

Thy Very Heart: My Heart Healed by His

~Isaiah 61 & Ephesians 3~

Week eight of series, "His Healing Heart," March 21, 2021,
Rev. Kathleen Christopher

--The purpose of this series--

We are putting our tired, cold, and weary hearts before God's great heart, asking God for healing and renewal.

Remember that our faith is far more than a set of ideas. It has an **affective center** where our hearts come in contact with God's glorious heart.

Our approach for the rest of the series will be to put our hearts before the flowing stream of truth and love coming from God's heart by turning to **Scripture**. Then we plead and **pray** that the **Spirit** would supernaturally make the truths we encounter take root inside of us.

--What we've studied over the last few weeks--

In **Matt. 11**, we saw that Jesus' heart is **gentle** and **lowly**, and therefore we can run to him.

In **2 Cor. 11**, we saw that ultimate **comfort** is found in God's presence, which we often experience through brothers and sisters in Christ.

In **Matt. 23**, we saw that God's **anger** burns hot when that which he loves is threatened, but his anger burns slow and his love flows naturally.

In **Heb. 4-5**, we saw that Jesus shares with us in suffering and stands as a witness to perfect, inexhaustible **mercy**.

In **Heb. 7**, we saw that Jesus' **steadfast** heart moves him to intercede for us always, and that he himself ensures his prayers for us are answered.

In **Exod. 34**, we saw that God is the source of steadfast, abounding, perfect **love** that seeks our glory by changing us to be more like him.

--Opening thoughts on the healing God provides--

This sermon series, by setting before us a vista of God's heart, has pointed us to the source of transformative healing: God shapes and heals us by allowing us to see his heart.

Throughout the Bible, God is called our healer. Ps. 103:2-3 says, "Bless the Lord...who heals all your diseases." Exod. 15:26 says, "For I am the Lord, your healer."

Healing is not just something God does—it is his nature. He is in the process of making all things whole again. And God still heals today.

When talking about physical healing, we don't know why God heals some but not others. It's a mystery. But *all* people can find healing for their hearts and souls, and this healing is far more significant.

Years ago, Kathleen and other church members prayed for a young mother with a tumor. Even as her cancer worsened, she experienced significant emotional and spiritual healing. At the time, she shared, "I feel like it was worth getting cancer for all the healing I and my family have experienced." Having seen God work in such new and profound ways, she was able to extend this healing to others.

God's primary target for healing is our hearts and minds. It's why the Son of God was made man.

John 3:16. *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.*

Healing of the heart is the most complete kind of healing. And through Jesus, God's perfect heart is perfectly revealed.

Isa. 61:1-4 says,

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me,
because the Lord has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor;
he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;

to grant to those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit;
that they may be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified.
They shall build up the ancient ruins;
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.

In his grace and mercy, God doesn't just take 'the bad' away, but he replaces it with qualities of himself.

When we are close to the Lord, we are filled with joy based on his unchanging character. (See Ps. 30:11.)

God doesn't just snatch pain, drop in some joy, and send us on our way. (Though that may be what we wish would happen.) But God's love is seeking more than our happiness; it is seeking our glory. And this requires we yield to the Lord.

Eph. 3:14-21. *For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

We receive healing for our hearts occurs as we pray and receive his Spirit. (See Rom. 5:5.) And as his adopted children, God has placed his Spirit in us. We have heart to heart contact!

Consider Audrey's testimony. She prayed for 20 years, and she had a group of Christian friends praying with her. Did she ever question whether God heard her prayers?

Having other believers join in prayer in faithful persistence is part of the process of heart (inner) healing.

Our healing means transformation and sanctification. We must keep coming back to the Lord in humility and with confession. We must continually ask for grace and love.

2 Cor. 3:18. *And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.*

--We are compelled to come to God in humility--

Again, consider Audrey's testimony. We often begin praying for someone else, only to discover there are things in our own hearts which require repentance and healing.

God *will* replace these things in our hearts with *his* qualities. But we must be willing to let go and ready to change.

We often know this in our heads. We know about Jesus and the Bible, but we wonder: *Why don't I feel it in my heart?* Well, our heart has its own way of thinking. Only Jesus, the lover of our souls, and the Spirit of truth can break through to the heart-level.

--How does this healing happen?--

Healing comes when our hearts draw near to God's heart. (See Heb. 10:22.) But we still ask: *Where? When? How?*

- (a) Much healing comes through times of prayer, when we draw our attention away from everyday things and take time for contemplation, prayer, silence, and study.

James 4:8 says, "Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you."

We are to live with the Spirit deep in our inner being. This indwelling of Christ is most important; it is the "fullness of God."

- (b) Our membership in the body of Christ. We are baptized into redemption for our souls and made members of Christ's church.

We often hesitate to share pains and trials with fellow Christians. In humility, though, Scripture teaches us to share and pray together. God's glory is revealed when Christians come together.

We still may ask: *Why do I need others to pray for me to be healed? Aren't my prayers enough?* Of course God can do it (he's omnipotent). But Scripture shows that God works through us.

Our American culture emphasizes self-sufficiency. But much healing comes from sharing and walking with one another in pain and experiencing the compassion of fellow believers.

Heb. 10:19-23. *Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.*

God is perfecting his bride. When God heals hearts, he is strengthening the bonds of the body of Christ. (See 1 Cor. 14:26.)

--What is true heart healing?--

True heart healing is...

- (1) *not* a self-help method or coping mechanism. It's not denial, nor is it the absence of pain. In fact, Jesus said, "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). It is the presence of God.
- (2) an actual rebirth and transformation, just as much as when Jesus healed lepers or restored an ostracized woman to her village.
- (3) being rooted and grounded in love, comprehending with all the saints, what is the breadth of the love of Christ, which surpasses all knowledge and fills us with all the fullness of God.
- (4) beholding the glory of the Lord, and being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.

--Study questions--

Was there anything in this sermon that particularly stood out to you? What about this series as a whole? What are some overarching themes you want to remember and continue thinking/praying about?

Is there something that you consistently prayed for over a long period of time? Did it ever feel like God would not provide an answer or healing?

Think about your life now. Is there something in your life that needs healing that you could ask a group of close brothers and sisters in Christ to join with you in prayer for?

Re-read 2 Cor. 3:18. How should the fact that God desires to transform us into his likeness (remember, he's concerned about our glory more than our happiness) shape our daily prayers?

Kathleen shared that much healing emerges from dedicated prayer, contemplation, and silence. Where do we see this modeled or taught in the Bible? Do you make space for this in your life right now?

What is one way you desire to see God shape your heart this week? Is there something you can do to help enact the truths you heard?

--When time allows--

As usual, consider reading Tozer's *The Knowledge of the Holy*. [Here's a free online version](#). This is one of those tried-and-true classics, and you could probably read it in one or two sittings.