

## 7. Rest and Restoration (2Q 2010—Health and Healing)

**Biblical material:** Gen. 2:15; Exod. 20:8-11; 23:12; Matt. 11:28-30; Mark 2:27; 6:30-32.

### Quotes

- A good laugh and a long sleep are the best cures in the doctor's book. *Proverb*
- Healing takes time. Despite great advances in medicine, the biggest part of your recovery is attributable to the enormous healing power inside you. The body heals itself according to its own timetable—anxious thoughts never hasten recuperation. *Criswell Freeman*
- Joy and Temperance and Repose/ Slam the door on the doctor's nose. *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*
- Fresh air impoverishes the doctor. *Danish Proverb*

### Questions

What is significant in God resting and the Sabbath? How is rest related to healing—and what should we do about it? How can we truly rest in this land of pain and sadness? What was Jesus' example in terms of rest and restoration? How does restoration speak to the divine healing of sin? What is our part in this process?

### Bible discussion

Adam was to work in the garden and care for it (Gen. 2:15), and was also given the Sabbath (repeated in Ex. 20:8-10). The Sabbath was the time to stop working, and be refreshed (Ex. 23:12). Jesus' promise is "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." (Matt. 11:28 NIV), noting also that Sabbath was made for mankind (Mark 2:27). From time to time Jesus also made sure to take time out, often with his disciples, telling them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." (Mark 6:31 NIV).

### Comment

"While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8). As a result we should "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." (Ephesians 4:32 NIV). For by grace you are saved...

Restoration. Cure. Healing. Re-making God's image in us. That's what God most wants, not to have us come to Him and say, "Please forgive me" and once we are forgiven go on in our own self-centered and evil way. God is far more interested in taking away our desire to sin than in just taking away specific sins!

That's why when Peter asked Jesus about forgiveness he missed the point. The Jews said forgive five times. Peter in saying seven times thought he was being extra generous. But Jesus' "seventy times seven" expresses the kind of *attitude* that real forgiveness is all about. And that's why we must not limit God's forgiveness.

Jesus told the parable of the ungrateful servant to explain what he meant, and concluded that we are to forgive one another "from your heart" (in other words, not keeping count and taking record, but having the right spirit).

We too must do this. Jesus is not just saying God's forgiveness is limitless and ours should be too--but that there's something more important than being forgiven. It's

being *saved* and *healed* from sin—so that ultimately we won't need to be forgiven any more, because we won't want to go on sinning!

In Luke 7:36-50 Jesus is in the house of Simon the Pharisee. Simon has been healed from leprosy, but he still has his sinful attitude, and sees the woman who anoints Jesus' feet as a complete sinner. He does not recognize how much he has been forgiven, so Jesus has to remind him.

Jesus explains what the woman has *done*. For true forgiveness brings *results*. And Mary's actions for Jesus expressed what she felt in her heart: her great love for Him, her amazement that Jesus should even consider one like herself, her overwhelming gratitude for the healing forgiving God in Christ. In contrast Simon's lack of attention and care show his coldness, and how little he really appreciated what Jesus had done for him. For though he had been *healed*, he had not really *experienced* God's healing salvation.

Simon sees God's great compassion extended to someone he had written off as being impossible to save. And deep in his heart he realizes that he is in greater need of forgiveness because of the hardness of his heart. And accepting God's forgiveness and healing for himself, Simon becomes one of Jesus' disciples—a proud Pharisee changed into a humble, self-sacrificing follower of Jesus. The results of God's healing!

For you and me too! Maybe you have said that forgiveness is not enough, especially when you keep on coming back asking to be forgiven for some repeated sin.

So often it's hard even to accept it—like Simon, we may even think we're reasonably "OK." Or we may not feel able to accept such magnanimous forgiveness. As Alfred Korzybski said, "God may forgive you your sins, but your nervous system won't."

Or perhaps you're like the woman I once met who was still asking God for forgiveness thirty years on from the time she'd sinned, never able to really believe she was forgiven. But the truth is that the moment we ask honestly for forgiveness, the gift is ours. We all need to have that peace with God, knowing that He loves us, cares for us, has forgiven us and is healing us:

- "A broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise." (Psalm 51:17 NIV).
- "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow." Isaiah 1:18 NIV.
- "Forgive, and you will be forgiven" (Luke 6:37 NIV).

### **Ellen White Comments**

The great Physician co-operates with every effort made in behalf of suffering humanity, to give light to the body, and life and restoration to the soul. And why is this? Satan came into our world, and led men into temptation. With sin came sickness and suffering, for we reap that which we sow. Satan afterward caused man to charge upon God the suffering which is but the sure result of the transgression of physical law. God is thus falsely accused, and his character misrepresented. He is charged with doing that which Satan himself has done. God would have his people expose this falsehood of the enemy. To them he has given the light of the gospel of health, and as his representatives they are to give the light to others. As they work to relieve suffering humanity, they are to point out the origin of all suffering, and direct the mind to Jesus, the great Healer of both soul and body. His heart of sympathy goes out to all earth's sufferers, and with every one who works for their relief, he co-operates. As with his blessing health returns, the character of God will be vindicated, and the lie thrown back upon Satan, its originator.

{Christian Educator, October 1, 1898}

Prepared December 17, 2009 © Jonathan Gallagher 2009