

1992

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BY PAUL ANDERSON

THE HEALING and redeeming workings of Jesus Christ are amazingly interwoven. In fact, the same word in Greek is translated as "healing" and as "salvation" in English. Both healing and redemption are twin and central aspects of the Gospel of Christ, and yet, another connection exists, as well. It is the liberating power of Truth.

In the light of God's Truth, we see ourselves as we really are—truly needy and dependent upon God's grace. We also see the availability of God's grace, which covers our sins and shortcomings because of what Christ has done for us on the cross. In that sense, we are not only redeemed, but we are "re-deemed." We begin to "deem" ourselves in ways radically different and new—as God sees us, and this is one of the major sources of emotional and physical healing. Jesus says, "You shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall set you free" (John 8:32), and the convicting illumination of the Holy Spirit (convicting of both sin and righteousness) is to our emotional selves what disinfectants and antibiotics are to our physical selves. They all facilitate healing. The analogy to the medical profession here applies.

Even now, fourteen years later, chills travel up and down my spine as I remember watching the nurse in the emergency room tending to the needs of a young man who had skidded in the gravel during a motorcycle accident. She took something like a scouring pad and proceeded to scrub the young man's forearm until the gravel had been totally removed from the terrible flesh wound. Then came the disinfecting and bandaging parts of the treatment. A few minutes later, a woman came in suffering from a mild case of poisoning. She was given an antidote and was taken to another room to be monitored. Next, a man came in with severe cuts received from a lawn mower blade. After getting stitched up he was further treated and released.

Spending that afternoon in the emergency room of a local hospital opened my eyes to a minute portion of the kinds of needs faced by those in the medical profession. More than that, however, the

experience opened my understanding to ways the healing power of God is at work in the world around—and within us all. No good doctor will tell you that he or she "heals" anyone. What medics do is rid the body of obstacles to its healing so that God's wondrous healing power can have its effect, fully and freely. Doctors cleanse, disinfect, and immobilize tissue to be mended, as God's helpers in the ongoing work of physical healing. But it is God alone who is finally the source of health and well-being.

Notice the parallels with Jesus' ministry. In Matthew, Mark, and Luke, He came healing the sick, exorcising the possessed, and proclaiming the good news of the Gospel. Often, two or more of these activities were carried out as Jesus touched people at their greatest points of need. Before healing the "epileptic" boy, Jesus cast out the demon that tossed him about. Before many of Jesus' healings, He first declared to the person, "Your sins are forgiven."

THE LINK between emotional health and physical health is always an intriguing one. In fact, therapists have long recognized a sort of causative relationship between the two. It's as though Jesus was meeting people's most pressing needs first, and the physical part of the healing took place immediately after, in connection with it. As the modern-day medic eliminates first the obstacles to healing, so Jesus first liberates the individual from the sources of bondage and accusation that so often hold their subjects hostage.

The frozen guilt of the past? Eliminated by the re-deeming declaration of forgiveness by Jesus. Bondage to the "Accuser of the Brethren"? Eradicated by the Lord's authoritative Word of deliverance. Physical ailments? Remarkably healed by the Master. At times, the need is solely physical. Sometimes Jesus simply touched people, and they were made physically whole. At other times, He set them free inwardly first, and the

signs of outward healing followed soon thereafter. Oddly enough, Jesus is never portrayed as praying for anyone's healing. He simply declared it into being, as though effecting a new creation, having first eliminated the obstacles to wholeness.

Being liberated by the Truth happens in many ways, but especially in terms of healing. Much emotional stress and anxiety is caused by trying to "cover up" those realities in our lives and around us that we'd rather not face. Sins of the past, weaknesses in the present, worries about the future—all of these can become debilitating and downright death-producing.

CARL ROGERS, an influential psychologist over the last generation or two, described the source of anxiety as the difference between the ways we perceive ourselves and the ways we experience ourselves. In other words, the more we deny the truth about what we are really like, the more stressed and anxious we become. He called it "incongruity," a source of tension that robs us of enormous amounts of emotional and physical energy. The role of the therapist, then, becomes parallel to the work of the medical doctor. By means of helping the client "see" her or himself more clearly, in the light of truth, the obstacles to emotional healing are removed. God's healing power is then released to have its full effect.

As helpful as authenticity and congruence are for restoring emotional and physical health, there is something far more powerful about the healing/saving effect of the cross. To see ourselves as we really are brings us to a place of healthy humility and self-esteem. Seeing ourselves as we really are makes us mindful of our strengths and weaknesses, and this makes us more dependent on God, as well as more at ease with our selves. However, to be declared FORGIVEN by the eternal God is to experience an objective change—not merely a perceptual one. It is to be healed and redeemed by being divinely re-deemed. The result is a new creation. **EF**