

Pray More Healing Retreat - Transcript

Praying for Healing

Dr. Bob Schuchts

Welcome back everybody. This is our fourth and last week of the Healing Retreat, and I pray that the Holy Spirit has been working powerfully in your life in-between times, and even as we've met. Just to kind of give you a summary of where we've been: The first week, we talked about Jesus as our Divine Physician. And the second week, that He operates most directly through the sacraments, and we talked about the sacraments as being healing us not only individually, but corporately. Healing the wounds of sin. And last week, we talked about redemptive suffering and healing, and that those aren't opposites, but redemptive suffering brings healing. And we mentioned how every time we forgive, we enter into a redemptive suffering and heal ourselves and the people that we forgive just in that simple act, but we also enter into facing our suffering as a way of moving through it, rather than staying stuck in it.

Sometimes our suffering is ongoing, and we have to, in that, not only participate in the suffering of Christ with Him, but offer it for the good of others as a way of redemptive love. And this week we're going to talk about praying for healing. And we've been praying for healing all the way through, but I just want to talk about it more explicitly. I believe that prayer, in addition to the sacraments, is one of the greatest gifts that God could possibly give us. The God of the universe, Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit, has given us the permission to have a phone, so to speak, with a personal line to the president of the universe, you know. We've got, what do they call it? The red line? We've got the direct line, and yet we don't even begin to appreciate the gift that that is.

Jesus says "Abide in Me, and I in you, and ask whatever you desire and I will give it to you. And My Father Himself will give it to you." That's incredible. In the book of Hebrews, it says ***We can approach the throne of grace without shame, because the blood of Christ covers us.*** So the things that keep us to hesitate, it's just a matter of believing in everything that the church teaches, you know, the whole last section of the Catechism. Everything that scripture teaches about prayer says that we have access to the Father 24/7. There is never a moment in which the Father doesn't hear our prayers.

Now, sometimes we can believe that He doesn't hear us because we're trying to get Him to fix something rather than to heal something, and I think we get into a lot of trouble that way. We want our prayers to fix now. We want it to be an extension of our manipulation of the way that we manipulate the rest of life. And

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one of the scriptures that has always spoken to me is in Hebrews, when it's talking about Jesus, and He says because of... ***With loud wails and cries to the Father, who could save Him from death, Jesus cried out, and because of His reverent submission He was heard.*** Well, I said to myself "Well, He didn't save Him from death, did He?" I mean, what does that mean? If, because of His reverent submission, He was heard, that means Jesus wouldn't have gone to death. And Jesus asked for this cup to be taken from Him, but it wasn't taken from Him, so His prayers weren't heard. So what does that scripture mean?

And as I prayed about it, I got the revelation. Jesus was saved from death on the backend, not the frontend. The resurrection was when the Father saved Him from death. If the Father would have saved Him from death on the frontend, none of us would have been saved. So often we want a quick answer to our prayers because we want to fix our suffering and escape from our situation. Whereas God may need to bring us through a circumstance and heal us on the backside of it, because He's healing so much more, like my brother Dave.

And so I think that's the biggest reason we lose hope and lose trust in prayers, is we... He's not a genie in a bottle that's magical. In fact, the Catechism talks about if we approach prayer and the sacraments in that way, you know, like it's some kind of superstitious genie in the bottle kind of approach, then that's really a sacrilege. That's really superstition. That true prayer always has the intention of bringing ourselves and everything that we're concerned about into relationship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. True prayer is communion with God. That's the first and primary healing. We are always healed when we pray in truth, because we're always brought into deeper communion with God, and that's healing.

And so any kind of prayer, every kind of prayer, if it's done from the heart - whether it's a Rosary, whether it's a prayer to St. Michael, whether it's a prayer of thanksgiving, whether it's a blessing - whatever prayer, if it's done in a right heart with the right disposition, desiring to have communion with God, brings us healing. But then there are specific prayers for healing in many different forms that I didn't really learn about until I was... really after that experience that I talked about on the Christ Renews His Parish weekend. That weekend changed my understanding of prayer.

