

Touching Heaven – Touching Earth

Tuesday morning bible study on prayer with Cindy Smith

April 22, 2008 Session 7

Review James 5:13-18 again. We are focusing in the second part of verse 15: “If he has sinned, he will be forgiven.” In this verse, taken altogether, we see a link between repentance and sickness, whether physical or emotional, and healing or being made whole. It speaks of opportunity for restoration. There is not a person in this room who does not value receiving a second chance. Through God’s mercy, we **can** have another chance. We can be restored to wholeness physically or emotionally. We can be refreshed and renewed.

This means that there is a place in acknowledging our sin—we have to be honest to admit our fault, we have to be transparent enough to see the error of our ways, and we have to accept responsibility for wrongdoing. Like David who acknowledged his sin before God and the prophet, Nathan—“I have sinned” after committing adultery with Bathsheba and then having her husband, Uriah’s death staged in a battle. The sign of mourning over sin was to sit in the ash heap, with ashes on your head, with ripped sackcloth as your clothing in the OT with fasting and weeping. David repented. And his brokenness over his sin was healed. He was given another chance—though there were consequences in the death of his son. Naaman was told by the prophet to go and dip 7 times in the river, and as he cleansed himself, he was healed of leprosy. The cleansing in the river was a shadow of the effect of God’s words to our heart when we repent.

Let’s look at some other instances in the NT where healing and repentance occurs together. Luke 5:17-26. Jesus both healed and forgave, but he forgave first and then healed him. Jesus was in touch with the eternal perspective, he ministered to the most urgent of the situation, forgiveness was an eternal issue and the salvation of the man’s soul and restored fellowship to the Father, but Jesus then healed the finite—the man’s mortal body. In another instance, we see Jesus healing and then leading a man into repentance: John 5:1-15. We see salvation coming as a result of God’s compassion toward one caught in adultery in John 8:1-11. Repentance was necessary. Jesus also ministered to this woman’s broken heart—she was a cast-off from their society—a woman of no value. He told her to go and to sin no more. Repentance means turn around and go the other way!

Repentance and healing were also connected in Matt 9:1-8, Luke 5:17-26. The story of the paralytic that Jesus healed in Capernaum, telling this man that his sins were forgiven and that he was to take up his mat and walk. In so many of the cases where Jesus healed, he forgave tending again to the eternal, but also to the body. There is in fact today many ministries that use the format of healing rooms that believe that most of the diseases are spiritually rooted. Henry Wright, and Cal Pierce are two who have actually taught this and have begun an international association of healing rooms from the Spokane, Wash Area.

It is interesting in that, it is not that people encountering Jesus sought forgiveness, but that in seeking Him with their need, and encountering His presence and His holiness, their need for forgiveness was realized. Mary, who anointed the Lord’s feet with oil from her alabaster jar, did not seek forgiveness, but sought to love Him with the best that she had. Mark 14:3-9 and simply loving Him, she received forgiveness. The blind men shouted from the side of the road, Jesus, Son of David, Have mercy on me.” They had heard that Jesus performed healing miracles and they wanted to know the healing mercy of God, but also in the process, he had mercy on their souls. They were given a fresh start, with fresh vision, with forgiveness realized.

Repentance from sin-known or unknown-is important for God to hear our prayers and respond. He will always respond to the one who humbly approaches Him with a contrite heart (Ps 51:17, 57:15 and 66:2). Matt 5:3 says “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.” “Poor in spirit” means the humble. The gospel is the “good news” that we can obtain forgiveness as we repent as it says in Luke 24:46-47 “The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” It takes humility to admit that you were wrong according to God’s standard, but that is really what the Word demands and then proof or demonstration of what has happened in the heart, or as it says fruit in keeping with repentance. (Luke 3:8)

Because there are things that are spiritual blocks to answered prayer, I have listed some common hindrances in one book by Henry Wright who wrote a Manual on “A More Excellent Way” and I have copies for all. But we want to spend some time on the issue of unforgiveness as one of the most common things which keep our prayers from breaking through. In our Cleansing Discipleship group sessions, the first thing we cover prior to praying about whatever it is they want deliverance or healing from is unforgiveness. The basis for our emphasis here is in the Lords prayer: Matt 6:12 “Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors” and the Lord’s prayer from the cross in Luke 23:34 “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” Peter asked how many times must we forgive? And Jesus answers him in Matt 18:21 70 x 7. Read Matt 5:23-24. We are told not to even offer a gift to God without first being reconciled to our brothers and sisters.

