**INTRODUCTION TO HEALING – BASICS AND BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE**

**Presented by Rev Trevor Butler: Past National Chaplain OSL**

I have been given the task to speak on the basics and Biblical perspective of the healing ministry of Jesus. It would take a miracle to do that in 30 minutes. So i'm going to stick to what I believe are the essentials where we, as Christians and as part of Christ's church, are concerned.

I've been involved in the healing ministry for around 30 years. Currently, I am the State Chaplain of St Luke healing ministries. Up until a few years ago I was the National Chaplain. OSL is a world-wide ecumenical organisation made up of members and lone members. Basically our role is to encourage churches to hold regular healing services. James 5:14-15, the prayer of faith, is our call to action and service.

We also gather together Christians interested in the ministry for prayer, study and practice of the healing ministry. We also lead teaching and training sessions at conferences and seminars. We believe that a Christian healing service is a time of worship that focuses on God's healing love and power as revealed in Jesus Christ and continues to be available today. We also believe God uses the medical profession to bring healing to His people. In fact, I had a total knee replacement not long ago.

I want to state the truth of Scripture, "That by Jesus stripes or wounds we are healed." Isa

53:45, Mt 8: 16-17, and 1 Pet 2:24 confirm this. God loves us unconditionally and His desire for us is to be healed and whole. It will either happen in this life or certainly in the next when we will be perfect in every way. Sickness does not come from God. God is our loving Father. What parent would give their child a bad disease or sickness. Sickness and death came through the Fall and Satan.

At the cross Jesus defeated sickness and death and reversed our bondage to it. By His stripes we were healed and set free.

I started in the healing ministry in St George, Queensland. A small group from the Uniting Church had started up an OSL Healing Group and so, being the new Anglican Minister, I joined in. I didn't know much about it but gradually I started to learn and I asked the Lord to teach me. As I prayed for people I started to receive visions and words of knowledge as I prayed. As I prayed and obeyed the visions and words, healings started to happen - especially sore backs and torn muscles.

Three of us went to the John Wimber conference in Melbourne in about 1990. The teaching and worship were great. John taught us how to pray effectively. On the first night I was given the opportunity to pray for a man called Leo. He had a crushed voice box and spoke with a scratchy voice and he was difficult to understand. I was led to pray for him three times as John had taught. The third time I believe I heard the holy Spirit say he is healed. So I said to Leo, "I believe the Lord has healed you, let's leave it to Him now."

Three days later I met Leo again at the dog track and I yelled out to him," Hi! Leo, how is it going?" He answered with full voice, "Great, I've thrown my medication away and I'm completely healed”. That's what I call a faith lift folks! Seeing someone you pray for healed by the grace of God through the authority of Jesus. I have attended many conferences, learnt and grown and seen many healings spiritually, emotionally and physically. I've also seen a lot of people who were not healed. I don't know why. That is God's business.

Our task is to pray in Jesus’s name as best we can as we listen to the Spirit. The rest is up to Jesus and God. God still loves that person and as His child wants to see them healed. I have learnt that perseverance in faith often brings blessing. However, many of us want instant results without letting go of the obstacles and bondages in our lives that often need to be dealt with first.

The greatest learning and privilege came for me one day on the steps of the Parish Office at St

George in 1991. As I walked up the steps the Lord clearly said to me, "I want you to go to St Bartholomew's Mt Gravatt and start up a healing and deliverance ministry". I had to ask twice if I was hearing right. I basically knew very little about deliverance. So, I rang the rector of St Bart’s and told him what I believed the Lord had said and could he pray about it.

Three days later he rang me back and said, "You have a house for a year, a car, a wage for a year and eight people who are ready to be trained and minister. Talk about confirmation! Then I had to tell the Archbishop I was resigning from the St George Parish. I think he was quite happy about that. At this time I was trying to get as close to God as I could get. To hear Him and obey Him as best I could. I spent many hours most days learning and growing in my love for the Lord and trying to listen to Him and I had been doing so for some six months.

About three months later my family and I left St George and I was saying goodbye to parishioners at the front door of St Bart's at my first Sunday service. A young lady came up to me and said, "They need you up at the altar rail to pray with someone. They are not sure what to do". As I walked up the aisle the Holy Spirit told me exactly what was wrong and what to pray for. When I got there, both ministers were there with a young lady kneeling at the rail.

I said to the rector: “will you trust me to handle this? The Lord has told me what is needed". He nodded. So I knelt before the lady and quietly told her what the Lord had said. She confirmed it and she was willing to be delivered of the problem. So, I did take authority and she was set free instantly. That lady has gone on to be a real blessing to the Kingdom and her husband has been on my team for over 25 years as a result.

The main point is the Lord confirmed and gave His authority to this new ministry He had called me to on my first day in my new Parish and ministry. Can you imagine the faith lift that that not only gave me but those who witnessed it? Within six months, the Lord gave me 25 members on team. Most came out of the need for ministry and after having been set free. The Lord is no man's debtor. He is faithful to those who trust Him and obey Him.

The reason I have shared part of my journey and spiritual insights with you is I believe they form the basis for all successful and Spirit-led ministry, including healing. I'm sure most Christians and churches which start out in ministry have good intentions and want to see the Lord at work, but if we try to do it in the flesh there will be very little fruit. It wouldn't work for Jesus and He said it won’t work for us.

Every ministry, including healing, should be based on Jesus’s truth in John 5: 19 - 20. "Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself, He can do what He only sees the Father doing, because whatever the Father does, the Son also does. the Father loves the son and shows Him all He does."