I was with a group of friends, and we were together praying and praising God when that happened, just like Jesus after His baptism. The grace of the sacrament was given, but it was in prayer that the Father spoke His blessing. And it's in prayer that we receive the blessing of the Father, that's already been given to us through the sacraments. Everything that we need, all the grace that we need is given to us in the sacraments. We have Jesus Himself, the in-dwelling of the Holy

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Spirit. But it's in prayer, it's like prayer is the place where we draw on the grace that's been offered to us.

And just as Jesus said to the disciples, He says to us: "Go and heal the sick, deliver those from oppression, even raise the dead." Now, that's hard for most of us to imagine, but those were Jesus' own words. And you'd be surprised at how many people through the course of history, including about 400 saints, have prayed for somebody to be raised from the dead and they were raised from the dead. It's happening now. I know of hundreds of stories of that. But it's mindboggling to us. We have a hard time in our Western civilization to really believe, in this scientific age, that God could actually answer prayer that way. But that's how powerful He is.

And so whether that death is the death of our own hearts, or a death of somebody's physical body, prayer is that powerful. And, as I mentioned, I had, on that weekend, saw the power of prayer, and I began then praying with people as a therapist when they would meet with me. I would begin praying with people, prayers for the areas where they were suffering, and I began to see God do amazing things. I began to see people who had gone through deep wounds of sexual abuse, and see God heal them in a way that they weren't being healed until they had an encounter with the Holy Spirit. Now, there was a struggle in it, and we had to work through things. I saw people healed of pornography compulsions, I saw people healed of broken marriages, broken relationships, people were divorced. And in the power of prayer, in all of those circumstances, God did an amazing healing.

I also saw, once I went down to Brazil, saw the power of prayer in physical healing. Now, actually it's a very simple prayer. When we went down there, we were just taught to say "Jesus, I just ask You to heal this knee," or "heal this shoulder," or "heal these blind eyes." It wasn't a lot of words. And we were encouraged just to expect that Jesus was going to respond to those prayers. And over and over He did, and it was surprising almost when He didn't. I remember this one young man who had been brought in on a stretcher, and I was asked with a group of people to go pray for him. And as we prayed nothing happened, and we were taught if nothing happened just to ask God if there's some barrier in the way.

And so when I asked the Holy Spirit to show me if there was a barrier to His healing, the words that came were "unforgiveness." So I asked him "Is there any area of unforgiveness in your life?" And he acknowledged that there was. That he had actually gotten beat up by a gang, and that's how he got in this condition, and he hadn't forgiven them." So we led him through a forgiveness prayer, like something like what we did last week, a little shorter. And after he forgave we

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prayed again, and he was literally healed right before our eyes. And I've watched that happen many times. That doesn't mean that every time we're not healed there's unforgiveness or some other issue. But because the prayer for healing is so simple, we can trust that God can work through a very simple prayer.

Sometimes it's multiple times. Remember the person in the Gospel with the eye problems. Jesus prayed actually twice before he saw, and I've seen that happen many times, where you pray for somebody repeatedly. In fact, in *Be Healed* I talk about this young girl who was healed of spina bifida. She had a hole in her spine. And the person who prayed for her prayed all night and all of the next day, continual prayers with the girl, and there was no healing for about eighteen hours. And then on the eighteenth hour, the healing came. Now, why is that? Did Jesus not answer the prayer the first time? I think there's something much more mysterious that we don't understand, which is all the ways in which we resist grace.

The Catechism talks about when our hearts get hardened and we get into doubt, and unbelief, and sin, and everything else, we can resist grace, we can... grace can be present and we can resist it. And there's something that happened in those eighteen hours of continual prayer, where this young girl with the spina bifida was soaked in the power and presence of God, that somehow that prayer moved the obstacles and moved her faith, and she experienced the love of God, she experienced the presence of God to a point where the healing could take place. Now, some of us can pray for years and not see it, so I'm not making that as a dogma. I'm just saying that, sometimes, prayer needs to be persistent, like the persistent widow, until we see the results that we're praying for.

Jesus says never give up praying, you know. That's why He told us the parable. Never give up. Never stop praying for the things that you are praying. And ask the Holy Spirit to guide you with how to pray. I think of a young woman who was a mother of a couple of young children, and she was married and she was dealing with suicidal depression. And she had some really deep wounds, sexual abuse wounds, somebody had sexually abused her. But she was actually driving around in the car with a noose in her glove compartment, looking for an opportunity to hang herself, and yet she didn't want to do it to her husband and her children. But she was in that much despair.

