

Faith

We are healed and we will be healed by faith in Jesus. So will our loved ones. To stop trusting Jesus for His full and perfect will for everyone we love (including ourselves) negates the power of what He won for us at Calvary. 'By His wounds we are healed' (IS. 53:5; 1P2:24). Period.

Like every virtue, faith is both a gift of grace and an arduous goal. For persons coming out of disordered identities and desire, it is easy to trust Jesus when we experience ourselves as solid expressions of our gender, our 'sap' flowing in creative directions. It's quite another to trust Him for healing when we burn with lust and self-hatred. How much more difficult is faith in God for the parent whose adult-child announces the 'gay' wedding or gender reassignment? 'Faith, the evidence of things not seen,' (Heb. 11:1) indeed!

It helps to anchor our faith in Gospel accounts of healing; over and over again, Jesus honors the faith of afflicted ones (morally, physically, emotionally) by restoring them completely (Matt. 9:22, 15:28; MK 5:34; LK 17:19; 18:42, etc.). Today, we tend to use Gospel healing accounts as metaphors for healing, as if Jesus' touch is a spiritual abstraction. That becomes an excuse for unbelief. I love the theology of Dr. George Eldon Ladd (*The Presence of the Future*, Eerdmans) who majored on healing and deliverance as evidence of God's Kingdom come in Jesus, a key that John Wimber utilized unlike any other leader as he led the Vineyard movement (of which I was privileged to be a part for twenty years.)

Wimber knew that God's Kingdom reign was heavenly, the 'not yet' of our pilgrim journey, but that Jesus brought heaven-to-earth 'now'; Christ demonstrated tomorrow's blessing today through signs and wonders. That means we as Christ's followers, endowed with the Spirit's power, can heal others this side of heaven. That requires faith in the unseen reality of Jesus who restores the afflicted through His faithful ones (JN 14:12). That drives our work at Desert Stream, and defines us as a Kingdom people who cry out constantly: 'Come Holy Spirit, and do what only You can do for hurting ones, starting with us, the staff!'

The fact that we as a team (who have been praying and healing for decades) still cry out indicates that we live between two ages—the now and the not yet.' We trust God to establish His rule and reign in our midst but know also that we are en route to full Kingdom reign.

I can recall multiple healings that Jesus has done at the core of my gendered and sexual self, each one a marvel of grace tied directly to sources of same-sex attraction. But I still must pick up my little cross daily, which means remembering who I am as a son of the Father, rebuking the devourer, and making good moral choices that ensure the health of family and friends.

Sometimes that cross is easy and light, at other times, a weight that can be carried only with the help of others. I can bear the moral effort required by faith because God has opened the eyes of my heart (Eph. 1:18). That is the gift of faith; I see and trust Jesus. I want no other Kingdom but

His, and He grants me glimpses of this Kingdom as we walk together toward what I cannot see in full.