the thorn in the flesh to be removed and God's reply was that His grace was sufficient and so the thorn was not removed. Paul had to live with it!

THE DILEMMA WE FACE IS THAT Jesus does heal most people but some are not. We may spit the dummy about this and claim unfairness by God but the reality is that God is not a vending machine where you put in a prayer and out comes the healing that you need.

I remember the testimony of John Wimber who had an amazing ministry of healing. He had prayed for 1000 people before anyone got healed. In his short ministry, he would say that about one third of the people he prayed for would be healed. But he would go on to say that if he did not pray for healing then no one would be healed! Those who did receive healing through John Wimber would never have if John had not prayed.

So why did Jesus heal people? Was it for their benefit or was there something more going on?

For many of us the immediate is our major concern. For Jesus while the immediate was the major concern, the bigger picture was also in His mind.

THE BIGGER PICTURE WAS THE ENTRANCE of God's Kingly rule; God's Kingdom. The bigger picture was who Jesus really was; the Son of God. The bigger picture was the Cross where sin, sickness and Satan would be defeated. The bigger picture was the Cross from which people would gain eternity.

The healing of people was a signpost to who Jesus was and why He came. Jesus main concern is not that you live longer on this earth through the healing of an illness but that you would live for ever.

Everyone who was healed by Jesus eventually died. Most of the disciples did not die of old age. All but one had their lives cut short.

So it is an unrealistic expectation that we will all live to over a hundred. It is an unrealistic expectation that every disease would be healed by God so that you live to beyond one hundred.

THE PEOPLE OF THE OT KNEW that there was a time to live and a time to die; that God had appointed our allotted years to us. While they grieved over the loss of a loved one even a child, they understood that the Lord gives and the Lord takes away, blessed be the name of the Lord.

They knew that God was in charge not them. They would challenge God about the injustice and loss of life. They would scream and yell and cry out. But in the end, they accepted that the Lord had his ways and His ways are not our ways.

THIS IS NOT THE PERSPECTIVE of many people including Christians today. They think that God is at their disposal and when He does not give what they demand, they get angry and complain and believe that God has short changed them. They have a hissy fit with God.

God is not a vending machine that answers every request and demand when you put a prayer in.

He is the sovereign Lord and must be treated that way. It is not good for you to harden your heart and put you offside with God. The heavens will become brass because of your sin ie your arrogance before God.

So what does Mark emphasize that gives us a fair chance of being healed. A close look of the healing stories in Mark chapters 1-10 before Jesus' last entry into Jerusalem gives us some clues.

Let me emphasize again. Even if you do all the things that Mark suggests, it does not mean that your sickness will be healed but it may give you a better than even chance.

MARK 1:40 FROM OUR reading today states

*A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, "If you are willing, you can make me clean"*

In this verse we see a recurring pattern that emerges in Mark's account of Jesus healing people here and in other accounts. Not all elements are present in every account but most are and taken cumulatively, it gives us some pointers.

### **POSTURE**

In most of the accounts in Mark, the sick people came to Jesus. They knew that He had the power to heal. They had heard about it and now they wanted their turn. In some cases, they ran to Jesus indicating their desperation and need of the One who could heal.

How desperate are we to run to Jesus for help? Do we know and believe that Jesus can heal us? What urgency do we put in our lives to come to Jesus?

IN MOST ACCOUNTS, the person who wants Jesus help falls on their knees. In some cases, they fall on their knees and worship Jesus.

Bowing or Kneeing before God symbolizes worship and honour to God. Kneeing during prayer or worship is a sign of humility, that we humble ourselves before Him and recognize His lordship. There are many scriptures in the bible that prove this fact, including the popular "every knee shall bow at the mention of the name of Jesus"..this symbolizes worship. In most cases, you will find that kneeling was followed by praying or making a request.

Falling on your knees indicates your humility before the God, your dependence upon God

## PLEAD FOR MERCY

In all the accounts there is a plead for God's mercy.

What did the people understand about this? Psalm 103 was the underpinning of their cry for mercy.

The mercy of God involves the following seven things. ONE, OF COURSE, IS HIS PERSON-WHO HE IS. This text opens up in Psalm 103 and says, "Bless the Lord. Bless His holy name." And notice what verse 8 says: "The Lord is merciful." Now the Lord does show mercy. The Lord has acts of mercy, but the Bible says that the Lord is mercy. The Lord is merciful, so it involves His person, who He is.

NUMBER TWO, it not only involves His person, but it involves His provision. It is mercy that makes all His benefits possible. [Psalm 103:2](#) says, "Bless the Lord and forget not all His benefits."