The other truth that Jesus gave every Christian is found in John 15:5. When He talks of the vine and the branches. Jesus says, "Apart from me you can do nothing."

I believe there are three requirements for any ministry, especially healing. The first is intimacy with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Jesus only ever did what He saw the father doing. In other words, He looked to the Father for direction, listened to Him and then obeyed Him. He did what He was shown and told to do under the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus’s ministry on earth was successful because of His intimate relationship with His Father and Jesus says to us in so many ways throughout Scripture, if we want to be successful in ministry we must have an intimate relationship with Jesus, His and our Heavenly Father. Jesus says to us, "Remain in me and I will remain in you and you will bear much fruit. Apart from me you can do nothing".

Do you know it is not God's main desire for us to work for Him? The desire of His heart is for us to know Him intimately. He wants us to know His heart and spend time with Him. We can do all the works in the world, see many miracles, but they will never satisfy us. Only intimacy with Jesus will ever satisfy us. If we get too busy to spend quality time with God as our primary focus on a daily basis, in other words loving Him and receiving His love, we will never be satisfied.

As we are told in Gal 4:4-7, Rom 8:14-17, and Gal 3:26-29, through faith in Jesus we are sons and daughters, children of God. We are heirs if the Kingdom through adoption. Heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ. Because of this relationship, He gave us the Holy Spirit who testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

1 John 3:1 says it all, "See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! and that is what we are."

This brings me to the second major requirement for a successful ministry. The foundation of Jesus’s ministry was knowing He was completely loved by the Father and that His Dad was well pleased with Him before He ever performed anything. Similarly, this was so with the disciple John. He knew he was completely loved by Jesus and this was the foundation from which he lived his life. Our reciprocal love for God and for Jesus has a huge effect on our walk and ministry with Jesus. We access the power of God through love.

Power comes from the Cross, but our access is through love. The secret to our ministry will be love. God's power flows through our love for Him and our love for God's people. God loves the person we are going to minister to as much as He loves us - unconditionally. It says in ten different stories in Scripture that Jesus was moved by compassion to heal the sick, raise the dead or multiply the food. It was Jesus operating through compassion that released the power for the miracles.

Love is really the foundation for absolutely everything in life, everything flows from love. God is love and we are created in His image, we were created in the image of love. In Rom 5:5 it says, "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us". As we give away His love, He will fill us with even more love. Jesus tells us to love one another and that love is the sign that we are one of His disciples.

The third major requirement comes from your very own discipleship, faith and belief in Jesus. Every Christian, including children, has been given the power and the authority to pray for the sick, not just ministers or seemingly especially anointed people.

John 14:12-18 says, "Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father, and I will do whatever you ask in my name so that the Father may be glorified in the Son".

“Whoever believes in Jesus” is the only requirement for us to be able to pray in Jesus’s name. In John 16:7 Jesus says He will send us the Advocate, the Holy Spirit to carry on His ministry. Then in Romans 8, it tells us the Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead also lives in you and me. This is the same Holy Spirit who Jesus listened to, and was empowered by, to do His miracles and ministry. We have everything that Jesus had to obey the father. We have the same spirit and the same authority.

When you and I believed in Jesus, He qualified us through the Cross to be used by Him to heal the sick. He is worthy. He has paid for all our sins and has paid the price for all the sick to be healed. I believe Jesus deserves to get what He paid for. Healing the sick is not about you and me. It is about getting what Jesus paid for.

Our God and Jesus wants to heal the sick more than you or I do. Our task is not to heal but to listen to the Holy Spirit and pray accordingly, or as best we can. However, intimacy with our Lord and God through His Holy Spirit and learning to listen and obey just as Jesus did, plays a major part in the effectiveness of our service to Jesus and the help and love we are able to bring to others. This is especially so in the area of prayer. If Jesus took so much time out to pray so much, surely we need to as well. Love, our love for God and Jesus, and for people is essential.

As I have said, the third essential comes from our belief in Jesus and His giving us His authority and power to use in His name, as a believer. The trouble is, we can all make up excuses as to why God can't use us.

God wants to use us and has given us everything we need to do so. Jesus paid the price to qualify every one of us for ministry in His name. All we need to do is believe it, step out in faith and ask Him to show the way.

I often say to Christians, "You can get as close to God and to Jesus as you want to get, the only thing that can stop you is yourself". As part of God's family, as heirs of the Kingdom, do you long for or desire intimacy with Him and to love Him as He loves you? Is God the most important person or priority in your life? If not, why not? If not, you are only robbing yourself, because God is waiting with outstretched arms and a heart of love for you to get fair dinkum if you aren't already.

This doesn't mean we shouldn't have healing groups or ministry within the body of the Church. However, the ministry should be based in intimacy, love and Jesus’s power and authority, led by the Holy Spirit. St Paul gives us some wise words in 1 Cor 2:4-5. "My message and my preaching were not with persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom but on God's power”.

I would encourage any church congregation, minister or follower of Jesus, to be open to what God wants to do for you, even if it is only prayer support. Like the blind man at Jericho, he cried out to Jesus for mercy. He wanted to see. Jesus said to him, “Receive your sight, your faith has healed you.” His eyes were healed and he started praising God. He asked, he received and it will ever be thus.

If you would like further information on healing as a Body ministry or on praying for the sick in Jesus’s name, contact OSL Healing Ministries – National Chaplain or National Secretary by email at contact@osl.org.au, or mobile 0481 318 341.

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