

# Healing Stories

Mark 5: 21-43 Psalm 30 Pastor Lentz  
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Not that long ago I did a study of the research on Healers. I wanted to know if they really heal people and if so how does it work. Obviously a lot of other people wanted to know as well because the research is abundant. What I learned made a real difference to me, on many different levels. For one, it made me realize that the Bible in telling us healing stories isn't just telling them so that we would believe, but so that we could heal either our thinking or our bodies better.

One of the reasons that the Bible contains stories about healing is that is a way to help heal others. Stories about healing help us to heal. It works in several ways, and is much more helpful than you might think on the surface. Let's pray that what we are about to understand will help us to heal at those times we need it.

Healers have used stories, and rituals to heal for thousands of years. They were doing it long before modern medicine came along and long before people stopped believing that was a way to gain healing. It works in ways that are much more powerful than by simple suggestion, or what some call mind over matter. Faith that it will or won't work isn't required. It works because of how God designed us.

Your Parasympathetic Nervous system is connected to every part of your body. Through trance the system is quite open, to being altered, and in fact, is one of the ways that people are made sick in the first place. So of course through the same system people can be healed. All it takes to be in a trance is a story. The story invites us to use resources that we might not recognize that we have. Just like a negative story or

belief may have contributed to the illness in the first place, a healing story can have a powerful impact.

What I discovered was that science no longer asks whether people are healed, but how are they healed. There is so much evidence of people being healed by healers that whether it happens or not is no longer the question at all. The question today is what are the ways that various healers around the world use and how can we employ those same mechanisms to help even more. Scientists listed 4 categories of types of methods used to heal. Stories was only one. Metaphors and rituals were two other methods.

We all know that most illness comes from bacteria, and virus. We rush to get antibiotics whenever we think we need them. However, how well your immune system works comes from what you have thought, and what others have said to you, along with what you believed it meant, as well as what you have done, and believed. So it is actually, quite easy to improve your immune system, and reverse some of the illnesses that the body was made more vulnerable to by negative thoughts, beliefs, guilt, anger, shame, and possibly things like envy, jealousy, etc.

Ideally, the church has been combating many of those vulnerabilities and helping people to restore to health just by doing what we normally do. We tell stories of healing in the Bible and we have rituals to help us let go of guilt, shame, jealousy, envy and even anger.

Actually, one of the healthiest things you can do is to attend a small church, because of the things that are built in, like being known and having ways of ritually being forgiven. Those play a huge part in our well being even when we didn't know that our actions were having those types of impact on healing whether we are ministers or members. I like to believe that having a minister that intentionally is

working to assist your health in all aspects makes it even better but research doesn't exist about that at this time.

When I was young I didn't know how God healed. I thought it had to be in certain ways. Today I know that it is more complicated and also simpler than that. For instance, trying to make yourself believe has little to do with healing ultimately. Hoping that God does want you to heal does. It is an entirely different thing. Allowing yourself to feel God's love is certainly a part of it. Obviously the reason I am telling you these things is to allow your conscious mind to understand how it happens, today and how it happened yesterday. So that you can appreciate that the text can still be healing to you today. It was written for that purpose. Both the past and the present can help us to recognize that God has given us incredible gifts in the form of healing stories in the Bible. God designed us in such a way that we can benefit from rituals, stories, and being together when we express our faith.

You might appreciate that these two healing stories are delivered in a way that also enhances them. The first story begins, and then is interrupted by a second story and that concludes and we continue on with the first story. The two add to each other. It is just one of the linguistic devices that are contained in scripture. The use of this device is useful for helping you to be healed. It invites you to become a little bit distracted by one story being interrupted by the second story. It is a device that is often used to encourage healing.

Now let's look at the stories closer, because that can offer some real advantages for all of us. They are both brief, and matter of fact. That alone can be a powerful mechanism if we allow it to be. We all know that there are people who heal who we don't know how they were healed, but they were. You may yourself have been healed in some way that was pretty amazing, many of us have. If you told about your experience you may tell it in a brief way. You and I may struggle with

believing yet, we have both heard about people healing that we don't understand how. It isn't important for us to know how, but only that God wants good for us. I have heard workshops where a person is healed and because I didn't see the actual event but only heard it on a recording it was more difficult to understand how the therapist helped the person, even though I knew and you would know if you listened that the person was healed. Some of those healings I have listened to as many as 8 times before I began to understand how the therapist knew what to do. It helps me to realize how much we can identify either with Jesus or the daughter. At times we may need to feel healed like Jarius's daughter, and at other times we may want to feel powerful enough to heal someone who we have come to care about.

