

John 4:46-54; 5:1-18
Health and Wholeness
WRCoB 2.6.22

Recently, I have had two different nephews
Sons of two different sisters
On separate occasions

Go to the emergency room
Complaining of fatigue, shortness of breath
And heart palpitations.

After running their tests
The medical staff could find nothing wrong.

They deduced the symptoms were caused by stress.

They both exhibited psychosomatic symptoms.

Meaning their physical condition
Originated from their mental condition.

Both nephews identified stressors in their lives
Started a regime of healthy eating
Regular exercise

AND began a practice of prayer or meditation.

The symptoms have since ceased
And they are both feeling much better.

They are of similar age.

One lives here in Virginia, the other in Ohio.

It seems the sign of the times.

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Psychosomatic, two Greek words combined

1 Pyscho (mind) and Soma (body).

Psychosomatics recognize the inter-relatedness
Of the mind with the body.

A healthy mind equals a healthy body.

And vice versa,
An unhealthy mind equals an unhealthy body.

Dr. Jeff Levin is a professor and author working
At the interface of religion, science, and medicine.

He wrote a paper entitled
FROM PSYCHOSOMATIC TO THEOSOMATIC: THE
ROLE OF SPIRIT IN THE NEXT NEW PARADIGM

He notes that medical research has confirmed
The role of mental health to physical health
The interplay in psychosomatics.

But he hopes it could go a step further
To what he calls *Theosomatic*
2 Theo (God) Soma (Body).

He writes in the introduction.

3 The research -- scads of it -- continues to confirm more or less the same thing: People who follow a religious/spiritual path are more likely to enjoy greater longevity and superior overall health than those who do not.

4

And prayer, meditation and other mind-body approaches, whether from the Eastern or Western religious models, appear to be beneficial to the healing process.

Dr. Levin not only addresses

How the body and mind work together

But how God's Spirit affects both.

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A major part of Jesus' ministry was spent in healing people

Both mental illness, as in demon possession

Or physical illness.

There are forty-one recorded healings in the gospels.

Matthew and Luke record the most

The Gospel of John records only three.

Today's readings are two of them.

The first took place in Cana.

A Roman official traveled from Capernaum to see Jesus

On behalf of his very ill son.

Jesus healed the boy without being in his presence.

The second healing took place at the pool of Bethesda
Just inside the wall of Jerusalem.

People believed that every once in a while
An angel would come and stir the waters

At which time all those seeking healing
Would rush into the water.

This man was an invalid for 38 years
And had no one to help him.

Every time the water was stirred
He was pushed out of the way.

Jesus simply told him to pick up his mat and walk.

In these particular healings
Jesus healed through the power of his spoken word.

Throughout the Gospels,
Jesus healed in various ways.

I count six different ways Jesus healed people.

5

- Jesus touched the person
- The person touched Jesus
- Jesus forgave their sins resulting in healing
- The person's own faith healed them
- The person's friends' faith healed them.
- Jesus spoke words of healing to the person

The most common way Jesus healed is through touch.

6

Matthew 8:2-3 NLT Suddenly, a man with leprosy approached him and knelt before him. “Lord,” the man said, “if you are willing, you can heal me and make me clean.”

7

³ Jesus reached out and touched him. “I am willing,” he said. “Be healed!” And instantly the leprosy disappeared.

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People were healed by touching Jesus.

8

Luke 6:18-19 CEV ¹⁸ . . . people had come to listen to Jesus and to be healed of their diseases. All who were troubled by evil spirits were also healed. ¹⁹ Everyone was trying to touch Jesus, because power was going out from him and healing them all.

Jesus healed people by forgiving them of their sins.

A fine example of how the health of the mind
Affects the health of the body.

In forgiving the person’s sins

Jesus affects the healing of their body.

9

Luke 5:18-20 NLT ¹⁸ Some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a sleeping mat. They tried to take him inside to Jesus, ¹⁹ but they couldn’t reach him because of the crowd. So they went up to the roof and took off some tiles. Then they lowered the sick man on his mat down into the crowd, right in front of Jesus. ²⁰ Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the man, “Young man, your sins are forgiven.”

