**A HEALING HEARING MINISTRY**

Jesus had a healing ministry. But it was not what you think that means. Yes, He did heal the physical bodies of suffering men and women, but His healing touch did far more for their souls then their bodies. Over and over again we read where Jesus was “*moved with compassion*” for people. And while He certainly responded with concern for their physical sicknesses, handicaps and bereavements by restoring their sight, hearing, speaking and feeling, we should note it was His compassion for their emotional well being that was possibly His greatest kindness.

What do I mean by compassion for their emotional well-being? Jesus did not just have a *healing* ministry, but a *hearing* ministry. He listened to people who were not being heard by anyone else, especially the religious leaders of their faith. The greatest healings in Christ’s ministry were done by His ears, not His hands. While we cannot match His miracles by healing the sick, we are called by Him to match His healings by hearing the forsaken people who are now falling through the cracks by neglect. All around us there are dozens, even hundreds, perhaps thousands, who are hurting in silence through private grieving, mental isolation, or social distancing. They are quarantined in body, but more so in spirit. They are not being heard, thus not being loved, and that is the greatest sickness of all.

Look at Jesus. Look carefully. Look below the surface. Read between the lines as you read these scriptures about His healing / hearing ministry:

Matthew 9 *35 Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. 36 But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were* ***weary*** *and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.*

Matthew 14 13 *When Jesus heard it, He departed from there by boat to a deserted place by Himself. But when the multitudes heard it, they followed Him on foot from the cities. 14 And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick.*

Fourteen times in the gospels it says that Jesus had “*compassion*” on the people. In fact, to be more specific, it often says “*He was moved with compassion*.” The word in Greek to express this emotion is *SPLAGCHNIZOMAI*, which speaks to the gut, the intestines, the seat of the emotions. Seeing the masses like sheep without a shepherd He was touched by their plight and responded with passionate love and kindness. But in doing so He did more, far more, than heal their bodies, He healed their spirits. But how?

He listened to them! That’s right, He sat and listened to them speak. The common people had been dismissed with a wave of the hand by their religious leaders. They were like the poor widow who had no voice to speak on her behalf to the unjust judge in Jesus’ story. In Luke 18:1-8 is found this famous account in which this woman who had no bribe money to pass under the table to secure a hearing from this greedy judge had to win his verdict by persistent badgering in his courtroom. Her story was the story of the majority of that day, and in every day and culture. The “justice” systems are unjust (read again Luke 18), the “religious” systems are irreligious (read the priest and Levite in Luke 10), and the “political” systems favor politicians, seldom the common man (read Matt. 23:4). No one seemed to be listening to the silent majority.

No one but Christ. Jesus was not a medical doctor, but He was the Great Physician. Jesus was not a licensed psychologist, but He was the Great Psychiatrist. He healed the broken bodies of the diseased, then He healed the broken spirits of the discouraged and depressed. As I said earlier, the greatest healings in Christ’s ministry were done with His ears, not His hands. For instance…

The two blind men from Jericho were repeatedly told to shut up and get lost by the crowd as Jesus walked through their town (Matthew 20:29-33). These men, parasites to others, were suddenly the center of attention as they hear (because they could not see) Jesus respond to their cry, “*Have mercy on us*!” Perhaps for the first time in their life they were not only touched (“*Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes*”), but listened to (“*what do you want me to do for you*?”). I’m guessing being *heard* was as startling to these men as being *healed*.

We could multiply this example by the score throughout the ministry of Christ. “*The common people heard Him gladly*” (Mk. 12:37) because the common people were also heard by Him gladly. The greatest healings Jesus ever performed were done by the healing touch of the listening ear. He stopped to listen when no one else would.

Job’s three friends performed their greatest comfort by sitting for seven days in silence (Job 2:11-13). “*And no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his grief was very great*.” Only when they spoke did they become “*miserable comforters*” (Job 16:2).

“*Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous”* (I Peter 3:8).

Look at Peter’s words again: One mind. Compassion. Brotherly love. Tender-hearted. Courteous. Do you see “eloquent” in there? Or “orator?” Or “brilliant?” Or “wise?” All you see are words that even a blind mute could do. A teenager with a C average and an F in speech could be that person.

Silence speaks volumes. The greatest comfort I have ever received was when I was so down and out all I needed was somebody to just sit and listen. Just *listen*. They didn’t say a word, they just listened. I just needed someone to show they cared enough to minister to me by being “*swift to hear, slow to speak*” (Jam. 1:19). They were introverts, but they performed the greatest healing of my spirit without ever saying a word. Their silence was deafening. I was healed from despair by their compassionate heart and hearing ears.

Until tomorrow… someone is lonely and hurting today. Find them! Start a hearing ministry. In doing so you might start a revolution that heals a sad and broken world.

I love you, very very much.

Rick