

Lord Heal Us.

INTRODUCTION : 2 weeks ago an article appeared in the Sunday Nation reviewing the healing ministry of one Nairobi Christian evangelist, Wairimu Nelson. The article was not a fair, well researched or balanced one, and it left one with the impression that any healing she claims to conduct is false. While I do not know enough about Wairimu Nelsons ministry to verify the supposed healing that takes place there, I do know enough about healing in the Bible to tell you that the article suffered from an inadequate definition of "healing". It's a common mistake that many make, not understanding that, while the causes for illness are many, there are basically 5 types of "healing" in the Bible. That's what we wish to look at today so that we can understand what our service is about . . .

THE 5 TYPES OF HEALINGS FOUND IN SCRIPTURE

1. REPENTANCE - one common cause of illness in the Bible is sickness that is brought about when we live in violation to God's stated laws. A clear example of this in scripture is the illness of David's child with Bathsheba . . .

II Sam 13:15 After Nathan had gone home, the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife had borne to David, and he became ill. ¹⁶ David pleaded with God for the child. He fasted and went into his house and spent the nights lying on the ground. ¹⁷ The elders of his household stood beside him to get him up from the ground, but he refused, and he would not eat any food with them. ¹⁸ On the seventh day the child died.

Another example is the illness that the Corinthians faced . . .

I Cor 11:29 Therefore, whoever eats the (*communion*) bread or drinks the (*communion*) cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸ A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. ²⁹ For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. ³⁰ That is why many among you are weak and sick,

In both these cases no amount of prayer for healing would have had much effect until that prayer was accompanied by repentance, and a commitment to obey God's word. Such illness arises out of our knowing or unknowing disobedience and contravention of God's law. Who would have thought that communion would have been a source of illness and not blessing? So too it could be for us that we are living in sin, or there is someone we have refused to forgive, and are bitter at heart, or we have not been faithful to tithe, or our lifestyles are so fast paced that we are out of sync with God, or possibly our relationships with others are not broken and need mending and restoration. Maybe the origin of illness is that we need to accept Christ as our saviour and we have not yet done so.

In each of these cases the real healing that needs to take place is not physiological, but spiritual. Healing here is **repentance**, and when you come forward for prayer, nothing may seem to happen except that the Spirit of God puts you under conviction of something you need to repent.

2. UNDERSTANDING : The 2nd sort of healing we find in the bible is what can be called the healing of understanding. An example of this is found in Paul's own life

II Cor 12 :7 To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my

flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. ⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. ⁹ But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. ¹⁰ That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

The healing that Paul received here was not physiological. Why? Because God had a purpose in his life through this illness and had no intention of removing it - in Paul's case it was there to keep him humble - removing it would have gone against God's purpose.

Some of us are ill for this sort of reason, that God is using that illness for good in our lives, and when we pray for healing, the message we receive is "my grace is sufficient for you". It's a message that should fill us with hope for it says that, even though I may not understand what God is doing, our illness does not originate in sin, but is within God's divine purpose. This is what I call healing in our **understanding**.

But this sort of illness should not discourage us from praying for healing unless God clearly shows us as he did Paul, that he want us to live with our illness. Note that Paul himself prayed earnestly 3 times for healing, and probably would have continued seeking that healing until God showed him why he did not want to remove the illness - and then Paul was satisfied.

3. INNER HEALING (Psychological and emotional)

The third sort of healing is from inner brokenness
Is 61:1 The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me,
because the LORD has anointed me
to preach good news to the poor.

He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim freedom for the captives
and release from darkness for the prisoners,
² to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor
and the day of vengeance of our God,
to comfort all who mourn,
³ and provide for those who grieve in Zion --
to bestow on them a crown of beauty
instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness
instead of mourning,
and a garment of praise
instead of a spirit of despair.

The healing that Isaiah is talking of here is the healing of the inner person, healing of the emotions or of the repressed hurt. Sometimes when there is brokenness in the inner person, then the physical body also becomes sick. Healing the body is merely dealing with a symptom. Real healing would first have to take place in the inner man. In praying for healing here, the Lord may give a word of insight to the person to help you revisit an incident or hurt in the past such as incest or rape.

4. PHYSICAL HEALING : The fourth sort of healing is physiological.

Mt 8:13 When Jesus came into Peter's house, he saw Peter's mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever. ¹⁵ He touched her hand and the fever left her, and she got up and began to wait on him.

Mt 15:30 Great crowds came to him, bringing the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute and many others, and laid them at his feet; and he

healed them. ³¹ The people were amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled made well, the lame walking and the blind seeing. And they praised the God of Israel.