Jesus healed through a person's faith:

10

Matthew 9:20-22 NIV ²⁰ Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak. ²¹ She said to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed." ²² Jesus turned and saw her. "Take heart, daughter," he said, "your faith has healed you." And the woman was healed at that moment.

Yet another way Jesus healed people
Is through someone else's faith!

11

Luke 8:41-42; 49-50 (ESV) ⁴¹ And there came a man named Jairus, who was a ruler of the synagogue. And falling at Jesus' feet, he implored him to come to his house, ⁴² for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying.

12

⁴⁹ While he was still speaking, someone from the ruler's house came and said, "Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the Teacher anymore." ⁵⁰ But Jesus on hearing this answered him, "Do not fear; only believe, and she will be well."

Finally, Jesus spoke words of healing
As in today's passage.

13

John 5:8 Jesus said to him, "Stand up, take your mat and walk." **9** At once the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began to walk.

Jesus had the power to heal.

Whether it is through his touch
Or people touching him

Or through the forgiveness of sins
Or through faith in him
Or through his spoken word

Jesus has the power to heal.

And through God's Holy Spirit
Healing continues to take place.

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Paul Liepelt and Brandy Fix are good friends.

They co-pastor the Annville CoB in the ANE District.

They were teachers at Kulp Bible College in Mubi, Nigeria
When I was Mission Coordinator.

They tried for years to get pregnant with no success
And reached a point
Where they were ready to give up!

Yearly they attended a Brethren Holy Spirit Conference.

It was held every year in the Shenandoah Valley.

This particular year they attended
Paul responded to an invitation for healing.

He had never done anything like this before.

Several people were up in the front of the sanctuary praying.

And the conference leader
Was moving from one to another
Offering prayers for healing.

Many of these people were, "Slain in the Spirit."

Meaning that when the one who was doing the praying
Laid his/her hands on the person

They fell to the floor as if hit by some invisible force.

This is not a traditional Brethren method of healing.

So Paul felt awkward and uncomfortable.

Paul told me later that as he was praying
Out of the corner of his eye
He watched the leader go from one to another.

And he said to himself
“No matter what happens, I am not going to go down!”

The conference leader came to Paul
And began to pray for Paul.

The very next instant Paul found himself on the floor.

He doesn't know how he got there.

But while he was there on the floor,
A voice came to him saying
“Brandy will conceive and have a child.”

And it came to be as it was predicted.

Esther, their first-born, is their miracle baby.

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Brethren may not be so overly expressive
As with Paul's story
But we believe in the healing power of Jesus.

And we believe we have access to this power
Through the Holy Spirit.

The Brethren use the anointing service for healing.

We believe that as we lift our prayers to God
And anoint with oil, God is present.

Our instruction comes from the book of James.

14

James 5:14-16 NIV ¹⁴ Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them 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 them up.

15

If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. ¹⁶ Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

Note the relationship

Between sin and mental and physical health.

Brethren anoint for the forgiveness of sins

For the strengthening of faith

And for healing of the mind, body, and spirit.

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The world views health in a psychosomatic way

Thanks to a lot of medical research

That connects mind to body.

Let us, as followers of Christ

Embrace a theosomatic view of health

Where mind and body connect to God's Holy Spirit.

God is here among us
And ready to offer health and wholeness
To all who seek it.

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During the singing of our last hymn
I invite you as led by the Holy Spirit
To come forward to receive an anointing.

The song we sung entitled, *By Peter's House*
Is a song written by Brethren Ann Metzler Albright.

I use the last line of her song
As our prayer of invitation to anointing.

Let us pray.

You met their need.

*O, hear our call from bed and chair,
In room and hall.*

*O give to us the faith they knew,
The strength to trust, to come to you.*

*O Jesus of the healing hem and hand and heart
Heal us as them. Amen.*