

## How I came to believe in healing

Jesus' teaching about the Kingdom has had a profound effect on my life in recent years. Not just on my understanding, but on my faith and my practice and my experience of God.

Four years ago I had great difficulty knowing what to do with the many outrageous promises of Jesus about answered prayer and healing. I was a Christian agnostic. I firmly believed all that a good evangelical charismatic Christian believes, but in practice didn't know *how* to believe much of what Jesus said.

For example, "As the Father sent me so I send you." This is innocuous enough if you think Jesus came to be nice to people and teach them good morals, but that is not what my bible says. My bible says "Jesus went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil." I read that Jesus sent out 72 with power to heal and authority over demons. I read that Jesus healed all who came to him who were sick.

I used to think that Jesus did all that healing to prove he was the Messiah, but four years ago as I was reading the Gospels again I realised that healing and deliverance was not about who *Jesus* is but about what the *kingdom* is. It was the core and essence of Jesus' Gospel. "If I cast out demons by the finger of God then the kingdom of God has come amongst you."

I was persuaded by my reading of the Gospels that healing and deliverance is meant to be the foundation of our proclamation and demonstration of the Gospel.

At that moment God did something in my heart. I became a believer. Instead of struggling with so many of the promises I decided I had better believe them. I had a wonderful joyous release of faith.

What Paul wrote to the Romans happened to me. "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing."

The first thing that happened was that I was filled with the absolute and joyous conviction that I would wake up the next morning with my life long tinnitus gone.

When I woke, guess what! I still had my tinnitus. What was I to do with my so-called newly found faith? What are we to do with these outrageous promises - especially when we give it a go and fail? Well I went round to an elderly friend who I had just heard had a very painful and inoperable problem with the vertebrae in her neck. I laid hands on her and prayed and she was instantly healed and remains free of this condition today.

That experience has helped me to keep trying regardless of previous failures. Jesus told many parables to encourage us to keep taking risks of faith. A king went on a long journey and before He left gave his property to three of his trusted servants. On his eventual return two had gone out and taken risks with that property and made a profit, but one was fearful of failure and did nothing with it.

Jesus made it very clear that he is not pleased if we shrink back in fear of failure rather than step out in faith on his promises. On the other hand he gave us many encouragements to persevere in faith. "Ask and you will receive" "Whatever you ask in faith, believing you have received it, will be done for you."

In these last four years I have set aside discouragement and believed for healing and deliverance. I have seen hundreds of instant healings and hundreds of healings coming in the days following prayer. Around 70% of those who have asked for healing have been healed.

We have seen healing of everything from aches and pains and colds to broken bones, blindness, deafness, dumbness, the lame, epilepsy, depression, nervous breakdown, cancer, heart disease, post viral weakness, genetic diseases, decades of arthritis.

All this and I'm just an ordinary member of a dozy village Anglican church. My day job is teaching people how to program computers. There was no one in the church encouraging me. I've not been to a healing and miracles conference nor had someone lay hands on me. I've never been slain in the spirit or visited the third heaven.

I don't think I have a gift of healing; I'm just trying to believe the Gospels and giving it a go.

And I am not anything unusual. You only have to look on YouTube to find dozens of videos of ordinary believers taking healing onto the streets of their communities.

God is on the move to bear witness to his kingdom wherever people have the courage to believe what Jesus said.

If you are thinking "those promises are for me too, I'm going to take risks and believe God." well that's wonderful. But I warn you that every *act* of faith involves a *fight* of faith. I had a friend who had received multiple miraculous healings and then died of cancer. Every disappointment requires you to get up again, reassert your faith, refuse to give up and then look for an opportunity to have another go.

Perhaps you have previously been bold in faith and given up in despair. I have been there countless times. I have a deep and lifelong relationship with crushing disappointment. It is the cancer of our faith that we just have to keep fighting. I'm not sure how I have survived but it is certainly by God's grace and with his help, and I think also my constant reading of the Gospels. Every day for the last four years I have read a chapter of the Gospels. I am fully persuaded that it is the father's good pleasure to give me the kingdom.

Although healing and deliverance had featured quite significantly in my ministry these last few years, that is not really my focus. It is the kingdom that excites me.

But since Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom was founded upon healing and deliverance, so, I believe, must mine be.

Mk 1:14-15 Jesus went into Galilee proclaiming the good news of God. "The time has come; the kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe the good news."

Jesus came to announce that the long promised kingdom was now here and he is the king. That was the good news. It is the Gospel that I too am commissioned to proclaim. Jesus said all authority has been given to him and he is with us to go and do what he did.

How can I proclaim Jesus is king if I can't demonstrate it in healing and deliverance? Without that all I have is "Jesus is king in heaven, but the devil rules on earth."

But, we are told, Jesus came to destroy the works of the evil one.

Jesus is king and his kingdom is at hand. It is within us and flows out from us.

He is not just king in name but in reality. He is not just king on judgement day but now. The ascension was not the end of his rule on earth but the beginning of his rule over all the earth.

Furthermore the kinship of Jesus needs to be demonstrated not only in church but out there in the community.

We can go door knocking or treasure hunting or healing on the streets. We can offer healing to our unbelieving friends.

"The time has come, the kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe the good news."

It is time for us to repent and believe.