The second story speaks more directly to us. The text says she touched, the tassel of his garment. It is a thick braided string that represents the law. Jewish men wore tassels that hung down toward their knees. The tassel represented the law. The story implied that because the woman touched Jesus tassel that represented the law that she was healed. It was written that way for us. It was written so that we could see ways the law can help us to heal, because God's law offers us God's perspective. It isn't always what we think, sometimes it is what we don't think that needs healing.

I am going to tell a couple of stories to address some aspects of these stories, to illuminate them a little. If as a result of these other stories you find yourself confused, or thinking differently, then these have been successful, because confusion is the first step in having an epiphany, and simply discovering that you are thinking differently is of course another way.

I would like to tell you a story about a student of mine. She is seeing a man who needs healing. He is struggling and he desperately needs to have some healing. Some would say it will take a miracle. From my

standpoint it is standard fare for God to heal someone like the man she is dealing with. However, she also has another supervisor. The other supervisor sees the man's predicament as a black and white issue. The other supervisor convinced my student that she needed to press the man into seeing his position as dire and that no matter what there was only one way to achieve healing. I of course disagree. I know there are lots of ways for him to heal. Just as there are lots of ways that you have already healed of many things, and will heal from others in the future, or even now.

Her other supervisor is like lots of folks on both sides of the argument about the recent Supreme Court decisions have thought as well. They have been caught up seeing it as only right and wrong. It is much more than that. God is beyond those two options, and makes a way where no one else sees a way. There is healing for both sides to receive. Just like there is healing for my student and the man she is helping. When they both are open to viewing problems as always having more than two options they will both heal. My student wants to believe me, but the whole idea is so foreign for her that she is struggling. She will get it, even if she has to doubt before she can have an epiphany and understands what I am saying. Our culture doesn't see healing to be more multilevel and integrated with a person's faith, but it is. The research is clear about that. I have helped many people to heal who struggled with the same issue and even with similar ones. There are always more options than just two. I have even developed a means that comes from the Bible's perspective. It works. It works because it is based on truth and not fear. It is based on how wonderfully God has made us, and how God must want us to heal.

Many of my students in the past struggled as much as the woman this week. One in particular struggled so much because he was and is a person of such faith. He was so certain the world was black and white, that for him it was tied up with his faith. Issues had to be right or

wrong. They somehow couldn't be multileveled learning experiences for us. He struggled with this a lot. I suspect for him it had to do with needing to earn God's love, even if he didn't believe he had to he acted as if he had to. Today, he not only gets it today he is healing people without causing them the months of anguish that a black and white mindset would. Today he is acting as if God loves him.

Yes, some folks may need to be angry and or hurt that the Supreme Court said what they did. Being angry and hurt is often a part of the process of learning. It certainly has to do with grief. When a way that we thought has been rejected there can be some grief. It is a part of life that when there is change we discover that we too have to change. Ultimately, how much grief a person has about it also reflects how important it was to them and how much learning they are about to have. It frequently reflects their level of faith. Ultimately they may learn some new ways to understand their own perspective in ways that help them. God certainly wants that.

The people who are filled with joy, are the same. The amount of joy reflects how important it is or was to them. Thankfully it also has to do with their faith. The more important it was or is the more that they are going to learn. Their learning may be more gradual, or quicker than the folks with grief, but it is just as sure. Will it increase their compassion, or empathy, or will it teach them more about humility and understanding, I don't know. What I do know is that they are about to learn because that is how God works.

Not only is the research clear that viewing problems as only having one right answer misses the point of our faith, it is part of what will help both sides see new options. Very few miracles in the Bible occur more than once. It is in part to stretch our ways of thinking so that we will see some of the other options. God is always using the situations in our life to bring us healing, and maximum spiritual growth. Amen

