



The Living Well

Canterbury Diocesan Centre
for Healing and Wholeness

Healing & Wholeness – Worship Leaders Course

REFLECTION

Over the many years I have been part of the church I have been blessed to be aware particularly of the role the church has to play in our corporate and individual wellbeing.

Essentially our healing and wellbeing is tied up in the Christian narrative of salvation which encompasses rescue, repentance (where needed), forgiveness, deliverance, reconciliation, purpose and healing; plus our own awareness of God and his intimate care and love for each one of us, made known to us in Jesus.

Often when we talk of healing within the church we might think of a healing service, the sacraments of bread and wine, or the laying on of hands, anointing with oil, prayers for healing – all of which are wonderfully used by the Holy Spirit of God working among us. I have been conscious however of the greatness of God to work way beyond these gifts, fruits and tools.

To come into the presence of God is to come into the potential, the plausible realm of healing. Where God is, his many attributes are as well. To *'enter into his courts with thanksgiving and praise'* (Psalm 100) – to come to worship – is to be where you may be healed. On every occasion we gather the possibility is present. God does not live in boxes and is not only present and available for healing when it is the monthly healing service.

Belonging to others, being loved, accepted, noticed and valued in church community is for many the healing they long for.

Being unwell, vulnerable, broken or hurting is unpleasant for most people but all of us experience this at some time in our lives and for some, sadly, and without comprehension, they experience ill health nearly all of their life.

The church, the family of God, is created to be a family of hope, help and healing. As disciples of Jesus we are called to be a part of good Christian community that is willing to walk the dark paths with others holding a Christ light for them. We need to provide a safe and inclusive space that is *church* and be willing to hear the painful stories as well as the joyful ones.

This way the church learns that it has both the gift of healing and the gift of perseverance to bring to fruition within the community of believers and beyond, as we live it this becomes not just head knowledge but heart knowledge too.

We begin to *live the gospel* when we respond to each other and the world we live in with grace, mercy, justice and compassion (Micah 6:8). And when we do *live the gospel*:

*Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily;
your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.*

Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry, and he will say, 'Here I am.'

Isaiah 58:8-9

Wisdom given to us by the Holy Spirit of God for the days in between Jesus' incarnation and His return helps us to acknowledge human frailty, complexity, uniqueness and our powerlessness to change all outcomes.

Sharing our stories with each other and **listening** well conversely makes us aware of the huge resilience amongst us and the deep care of God who has kept so many of us through some really tough times and traumas in our lives. *God is good. All the time. All the time. God is good.*

Humbly we offer ourselves in ministry, accepting the Lord's call and delighting that he chooses to commission us and work with, in and through us. This is pure gift, a real joy and a shared blessing. We have no healing power or ability of our own. An *attitude of gratitude* accompanies this ministry of Christ.

Deeper questions develop as we give detailed thought to the place (and purpose?) of suffering amongst us. We ponder the outcomes of our hopes and prayers for healing for others, the disappointment when God does not seem to hear, and the anger and horror of some of the traumas.

We live in the tension of the 'now and not yet now of the Kingdom'; *for now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known* (1 Corinthians 13:12), is not an easy place to be and the temptation to become despondent in our life of faith and prayers for healing is real.

My discovery has been that the more I am prepared to go on taking the risk of asking God for healing, the more I am prepared to get out of the boat and have a go at walking on water, the more I **listen** and am made conscious of my brother or sister's need, the more the Lord provides the comfort, hope and help we yearn for at times of difficulty.

We have a **listening** God, He **listens** with all that He is – He **listens** with his ears and with His eyes, He **listens** with His intuition and His heart, He **listens** with His Spirit and His mind. His complete being listens to your complete being. And most importantly He responds with healing, love and grace....and asks us to take Him as our role model, to imitate the one we love in Jesus Christ:

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. Ephesians 5:1-2

7 QUESTIONS & SCRIPTURES TO PONDER – please engage the suggested scriptures with your answer if you can– but also feel free to explore beyond them.

- **Q1. What do we mean by healing?**

*The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to **reconcile** to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.* Colossians 1: 15-20

- **Q2. Where do we see the need for healing today? Where do we meet with suffering?**

*'Today **salvation** (Greek soterio) has come to this house'.... Jesus said, 'For the Son of man is come to seek and to **save** (Greek sozo) that which was lost' Luke 19: 9 - 10*

Greek Soterio - Salvation, deliver, protect, prosper, peace of mind

Greek Sozo – save, rescue, deliver **heal**

Save – Saviour - Salve

- **Q3. How whole and healed can we expect to be?**

If one part of the body hurts, the whole body hurts with it.... 1 Corinthians 12:26

- **Q4. How does the local church community offer healing?**

Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness....

...Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give. Matthew 10:1 & 8

- **Q5. How do we manage our expectations and our disappointments?**

At sunset, the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness, and laying his hands on each one, he healed them. Luke 4:40

- **Q6. What were Jesus healing, miracles, signs and wonders for?**

He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well." Mark 16:15 - 18

- **Q7. Do we have a theology, a 'God talk', an understanding, an explanation, for suffering?**

As you go, proclaim this message: 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' Matthew 10:7

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