

Healed People - Heal People

February 4th, 2024

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O God our Healer. Amen.

The Stars Ambulance just celebrated 10,000 missions. They are the red helicopter ambulances that we see in the sky bringing patients to receive lifesaving medical care here in Saskatchewan. They have been operating for over a decade.

I've been standing on the top level of the children's hospital at night when the ambulance is landing on the roof. It gives you chills to think of the paramedic pilots and the families inside the helicopters, the trauma teams running out to meet them. I am in awe of the advanced science and education and personal sacrifices that our medical workforce offers every day to families in our province.

Today, our gospel reading is about healing. And part of that is to give thanks for all of the people who bring us medical care, lifesaving help, surgeries, the ability to manage chronic pain and illness, and often, cure us. And I know that the incredible people in our medical system here in Saskatchewan have helped every family in this church.

But sometimes there is no cure. I have shared about this patient before at a Saskatoon Cluster meeting, so, forgive me if you've heard about her. I'll call her Jane. Jane was a deaconess in the United Church, and a missionary. She was gregarious and full of life, and I loved her so much. I learned that there was no cure for her cancer. And that she was dying.

And one day, just after I had said the Lord's prayer with her, I was so sad, that I started to cry. And Jane looked at me, and she took my hand, and she began to sing Amen. And then – in true United Church fashion – she burst into a round of A-woman. There was no *cure* for Jane. But Jane was *healed*. In Christianity, we believe that we can receive spiritual healing. Healing may not change our physical or material reality, healing *may* not come with a cure, but Jane received healing from God, the healing of peace, and acceptance. She received healing, when she was filled with courage and hope for the journey to the next place. The healing that comes from a relationship with the divine. The healing of the soul meant that even as her body was giving out, Jane was whole. Her spirit was so strong that she became a healer to me even as she was dying.

She brought me the healing of comfort in my sorrow. The healing of hope and the assurance that she is safe with God. And I have no doubt, that she is singing A-Woman in heaven right along with us this morning.

We have heard that "hurt people hurt people". That when someone is in pain that pain can cause them to bring pain and suffering to others. It's the idea of the cycle of abuse and violence, *hurt people hurt people*. And if that's true then when it comes to the experience of spiritual healing, I think we can say – Healed people - heal people. Healed people - heal people.

Like Jane, whose spirit was healed and fully realized, she had this capacity to love that just spilled off her hospital bed to give energy to her care team and nurses, to comfort her family in their sorrow, and even to help me. In her presence, we felt – better. We felt some healing.

In our bible reading today from Mark's gospel, Jesus is performing all sorts of healings, and driving out demons which is in the same ballpark as healing. It says,

*As soon as they left the synagogue,
they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.
Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever,
and Jesus took her by the hand and lifted her up.
Then the fever left her,
and she began to go about her business in the house.
Then at sundown, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. And the whole
city was gathered around the door.
And he cured many who were sick with various diseases,
and cast out many demons.*

When Jesus performs miracles like this I'm just as mystified as I am watching that red helicopter land on the roof of the hospital. I have no idea how he does it, or what the details are. I am in awe, and I'm very grateful that healing is real. The gospel goes on to say-
*In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place and there he prayed.
And Simon and his companions hunted for him.
When they found him, they said to him, "Everyone is searching for you."*

In this story, and throughout his ministry, Jesus heals *some* of the people, but not *everyone*. and from time to time, he takes breaks or goes to other places. If healed people heal people- then Jesus the Healer does not *have* to heal everyone. By healing some, he knows the healing will flow out to others. Jesus says,
*"Let us go on to the neighbouring towns,
so that I may proclaim the message there also;
for that is what I came out to do."*

In his mind, Jesus is *bringing a message*. The *message of healing*. He's just getting the healing started. It does not end when he leaves town but flows out from the people who have been healed. And it spreads through his followers. Through the disciples, through people like Jane, people like us.

But how do we receive this spiritual healing? How do we ask for and encounter the healing of God? How do we become spiritually strong enough to be a healing presence to others? How can *we be* like Jane?

I think there's a key to spiritual healing in the gospel today. Part of the gospel tells of Jesus healing all kinds of people, but a big part of this story is that **Jesus takes a break**. He sneaks off to pray even when people are lined up at the door and there is more healing to do. It says that the disciples *hunted* for him. They said, "Everyone is searching for you." When he was so busy that people were hunting for him and the whole city was at his door, **that is when Jesus went to be with God**.

A very astute person in bible study said it like this, "*He gets his power from God.*" It seems like in his time with God, Jesus' energy is renewed. Anything that had been taken from him, or diminished in his work was repaired. In time with God, Jesus' mission and vision was intensified. He knew in his heart and was able to express to his friends where he would go next. In time with God, away from his work and away from people, Jesus is fulfilled, made whole, *healed*.

Jesus gets his power to heal, when he spends time with God, the great healer. **And I wonder if it is the same for us? Can time with God heal what is broken in us?** Like rest can heal a sprained ankle. When we rest in God's presence, we may receive the spiritual healing we all need so badly.

Isaiah 30:15 says,

In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength.

Our scriptures today remind us, that Jesus' work is about healing. God's nature is always to heal. In the words of our psalm,

He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

God wants to heal us but being able to receive that healing, means spending time in God's presence.

When I think about my dear Jane, I know that the incredible strength, and joy, and compassion she had, the healing and light that shone out of her soul, could have only come from one thing. Lots and lots of time with God - from whom she received her power, and who shone the light of healing into her soul.

So this week, in this crazy busy world, with so much to do, and so much to worry about, I challenge you to take a break. Take a rest, sleep, pray, read. Spend time in the church of the Living Sky which is outside, and see what that does for your soul. See and feel how God's healing can come into your life. And if you're sitting there right now thinking, "*I don't have time for a rest, I'm too busy.*" then I'd like you to meditate upon the story of Jesus. How when people were hunting for him and banging down his door – he made a boundary, and found space to be with God. When we are completely overwhelmed with stress, Let's just ask ourselves, *Am I really busier than Jesus?*

And finally, I want to leave you with the words from the prophet Isaiah,

Those who wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not grow weary, they shall walk and not faint.

Amen.

Rev. Emily Carr