And she had actually read about praying for healing, and had even done some earlier, but one of the things that came back to her mind at that point was a simple prayer of renouncing. A prayer of renouncing false beliefs, and also demonic oppression. This is one of the things that all of us have been given authority in our baptism, is to pray for ourselves in that way. And just a prayer of renouncing,

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again, like a simple praying of physical healing, renouncing just goes “In the name of Jesus, I renounce whatever that is. Whatever that false thing is, or whatever that spiritual oppression is, I renounce that oppression, or I renounce that despair.”

And she kept arguing with herself. You know, it was like the Holy Spirit was bringing this to her mind and she was saying “That won’t do any good. That won’t make any difference.” You know. And yet it was persistent. And so finally she says “Okay, just to prove it’s not going to make any difference I’ll do it.” And so she says “In the name of Jesus Christ, I renounce despair, I renounce suicidal ideation and thoughts.” And with the choice of her will and the power of that prayer in Jesus’ name, she said she was stunned. She said there was something lifted. This heaviness, this despair, this oppression just lifted, and she was free from the suicidal thought. She couldn’t believe that she had gotten that close to killing herself when so much of that, she thought were her thoughts, were actually demonic oppression coming down upon her.

So it may not be that dramatic, but we all have things, we all have areas of our lives where we’re believing things, where we’re taking things in, where we’re making agreements with things that aren’t from God. It could be just believing that nobody loves us, or believing that things will never get better, or believing that “I’m alone and I have to take care of myself.” And so I just ask you, as we move towards closing in prayer here, to think of a situation in your life, or a belief in your life, something that’s plagued you, that you’ve just made agreement with, you know. “My life will never be happy,” or “I’ll never be healed,” or whatever that is. And I need you to think about that. “I’ll never have enough money.” “I’ll never have what I need.” “God won’t come through to me.” Whatever that is. And I just ask you just very simply to pray with me, and see what God does in it.

“In the name of Jesus Christ, I renounce whatever that belief is. In the name of Jesus, I renounce the belief that God doesn’t care about me. That God won’t be with me. I renounce the belief that God won’t take care of me, take care of my needs. And I give You permission, Holy Spirit, to restore my trust in this area. To restore my understanding that You’re with me, that You love me, that You care about me.” And as a way of putting it into practice, I want to end with this prayer. It’s a prayer I learned from somebody who’s a psychiatrist, his name is Dr. Karl Lehman. If you want to look this up on a website, he’s a Minister of the Cross, the Body of Christ. But his prayer is called the Immanuel prayer process, and it’s very simple, and it’s remembering a moment where you felt the presence of God.

And if you can’t think of a moment where you felt the presence of God, or felt God’s love in some way, think of human love. A time when you felt love by somebody, or a joyful experience. And just, in this prayer process, very simply

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allow yourself to remember it - it's what we do with the Eucharist - remember in the present, let it be present in the moment. So go to that moment, that experience, and allow it to be present right now, and allow yourself to re-experience, and let the Holy Spirit show you, re-experience that time of encounter with God, that time of love, that time of peace, that time of joy; whatever the fruit of the Spirit was you're present with it. Just re-enter into it. St. Ignatius also teaches this, and many of the spiritual masters teach this kind of prayer process.

And as you enter into it, pay attention to your experience. Pay attention to what it feels like. And then, in that moment, what you believe about yourself. What do you believe about yourself in that moment of encounter? How do you feel? What do you think? Who are you? And then remember the name that God gave you. "You are My beloved son. You are My beloved daughter, in whom I delight." And just, as we end, I want to end on that note, that you would end in the reality that you're a beloved son or a beloved daughter, the Father delights in you, that Jesus is present with you, and that the fruit of the Spirit - His love, His joy, His peace, His presence - is always with you and it's accessed, it's received, as we pray.

And so I want to end with a prayer for each of you personally that, Jesus, that You would manifest Yourself in a new way, and bring healing to the things that are deepest in the heart of each person who's participating in this. It's been a joy sharing this time with you, and I look forward to seeing you again. If you want to look at resources, JP2 Healing Center, we have a lot of resources there, and conferences, and books that you can read if you want to go deeper in this. God bless you.