

Physician Heal Thyself...

Matthew 8:16

When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to Jesus, and He drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick.

Matthew 8:17

This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: "He took on our infirmities, and carried our diseases."

What do we mean by Apostolic?

I have grown up as the Apostolic son of an Apostolic Preacher... as a young man I served or volunteered in almost every position of the Apostolic church that I grew up in (except women's ministries)... I went to an Apostolic college... got an Apostolic degree in Religious Studies and Ministry... I married an Apostolic pastor's daughter... I have pursued Apostolic mentors... I traveled America for nearly a decade preaching as an Apostolic evangelist in Apostolic churches... and my wife and I worked hard in nearly every city we held revivals in. I came back to the church I grew up in and served as a staff pastor for 8 years... and it has been the honor of my life to serve as Lead Pastor for the last twelve.

I'm Apostolic born, bred, and when I die I'll be Apostolic dead...

Why do I say this?

I believe I have some credibility when I say that the defining element of the Apostolic movement is zeal for the Lord...

Your strength is often also your weakness...

We have done some harm by being zealous in a less than temperate way... as pastors, as parents, as soul- winners...

Medicine is such a respectable profession today... But this wasn't always so...

The OT doesn't include a single reference to a doctor or medicine healing a single person. There were honorable physicians among the Jews, but the writings of the rabbis include this line: "The best among the physicians are destined for hell." And so, in the Mishnah, physicians are listed among the "trades of robbers."

If a doctor wanted to cheat you... there would be very little you could do about it.

The Hippocratic Oath bans doctors from poisoning their patients. Strange. But consider the Romans...Romans hated their doctors. Rome's first official physician, Arcagthus, was given the nickname Carniflex, meaning executioner. Roman physicians were, however, expert poisoners, and Roman doctors were routinely hired by persons of high standing to kill other persons of high standing. Emperor Claudius was killed by his own official poisoner, while Juvenal, an acute observer of the upper crust, wrote that a good poisoner was indispensable to anyone hoping to get anywhere in Roman high society. He tells the story of the women who, upon poisoning her husband, discovered that he had taken the antidote beforehand, and, embarrassingly, had to stab him instead. Business was so good for poisoners that praegustator (tasters) formed their own union, and Emperor Nero was so happy with his poisoner, Locusta, that he had her charter her own poisoning school.

Yet Jesus chose healing, more than anything else, as a sign of his deity...

Matthew 4:23

Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.

Matthew 4:24

News about Him spread all over Syria, and people brought to Him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering acute pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed--and He healed them.

Mark 1:32

That evening, after sunset, people brought to Jesus all who were sick and demon-possessed,

Mark 5:23

and pleaded with Him urgently, "My little daughter is near death. Please come and place Your hands on her, so that she will be healed and live."

Even when questioned by John the Baptist, Jesus uses healing as a sign of his divinity.

Further...

Matthew 8 tells four stories of healing that teach us a lot about Jesus' healing ministry:

1. The first story shows us that it's God's will for people to be healed.
2. In the second story, the centurion, a man in authority, figured out that Jesus was a middleman acting on behalf of a higher commander.
3. The third story happens during lunch on a Sabbath day at Peter's home. It illustrates that Jesus simply responded to people in need. He always met needs.
4. The fourth story is about what happened later that same day when those in a large crowd were all healed. The fact that the crowd was all healed demonstrates that there are no reasons or excuses that limit healing. It also shows that there is no limit to what the anointing can do!

The result is that Jesus is known for all ages as the Great Physician.

Jesus entered an ugly world... and made it beautiful.

Jesus entered the ugly history of religion... and made it beautiful.

Jesus chose the ugly profession of the physician and made it beautiful. It isn't just the patient that needs healing... it is the doctor too...

The Doctor cannot heal him or herself... fix him or herself...

Everything that humanity does is marked by the flaws of humanity itself...

Remember how I mentioned the zeal that is in the Apostolic movement... I've seen terrible excesses of zeal... you probably have to...

But God leaves his mark upon history by taking ugly things and making them beautiful.

That isn't what we do... we make ugly things disappear... we hide them... we trash them... we bury them...

God makes them new!

How?

1. He Restores

He restores us spiritually through forgiveness and justification.

He is able to restore earthly relationships by teaching us the fruit of the Spirit.

And he can even restore days and years that have been lost to the effects of sin (Joel 2:25).

That has to be the greatest evidence of the extravagant nature of God's mercy. Not only can he renew a life and redeem its future, but he can also redeem its past.

In Scripture, we see God's power of restoration countless times. When Jacob was finally reunited with his lost son, Joseph, he described the grief-filled days of his life as "few and evil" (Genesis 47:9).

But in his last days, through God's mercy, Jacob was able to look back on his life and see that God had been his shepherd all along and that he had been redeemed from the evil that once marked his life (Genesis 48:15-16).

In the story of Ruth, we see God take a family whose name faced extinction and not only restore to them a secure future but knit them into his grand story of redemption by placing them in Jesus' family line.

In the New Testament, we see Jesus live a ministry of restoration. He restores sight to the blind, the ability to walk to the crippled, hearing to the deaf, and new clean skin to the diseased (Mark 8:22-26; Matthew 9:2-8; Mark 7: 31-37; Luke 5:12-25).

In all of these accounts, Jesus didn't just heal a condition. He restored life, security, and hope to broken people.

2. He Renames

Names carried a lot of significance in Scripture. Throughout the Bible, people are introduced to us by name and by the meaning of their name. Eve was "the mother of all the living," Isaac was "laughter," and Samuel was "asked of God" (Genesis 3:20, 21:6; 1 Samuel 1:20).

What's even more significant is the renaming of people in Scripture. When God gave someone a new name, it was always a sign of renewed purpose and a redeemed life. God changed Abram's name to Abraham to signify his promise to make him the father of many (Genesis 17:5).

He changed the names of Hosea's children from No Mercy and Not My People to My Loved One and My People to symbolize his love for Israel and his plan to redeem her from idolatry (Hosea 1-2).

Simon became Peter, and Saul became Paul when they became Jesus' disciples (Matthew 4:18; Acts 13:9).

3. He Resurrects

God makes dead things alive again. Literally. He has power over death in every sense, and he demonstrated that to us when he raised Jesus from the grave. Scripture says that, as believers, we have that same power dwelling in us. It's what gives life to our dead souls (Romans 8:11).

God wants to heal you, and heal through you...

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Study Credit:

Caitlin Plascencia, Dictionary of Daily Life in the Bible,