Jesus performed many such healings in the bible, and has called us to pray in faith, believing God for such healing too. Many of us understand healing, miraculous healing, only in this category, and because of our limited understanding of healing, miss out on the other forms of healing that God conducts.

Too many times however, we are embarrassed by prayer for miraculous healing. Embarrassed because we're not sure God still works this way today or embarrassed because nothing may seem to happen, and hence our prayers are motivated more by fear and weakness than by faith in God. Let me encourage you today - we don't want to be presumptuous before God or to put him to the test, but we don't need to be embarrassed for God or to try and defend him. His promise to us is :-

Mark 16:15 He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. ¹⁶ Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. ¹⁷ And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they . . . place their hands on sick people, and they will get well."

And again in James 5:14 Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵ And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up.

But for you who come for prayer, Jesus also commanded us in

Mark 11:22 "Have faith in God. I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. ²⁴ Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours."

5. DELIVERANCE

The fifth sort of healing comes only by spiritual warfare as it arises out of the demonic. A good example of this in scripture is

Matt 17:16 When they came to the crowd, a man approached Jesus and knelt before him. ¹⁵ "Lord, have mercy on my son," he said. "He has seizures and is suffering greatly. He often falls into the fire or into the water. ¹⁶ I brought him to your disciples, but they could not heal him."

"O unbelieving and perverse generation," Jesus replied, "how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy here to me." ¹⁸ Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of the boy, and he was healed from that moment.

Had I been the one to pray for that boy, I would probably have prayed for his epilepsy and for protection from falling into the fire - and yet the way to have healed him was only by casting out the demon. This sort of healing needed someone with the gift of discerning evil spirits.

Another example Mark 5:9 They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. ² When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an evil spirit came from the tombs to meet him. ³ This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him any more, not even with a chain. ⁴ For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to

subdue him. ⁵Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones.

⁶ When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. ⁷ He shouted at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Swear to God that you won't torture me!" ⁸ For Jesus had said to him, "Come out of this man, you evil spirit!"

Again, left to me I would probably have dismissed this man as mad, and avoided him; but the man needed healing, and the healing would come through someone who could discern that this was not real madness, it was evil spirits that had made this man this way, and what he needed was deliverance, not prayer for schizophrenia.

6. ETERNAL HEALING

The final sort of healing is best called eternal healing, that only God can effect. When my mother, who was a born again believer, died from cancer, there was a sense of disappointment that even though we had prayed so earnestly for physiological healing, she never-the-less passed away. But I was struck by a prayer that my sister prayed thanking God that she had found true healing at last.

Rev 21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

IMPLICATIONS : If these 6 forms of healing are valid, then it says several things to us as a church

1. A wholesome healing ministry needs to include those with the gift of healing, and it may be that some have this gift only as it relates to physiological healing, others as it relates to words of insight, others as it relates to discerning evil spirits, and others like the elders with the gift of healing because of their office and personal holiness, who also have the additional task of anointing with oil. A wholesome healing ministry therefore needs to be a team ministry
2. Secondly, prayer for healing needs to include prayer for wisdom from God as to what type of healing we are looking at - is it deliverance, is it emotional, is it physiological, or are we looking at a case of repentance?
3. Thirdly, God does not follow a set pattern when he heals. Some he heals on the spot while with others our prayer begins a process of miraculous but gradual healing. With some the miracle is that they need no drugs, while with others the miracle is that their now have an obvious effect. God uses both prayer and medication to heal, and it is the height of presumption to limit him to only one way. I have heard of one Faith healing ministry where they insist that if they pray for you and you are healed, then you must go back to your physician and get a proper medical check-up to confirm the healing.

Faith prayer and medicine are both part of God's way of healing and I don't think this is shown better anywhere than in the use of Oil to anoint the sick. Oil in the bible was used for 2 purposes : the first was for medicinal value - when the good Samaritan

found the man beaten by robbers on the road to Jericho, he first poured oil into his wounds and then bound them, because oil had medicinal value. But Oil is also used frequently as a sign of the presence of God's Spirit and blessing.

4. Finally and fourthly, we need to realise that these different forms of healing are not mutually exclusive. Maybe your illness arose out of sin, but now it has become physiological and you need healing in more than one way. Our time of healing will not allow us time to discern which of these forms of healing you need, but maybe even as I have spoken, you have heard God's voice and you can tell us as we pray.

We will ask you to come forward, and at the front here will be several people who have been in prayer for preparation this week. Come and allow us to pray with you. Behind that first group of people will be a second group, the elders, who will have anointing oil with them, and who in obedience to James 5, will be ready to anoint you for healing.

In some situations, we will need more time with you, time to listen quietly to God's Spirit or even time to counsel with you, and so today may for you be more a cry to God to begin the healing you long for. Come and let us pray together and so begin that process.