THE THIRD THING THAT IS involved in the mercy of God is His patience. Psalm 103:8,9. It says, "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger." That is the word "patient."

NUMBER FOUR, when you ask what is involved in mercy? It also involves His punishment, believe it or not, [Psalm 103:10](#) . When God does punish us for our sins, you must understand that it is done in mercy. If God would punish you according to what you really deserve, you would be in big trouble! The Bible says in verse [10](#) , "He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities." Aren't you glad?

THE FIFTH THING THAT is involved is His pardon. There are no two verses in the Bible that so clearly demonstrate what God does with our sin than these two verses.

*11 For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him;*

*12 As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.*

THE SIXTH THING IS that mercy is involved with pity. *13 As a father pities his children, so the LORD pities those who fear Him. 14 For He knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust*

THE SEVENTH THING is that mercy is part of the plan of God.

*15 As for man, his days are like grass; As a flower of the field, so he flourishes.*

*16 For the wind passes over it, and it is gone, And its place remembers it no more.*

*17 But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting On those who fear Him, And His righteousness to children's children,*

Their appeal was: God be merciful to me. Jesus would say to the Gadarene demoniac: *Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has shown you mercy.*

PEOPLE WHO WERE HEALED appealed to the mercy of God and recognize that they were totally dependent upon the mercy of God and nothing else: no previous good works or righteousness before God.

## PERSISTENT FAITH

Mark's accounts showed that faith that was persistent and willing to go to any length to reach Jesus and ask for healing.

In Mark 2, four men did not let a packed room with people standing outside to get their mate to Jesus. They climbed up on the roof, opened it up and lowered their friend down.



In Mark 5 the synagogue ruler was prepared to risk all, his reputation and standing in the synagogue to go to Jesus. When Jesus and he heard that his girl was dead, Jesus do not fear, just believe.

WHEN GOING TO THE GIRL, a woman with an issue of blood was so desperate that she reached in and touched the hem of Jesus' robe. She thought that if she touched the hem of his robe, she would be healed.

Others had a small belief. But the faith that moved Jesus was not the quantity of faith but the type of faith that was prepared to do anything to get to Jesus and plead for healing. They knew in their hearts that only Jesus could heal them.

HOW FAR ARE YOU PREPARED to go to get the healing from Jesus that you are looking for? How long are you prepared to wait for the healing to come? How are you going to put your faith in Jesus into action?

### **PROACTIVE RESPONSE**

The final piece in the puzzle for the people to receive healing was to act on what God had said to them.

THE STORY OF NAAMAN in the OT reading for today demonstrates the situation of people wanting to be healed but disobeying what God had told them to do.

Bathing seven times in the Jordan was not what Naaman had imagined how the healing would take place. Thankfully his servants read the riot act gently to him and he did what the prophet had asked him to do. I imagine that the fullness of his healing would come only after the seventh time. For total obedience was what was called for the healing to take place.

FOR THE PARALYZED MAN IN MARK 2, he would have to be obedient to two things. Firstly receiving the word of forgiveness that his sins were forgiven. I suspect that sin was the cause of his sickness or the blockage for his healing. Then he would have to literally obey Jesus by getting up and picking up his mat when everything inside him was screaming *I am paralyzed, I cant do this. I cant get up let alone pick up my mat.*

Healing takes place when the sick person listens to Jesus and obediently does what Jesus tells him to do even though he/she could not do that before.

They too had to exercise faith in Jesus by obeying his command of healing.

Here's then the good news – Jesus wants to heal your impaired body in spite of your imperfect faith. Regardless of how serious your situation may be, Jesus has the solution. He can do for you what no other can.

LET ME SHARE THIS STORY from Allen Golding. He writes: “When we were missionaries to the Philippines, we vacationed in Baguio City in the mountains of Northern Luzon. While there, we visited the St. Louis Silver School, . . . We admired exquisite workmanship . . . and took home a souvenir – a pure silver money clip embellished with a distinctive design. I carried that clip for the next 24 years. One day it finally broke . . . I then took the two pieces of the money clip back to the silver school in Baguio. One workman, about my age, asked if he could help me. . . .

“After examining the pieces for a minute or so, he looked up at me and said, ‘I designed this clip. I was the only one to make this design. I made all of these that were ever made.’

“I asked, “Can you fix it?”

“He said, ‘I designed it. I made it. Of course I can fix it!’ (“Creator Makes and Fixes Creations,” [www.PreachingToday.com](http://www.PreachingToday.com), s.v. “Healing”).

GOD CAN 'FIX' YOU TOO if you'll bring the pieces of your life to Him.

So what are you going to do with your doubts? Bring them to Jesus and He won't hold them against you.