

Community Church of Issaquah  
February 5, 2023

## When the Impossible Are Healed

Rev. Vincent Lachina

Not long ago I heard a most interesting story. When I share it, you might have heard about it, too. This was an experience that happened 8 years ago in a small town in Missouri. One day three teenage boys were playing on a frozen lake, exactly what they had been doing the day before. The only difference was that the temperature had risen, and the ice wasn't frozen as solid as it had been. In the middle of their playing and running, two of the boys fell through a crack in the ice and were submerged in the freezing cold water. Fortunately, one of the boys was pulled from the water fairly quickly. The other boy, a fourteen year old named John Smith didn't surface right away.

Responders for a 911 call worked diligently to find and pull John from the lake, but all of their efforts couldn't find him immediately or pull him out of the water. John was underwater for 15 minutes before he was pulled from the lake and taken to a hospital. First responders tried very hard to resuscitate him, but when they reached the hospital, John still had no pulse. Taken immediately to the emergency room, the medical staff work passionately trying to bring him back to life.

John's mother, Joyce had been notified of the accident and hurried to the hospital. When she reached her son, he was lifeless and had been without a pulse for almost 45 minutes. The attending nurse told Joyce she had been trying to find John's pulse for 27 minutes but had no results. They thought it appropriate for Joyce to be there when the medical staff declared John deceased. But Joyce said no. Instead, she placed her hands on his frozen, gray feet and began to pray. She pleaded desperately with the Holy Spirit to bring her son back to life. In a state of shock, the attending nurse yelled, "I have a pulse!" And John returned to life. After a long recovery, John returned to his normal self, he is today 22 years old today and studying to be a minister. Joyce, his mother, has written a book titled "The Impossible" which was also made into a movie.

Stories like this happen more often than we might be aware – impossible healings. Now granted, not every story similar to this has the same outcome. But this life experience verifies for me that God through the Holy Spirit still works miracles of healing. I cling to the hope that believers in Christ will trust that the Holy Spirit does indeed exist in our world today.

The Scripture passage I asked Sharon to read today tells the story of two very different people and two very different healing experiences. The first tells a heartbreaking story of a woman who suffered from continual bleeding. Medically speaking, she was caught in her menstrual cycle for twelve

years in what seemed to have no end. It had been going on for a very long time and she was a victim of the social complexities as well. The Mosaic law forbade men to be with women during their menstrual period, so this poor woman must have been isolated from society because of her illness.

At some point she had heard about this man named Jesus who had the power to heal. Perhaps out of desperation, she followed him as he walked with a large crowd of followers surrounding him. Knowing that she was not supposed to be near any man because of her condition, she simply reached out and touched his robe, believing that was all she needed to do for healing. To her shock, the bleeding stopped immediately. Imagine her surprise when Jesus knew that someone had touched his robe and stopped to see who. "Who touched me?" Jesus asked. And the woman came forward, admitted that she had touched his cloak and told him that she was immediately healed. Jesus's reply was simple. "Your faith has healed you. Go in peace."

That is truly a beautiful story about an impossible healing, but there's more. While Jesus was speaking, one of the household staff of the synagogue ruler, Jairus, came to tell him that his young daughter had died. His words seem to be so insensitive, "Don't bother the teacher anymore." But Jesus wouldn't have any of that. To Jairus he said, "Don't be afraid, just believe and she will be healed." And so Jesus with three of his disciples and the child's parents

went into the house. Outside people were already mourning a child they assumed was dead.

Nope. Jesus told them that she wasn't dead, just sleeping. Their response? They laughed at him. So Jesus took the child by the hand and immediately she came back to life. Her parents were astonished, and I'd be willing to bet that the crowd who had been mourning were speechless and flabbergasted. I wish I had been there to see their faces, don't you?

These three individual stories are amazing recounting of physical healings. I dare say that each of us has been in a position where we would have loved for Jesus or the Holy Spirit to intervene and bring healing immediately. Personally, I have prayed and begged for healing for my husband during his 20 year battle with surgery after surgery to fix his heart valves, But there has been no physical healing. As a minister and chaplain for many, many years, I have sat with individuals and families asking the Holy Spirit to heal and restore. Just like I was experiencing.

When I first came to Seattle in 1985, the US was in the beginning stages of the AIDS pandemic. I was one of three on call ministers in all of Seattle who dared to offer pastoral care and support to the men and women who battled that disease. Most pastors in Seattle did not want to put themselves at any risk and so they would refer patients to me. In my first two years at a pastor here, I officiated at

more than 125 funerals. It became such a stressful time that I had to stop counting the deaths because I was not over one before I had to grieve another. As you can imagine, my most frequent prayer was for healing – usually the physical type but often the mental type as well.

Looking back on my life and looking forward to the future, I have come to realize that healing comes in so many different ways and it is not always physical. When someone loses a loved one, there is a definitely need for healing the heartbreak. Realistically, that healing does not happen immediately like the healing we talked about earlier, but it can and does come in time as we pray for God to intervene and mend our hurt. All of us have experienced this sad loss of a dear one. All of us. Healing can come to heartbreak.

Healing can come in broken relationships. When my parents divorced, I chose to distance myself from my father. He had been an alcoholic and womanizer all my early life and I was so angry with him for the pain he had caused my mother. But I never stopped praying that the Lord would help in healing that relationship and allow me to forgive him and call him 'Dad' again. That happened, but only a few years before his death. I don't think I'm the only person who has prayed for healing to come in a broken relationship. Many of us have. Healing can come in relationships.

There are times when healing – almost a seemingly impossible healing – can come to us as we learn to accept ourselves as worthy and loveable individuals. Do you recall that verse of advice when Jesus said that we are to love others as we love ourselves? I needed healing to love myself so that I could love others. There have been times in my own life when I have wondered if I even mattered. That causes a desperate need for emotional healing to awaken our spirits to know that as a created individual made in God's image, we are worthy and blessed. My spirit was crushed when I was physically pushed out of the Southern Baptist Church where I was serving before my divorce and barred from attending any other sister church. It was perhaps my lowest point in my ministerial life. Then I got a job at Boeing by some desperation on their part, and within my first year there, I had been chosen Employee of the Year. I see that as healing my soul and my spirit when it needed it.

When we think about healing, particularly impossible healing, we must remind ourselves that healing comes in so many different ways in our lives. Yes, I will continue to pray for physical healing for those who are in need because I have seen in the life of one teenager that the Holy Spirit is still at work. Yes, I will continue to pray for healing of hearts that have suffered the loss of loved ones. And yes, I will continue to pray for broken relationships that cause enormous pain. Yes, I will pray for the healing of people who long to find and love themselves.

Maybe some of these sound impossible, but I have confidence from the Word of God that healing does come and that we must never fall into the doubt that even the impossible can find God's cure. I have experienced healing in my own life in so many ways, and I believe you might offer a similar testimony. I've come to await the Holy Spirit's word to me, "You can be healed" and then I will be. That's God's promise. It's a little bit different than those days we watched Oral Roberts on TV and were told to put our hands on the television set while he yelled, "Be healed!"

Let us never give up hope that what Christ has done for others, he still can do for us. Pray for healing of broken bodies. Pray for healing relationships in life that are broken and have moved us away from someone. Pray for healing of hearts that seem broken when a loved one leaves us in death or any other way. Pray for healing of your inner spirit to know you are a child of God and loved unconditionally. Maybe this sound impossible, but with God, all things are possible. As Jesus said to the woman he healed, it is our faith that heals us.