

Blessing & Nutrition

Healing Then & Now:

Exodus 23:24-26, 2 Kings 4:38-41

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Bethany Church

Each week at the end of our worship services, we have a team ready to pray for your needs and minister Christ's healing. Each month, we dedicate one Sunday to ministering, experiencing and growing in the healing ministry of Christ. To perpetuate his mission, Jesus gave his disciples a two-fold command: heal the sick and proclaim the kingdom of God. Furthermore, Jesus told his first disciples to disciple all nations teaching them to obey the two-fold command and everything else he commanded of them. Our mission at Bethany Church is "Go and bring people to faith and freedom in Jesus Christ." Bringing people to faith in Jesus Christ involves proclaiming his kingdom; and bringing people to freedom involves healing.

Healing in Christ's name is not just the stereotypical laying on hands or praying for people. Last month we discussed medicine. Paul wrote his friend and apprentice Timothy:

Don't drink only water. You ought to drink a little wine for the sake of your stomach because you are sick so often. (1 Timothy 5:23, NLT)

The Apostle Paul wasn't trying to convert a teetotaler into a drinking buddy. The Spirit of the Lord was leading Paul to prescribe wine as medicine. He was focusing on its medicinal properties. Hundreds of years earlier, God led the prophet Isaiah to heal King Hezekiah from a fatal disease with a salve made from figs. Medicine is God's idea and gift, but it is not a substitute for God's blessing. We often make idols of God's gifts. We put our faith in the gift rather than the giver. God, not medicine, is our healer.

Today, God is opening our eyes about another gift. We recognize that food and water is a divine gift. However, the promise of God given to the people of Israel reveals more:

Worship the Lord your God, and his blessing will be on your food and water. I will take away sickness from among you, and none will miscarry or be barren in your land. I will give you a full life span. (Exodus 23:25-26, NIV)

God didn't just promise to bless Israel *with food and water*. As they turned from idols and worshiped only the Lord, God promised to *bless the food and water*, so that the people would no longer be sick, infertile or short-lived.

Dr. John Reid is a member of Bethany Church and a chiropractor who has studied nutrition and disease extensively. John is alive because of changes God led him to make in his diet. The first two weeks of Sunday School, John is going to share some of his story and some of his research. John has agreed to answer a few questions. (Questions and answers with John)

John's story reveals how food can hurt us. This was true for some prophets fed stew by Elisha. As the prophets became mortally sick and cried that there was death in the stew, Elisha didn't induce vomiting. He didn't lay hands on his guests and pray. He didn't anoint them with oil. Instead, God led him to put flour in the stew and have the prophets continue to eat. They were made sick by food, and they were healed by food; and God scripted this for you and me to read and ponder.

God gives us food to grow us healthy and strong. When it is blessed by God, it does exactly that. When it isn't, we suffer all kinds of harm; and our lives are shortened. How can we assure that our food is blessed by God?

The key is repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. The Bible tells us that we have every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus. Unfortunately, we leave most those blessings in a closet to gather dust. We act like rich kids living in poverty. We're hindered by unbelief.

Wasn't that cool how Bob Walker just put his hand on the man in front of him in a grocery store and he was instantly healed? Bob meant to bless with affection, and the man received new legs. How did that happen?

Doesn't that sound like something that would happen with Jesus? We are apprentices of Jesus. We carry the blessings of God. We are the body of Christ where he acts through us and speaks through us. In Isaiah 55 we are taught that the word of God goes out like rain that waters the earth and somehow makes things grow accomplishing God's purpose. Once the rain hits the soil its work is hidden, but that is exactly when it is powerful.

As the body of Christ, we are the mouth of God. Jesus called his disciples to speak blessing. In Luke 10, Jesus gave these instructions to 72 of his followers:

When you enter a house, first say, "Peace to this house." If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it will return to you. (Luke 10:5-6, NIV)

The word "peace" in Hebrew is *shalom*. It is not just the absence of conflict. It means completeness, welfare, health. Jesus told the 72 to speak *shalom* to a household, so that peace and health would rest on it unless its leader walked in rebellion.

Precisely because our words have great importance, Jesus warns that calling someone a fool puts us in danger of the fires of hell (Matthew 5:22). Jesus does not believe that God is an ornery curmudgeon gleefully waiting to burn his children for a slip of the tongue. Jesus says:

Out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.
(Matthew 12:34-37, NIV)

Jesus says that your words really expose what is going on in your heart. It unveils whose controlling your thinking and emotions. However, that is not why we are judged or acquitted by our words. Our words carry awesome power and impact.

An indiscreet word by a dear-old uncle may be tolerable, but the slip of a tongue of a ruler can send the stock market diving and put armies on alert. You are God's rulers, his peace officers. You fog or enlighten, curse or bless the world about you. God's peace and blessing upon the food we eat, the homes we live in, the land we belong to and the lives we lead depend on your words and actions. Your words are like rain that water and make things flourish. Your curses in the same way cause things to wither, especially people. You are God's peace officers. You bring the peace, and there is something key to being a peace officer.

Here are a couple of them. (Andy Griffith – DVD excerpts)

I think many of us have been Barney Fife when it comes to healing. We forget the badge and authority God has given us. We forget whose bidding we do and who stands behind us? As long as we are fearful, even a little puppy can chase us up a tree. When, however, you begin to actually believe, you will speak differently, behave differently and act differently. You will be Christ's apprentice receiving revelation and bringing freedom and healing in ways you never thought possible. You will see Jesus' love and healing expand right through your life.

TODAY'S PROCEDURE:

- 1. Pray thanking God and rebuking Satan's deception**
- 2. Instruct people for Corporate Healing**
 - a. Ask the Lord Jesus to visit you with his Spirit of power and counsel**
 - b. Ask the Lord to heal and bless individuals around you**
- 3. Pray and bless your neighbor: Father, in the name of Jesus, bless... (name), bless their food, drink and life with peace and health**
- 4. Personal Ministry of Healing**