

Meditation 8-22-10

Humans can be healed in many different ways from many different maladies. Sometimes, we are healed from mental illness or addiction, sometimes from depression or emotional problems. Perhaps, the most dramatic healings we see are those of a physical nature. Someone we know beats an illness or disease. Often this is through medical intervention. Sometimes it is not. When someone is simply cured and there is no explanation for it, we term it a “miracle.”

Such a healing took place in this morning’s reading from the gospel of Luke. A woman, who had suffered for a long time, was healed by Jesus. One would think that everyone who witnessed this event would rejoice. Most did, except for those bound by the letter of the law. They reprimanded Jesus, reminding him that no work of any kind should be done on the Sabbath. The Sabbath was to be set aside for rest and reflection on God and God’s place in all of life.

Jesus confronted his detractors and reminded them that a human life was at least worth as much as the animals they cared for on that holy day. Healings were not “just work” but an act of God channeled through him.

We don’t know if the woman who came to Jesus knew the hard and fast rules of her faith--rules that were man-made. All we know is that she had been suffering and she came seeking relief. If this man, whom she had heard so much about, could help her, there were no human rules that could prevent her from finding him. There were also no rules of the faith that would prevent Jesus from stretching out his hand and helping her find wholeness of life once again.

Some people insist that life must operate within a narrow set of boundaries and that all must adhere to rigid man-made rules and regulations. As such, they take the joy and spontaneity out of life never daring to step outside of the boxes in which they feel safe and secure. Jesus must have made them very uncomfortable as he sloshed around like new wine in old wineskins threatening to blow their world apart. They were upset that their closely controlled definition of life might be disturbed. Disturb it he did and the world was changed.

As I said, we are healed in many ways by the care and concern of other humans. We don’t always expect such help to be forth coming and when it does it gives us great relief, it changes our lives and helps us gain a fresh, new perspective, it helps us realize that there are other people who value us, understand us and who will help us. We don’t always know this because there are also many others so focused on their own lives that they cannot see what is right before them, even if it is a person locked in the chains of distress. Often it only takes a moment, a touch, a word, a look, to let another person know we understand his or her deepest longings and troubles. It may just take a listening, understanding ear to help us understand that someone else has “been there, done that” and that they know a way out of a dilemma. The support we give one another when we reach out to help is invaluable.

The very best thing, the “good news” in all of this is that we all are capable of being kind, patient, helpful, loving and healing to others. We simply need to set aside any

preconceived notions we might have about another person and meet them where our human conditions collide. We need to find the intersection of our lives and instead of flying right through it and past it, we need to put on the brakes and take a bit of time to discover others at that same point in life.

We are very busy people and some of us imagine our selves to be very important. We believe there is often no time in our lives to extend a bit of kindness to others. We fail to realize that what we reap is what we sow and it often comes back to us tenfold.

As practicing Christians, there should be no room in our thought process that allows us to feel superior to others and to refrain from offering a simple helping hand to someone in distress. Jesus told us that “That which we do to the least of our brothers and sisters, we do to him.” That’s food for thought. If we are judgmental folks, unable to love and care for those who surround us, what is it we are saying to the founder of our religion? If we are so bound by our busyness that we dash past those in need, what are we saying about the religion we claim to practice? If we become bogged down in rules and regulations that make absolutely no sense and use them to continue on our thoughtless ways, what kind of example do we set for others?

Jesus’ ministry was a ministry of interruption. Just when he thought he was on the road again, teaching in the synagogue and focusing on the text, a hand reached out and asked for help. A father asked for healing for a child, a woman for healing from a pesky ailment, a man that he might see or hear again. Instead of saying, “Let’s see, where can I work you in on my calendar,” or “Go away,, can’t you see I am busy and absorbed with myself,” he always paused in whatever it was he was doing and gave the person looking for his help his full attention. Knowing that his mission was far broader than that of a physical healer, he had come to help people find their way to God, did not stop him from being kind and loving and patient.

We need to take a lesson from him and the amazing grace with which he led his life and then go and do likewise.

Amen