

**Being Brought Back Series –
“Healing and the Christian Faith”**

Text(s): Mark 5:21-43
- Pastor Ken Nelson

There are few relationships more pondered than the one which exists between faith and healing. What for example, does it mean to be “*healed?*” And why do faithful Christians die, for lack of a better term - “prematurely?” Fully 1/5th of the miracles of Jesus involved healing. People were attracted to Jesus from the very start of his ministry because he healed. Thus from the very beginning of the Christian faith, recovery from illness that was considered unlikely if not out of the question has been the greatest sign of the power and compassion of God, and a clear sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit among his church.

The church for centuries has been caring for the sick and dying. Today, few issues consume us more than health care. We live longer and stronger than any generation in history, but illness is still one of our greatest fears. Health care costs themselves can make us ill, the system that offers us such wonderful treatments is said to be sick, necessitating in some people's opinion the massive “overhaul” of health care by Congress in 2010. Yet stories of medical mistakes, untried and untested drugs, and millions of uninsured people in our country make us hang our heads in fear.

Add to that the fact that there seems to be a greater and greater gulf between faith and health in our country. A century ago, most hospitals were not only named “*Trinity*” and “*St. Josephs*”, but they were run by faith based organizations whose leaders and practitioners invoked the Triune God as the inspiration for their work. Nuns and Deaconesses not only checked you in but routinely checked up on you. Now Chaplains and pastors and deaconesses, if they see you at all, are there by “invitation only”, and are encouraged not to get in the way of “real” health care. But our lesson from Mark asserts that healing and faith are very closely linked. You could argue on the basis of this lesson that the practice of Christianity and the practice of healing are virtually one and the same. So why do our prayers sometimes go unanswered, why pastor is my health in decline? First of all, need a more complete definition of “health.” We need to understand that faith is what some call “holistic.” That means faith is concerned not just with our souls, but with our bodies and minds as well. We, body mind and soul “*bear the image of God*”. Any spoken act of faith has physical as well as spiritual implications. We must remember that to say a prayer for physical healing and not recognize its spiritual benefits is a false understanding of prayer and health.

In our lesson today, the very act of “*touching the hem of Jesus’ garment*” was an act of faith that brought physical and spiritual health. Most important however, is for us to understand that the glory of God is evident in sickness as well as in health. If we make the claim that our bodies “*bear the image*” of God, we also make the unique and stunning claim that in the limp, lifeless body of Jesus on the cross the most complete “image” of God is presented us. In experiencing death Jesus promises that in our own suffering and dying we are just like him, and we will find him.

We witness incredible miracles of healing through our system of health care today. We also struggle to find our dignity within a system that despite the incredible contributions and compassion of providers, often makes us feel like little more than a case file. Good and well for us at such times to remember our Savior Jesus, the same Lord and Savior who picked out a face in the crowd, the face that is or one day will be yours, and says to you as her...have no fear...your faith will make you well. Look to Christ, for *that* life where in body, mind and soul you will know God fully, enjoy him completely, and glorify him forever. AMEN