Because unforgiveness is such a hurdle to overcome I want to wait until next week to properly address this area that oftens keeps our prayers from effecting heaven and then earth.

33 Hindrances to Healing

- 1) Unforgiveness: Mark 11:25-26, John 20:23
- 2) Ignorance or lack of knowledge: Isa 5:13, Hosea 4:6-7, I Cor 13:12
- 3) No relationship with God according to knowledge Mark 7:24-30, Mark 7:6, Matt 6:33, James 4:8
- 4) Personal and family sins: Isa 59:1-2, Exodus 20:5, Deut 5:9, Neh 9:1-2
- 5) Not having faith in God: Mark 11:22, Heb 11:6, Heb 4:2,6, Mark 6:5-6, Mark 5:36-42
- 6) The need to see a miracle: Mark 27:39-40, John 20:28-29, Matt 4:1-3
- 7) Looking for signs and wonders: John 4:46-48 The key is to have faith in God and in His Word on the basis of relationship, not on the basis of signs and manifestations
- 8) Expecting God to heal on one’s own terms: 2 Kings 5:8-14
- 9) Looking to man rather than God: Jer 17:5-6, 2 Chron 16:7-12
- 10) Not being transparent and honest: Prov 28:13, 1 Pet 4:8, I John 4:18
- 11) Flagrant sin or habitual sin Gal 5:19-21
- 12) Robbing God in tithes and offerings: Mal 3:8-11, Prov 3:9
- 13) Some are just not saved: 2 Thes 2:10-11
- 14) Sin of our parents: 2 Sam 12:13-14, I Kings 14:1-13
- 15) Sometimes sickness is unto death: I John 5:16, 2 Kings 1:2-8, I Chron 10:13-14
- 16) Our allotted time in Life is fulfilled: Ps 90-anything less than 70-80 years is a curse.
- 17) Looking to the symptoms and not to the healer: Matt 14:28-30, Eph 1:19-23, Eph 2:6, Rom 8:11
- 18) Letting fear enter your heart: Rom 8:15, Rom 14:23, John 14:1
- 19) Failure to get away in prayer and fasting: Matt 17:18-21
- 20) Improper care of the body: Phil 2:25-30
- 21) Not discerning the Lord’s Body: I Cor 11:29-30, Matt 8:17, Isa 53:4-5, I Pet 2:4, Matt 11:22-24
Communion: I Cor 11:27:31, I Cor 12:27, Gal 6:2, I John 3:14 I Cor 10:16-17
- 22) Touching God’s Anointed leaders: I Chron 16:22, Ps 105:15, Numbers 16 (Korah’s rebellion), Numbers 12 (Miriam’s leprosy)
- 23) Immoderate eating: I Cor6:19-20, Gal 5:23 (self-control)
- 24) Pure unbelief: Mark 6:4-6
- 25) Failing to keep our life filled up with God: Matt 12:43-45, John 5:14, Luke 11:21-26
- 26) Not resisting the enemy: Isa 38:1-5, I Peter 5:8-9, James 4:7-8
- 27) Just giving up: Ps 88:9-10, Ps 30:9, Ps 90:10
- 28) Looking for repeated healings instead of divine health: Exod 15:26, I Thes 5:23, 3 John 1:2
- 29) Rejecting healing as part of our covenant today: I Pet 2:24, Iisa 53:5, Ps 103:3
- 30) Trying to bypass the penalty of the curse: Prov 26:2
- 31) Murmuring and complaining: Num 12:1-15, I Cor10:10-11, Phil 2:14-15
- 32) Hating and not obeying instruction: Prov 5:11-14, Isa 28:8-19
- 33) Past and continued involvement with occultism, I Sam 15:22, Isa 26:3, Dan 5:17-21, I Sam 28