



THE EXHORTER

"And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation." Acts 2:40

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Mark 1:34 "And He healed many who were ill with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He was not permitting the demons to speak, because they knew who He was."

I was thinking the other day about the lasting impact of miracles, especially, healings. There were so many. We may never know exactly how many Jesus healed. As word spread, the crowds that gathered around Jesus didn't look like a Sunday morning church service, but rather the waiting room of a doctor's office. Sick, possessed, crippled, all hoping to get near enough to Jesus that He would notice and help them. When Jesus traveled, lepers would shout out His name, hoping for some mercy.

How many did Jesus help physically? Hundreds? Thousands? But what was the lasting impact of those healings? Here are a few thoughts:

First, everyone healed and the few that were raised, eventually all died. Those that were cured of an illness, later got sick and died. It wasn't because the miracle wore off. It wasn't because Jesus wasn't thorough. They got sick and died because it is appointed unto man to die once (**Heb. 9:27**). The miracle wasn't a perpetual "You'll never get sick" again card that they could pull out and use over and over again.

Second, there is no specific indication of anyone being healed a second time. Most of the miracles are generic and the few occasions where names are given, they are not found a second time being healed later on. We don't read of Jesus healing a person and then later on, one of the apostles healing the same person of another disease. That's not found in the Scriptures.

Third, the healings were for the moment and not a lifetime. Those healed and those raised eventually died, everyone of them. There are no people walking on earth today that was healed by Jesus and now they never get sick and they live forever. The miracles were immediate and for the moment. Jesus did what no one else could do. The healings were upon visible things. Leprosy is something that you noticed in skin color. Deafness, blindness, crippled limbs, those are all easy to notice and verify. We don't read about heart valves being fixed. We don't read about internal tumors being removed. Did anyone back then have a bad gall bladder?

(OVER)

The problem with the internal things, is that it's hard to notice and detect and examine. It wasn't hard for Jesus, but it would be hard for the audience. And, here in lies the purpose of miracles. It wasn't merely to make sick people well. It was to prove that Jesus was Lord of Heaven and Earth(**John 20:30,31**). There was nothing that He could not do. No weather system was greater than He was. No demons were greater than He was. No disease was impossible for Him to cure. So, the miracles were fast, immediate and visible. The reason, to point to Jesus as the author of life. The praise would go to God. This wasn't magic. It wasn't hocus-pocus. The crowds weren't fooled. No one was suspicious. Jesus didn't bring these people with Him. They weren't planted in the audience. It was spontaneous. It was local residents that everyone knew. It was people who had been diseased and crippled for a long time, often decades long.

Fourth, so in time, all healed eventually died. What was the lasting impact of those healings? The success wasn't in the number healed. It wasn't in how many lepers and how many demons, as if someone had a clipboard and was tallying all of these. The lasting impact is that all these years later you and I believe in Jesus. We believe because He healed. We know He healed. We know He did what no one else could. The impact wasn't in giving life to people who had no life. It wasn't in extending years to lepers. It wasn't in allowing crippled people to return to a normal life. It was in seeing the hand of God do what no one else could do. It became the substance of faith. It gave hope to a world that had lost all hope. It made us realize that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Finally, if Jesus could make the blind to see and the crippled to walk, things that they could not do, do I not also believe that Jesus can forgive my sins, fill my heart and give me new purpose and direction? Impossible? No. How do you know? Look what Jesus did in the first century. He constantly redefined the word impossible. On our own we make things messy. We become blind and crippled spiritually. We get to the point where things seem impossible. We'll never be better, we say. We'll never see Heaven. We nearly throw in the towel and then we come to see what Jesus did with healings. Powerful. Impossible. Incredible. Instantly. And, there in, lies our hope. By faith, we can be saved. The grace of God that opened closed eyes, can open our hearts. The grace of God that gave life to a dead girl, can give life to our dead hearts.

What's the lasting impact of the miraculous healings? It's our faith in Jesus Christ. It's our following Jesus Christ. It's our commitment, dedication and hope in Jesus Christ. Jesus summed this up when He said concerning the crippled man (**Mark 2:9**), which is easier, to forgive sins or to say take up your bed and walk? To prove He could forgive, He made the man well. In making him well, He also made him whole.

That's what miracles are about. It's about Jesus' greatest work, salvation.

Roger Shouse (used by permission)
