

“Crushed And Waiting”

Job 42:1-6, 10-17

Psalm 34:1-8

Hebrews 7:23-28

Mark 10:46-52

Jesus says, “Your faith has made you well.” My friend the Rev. Dr. Steve Hayner, who passed away in 2015 from pancreatic cancer, wrote this on his blog several months before his death:

Many are praying for one of God’s “big” miracles. We are as well. But it is not how God answers prayer that determines our response to God. God is committed to my ultimate healing. But being cured of my cancer may or may not be a part of that healing work ... One person told me how disturbing it is to her to watch so many thousands of prayers on my behalf and yet to see a minimal of physical evidence of healing. Does God really heal? ... Does the amount of prayer have any special impact? Honestly, while I understand the importance and logic of questions like this ... most of these questions are not ones that are important to me. I truly don’t know what God has planned ... I could receive “healing” through whatever means, or I could continue to deteriorate. But life is about a lot more than physical health. It is measured by a lot more than medical tests and vital signs. More important than the more particular aspects of God’s work with us ... is God’s overall presence with us, nourishing, equipping, transforming, empowering, and sustaining us for whatever might be God’s call to my life today. TODAY, my call might be to learn something new about rest. TODAY, my call might be to encourage another person in some very tangible way. TODAY, my call might be to learn something new about patience, endurance, and the identification with those who suffer. TODAY, my call might be to mull through a new insight about God’s truth or character.”<sup>1</sup>

Steve closed his blog by quoting the poet E. E. Cummings: “I thank you God for most this amazing day ...”<sup>2</sup> I admired how Steve recognized the crushing of his suffering but waited patiently through it by trusting that God was with him, making the most of each

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<sup>1</sup>The source is Leslie Scanlon, “Columbia president affirms faith despite spreading cancer,” *The Presbyterian Outlook* (7-29-14).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

day. Steve placed his faith in Jesus Christ to nourish, encourage, and shape him to be more like Jesus.

Jesus says, “Your faith has made you well.” How does your faith make you well? Believe that the suffering you’re experiencing is not an obstacle, but an opportunity. In this regard, T. D. Jakes in *Planted with a Purpose* writes, “. . . I’m convinced God can use the weight crushing your soul right now to create His choicest product—if you will let Him. Crushing is not the end!”<sup>3</sup> How do we allow God to create us into someone amazing during the crushing weight of whatever we’re going through? We exercise our faith in Jesus Christ. We believe that all things work for good for those who love Jesus. Wellness, in whatever form, is the outcome of exercising faith in the crucible of suffering.

The Old Testament, Psalter, Epistle and Gospel Readings remind us that an individual’s faith in God is meant to be used for their benefit. Job 42:10 reads, “And the LORD restored the fortunes of Job when he had prayed for his friends; and the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.” Psalm 34:4 reads, “I sought the LORD, and he answered me, and delivered me from all my fears.” Hebrews 7:25 reads, “Consequently he is able for all time to save those who approach God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.” And Mark 10:51 reads, “Then Jesus said to him [a blind beggar] ‘What do you want me to do for you?’ The blind man said to him, ‘My teacher, let me see again.’” Remember, it is a person’s faith that keeps them reaching out to God in times of suffering, despair, and hopelessness.

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<sup>3</sup>T. D. Jakes, *Planted with a Purpose* (New York City, New York: Faith Words, 2020), 9.

Jesus' teaching and healing in Mark 10:46-52 is his final stop before entering Jerusalem for the first time. The healing of the blind man in Mark 8:22-26 and Bartimaeus in Mark 10:46-52 gives hope that the disciples will "see" what God is up to in Jesus. The blind men had faith. The disciples are struggling with having a simple faith to bank their hope on God's promise of salvation, healing, and wellness. The lack of faith and recognition of Jesus' identity as Lord and Messiah, as the Son of God by the disciples who had been with Jesus for three years is compared to the faith of Bartimaeus, the blind beggar. Jesus' message is powerful as it was to the disciples who had jobs, but the marginalized be them poor, sick, or sinful had a more immediate resonance with Jesus in faith and with faith. Jesus consistently challenged, taught, and healed people to evoke and provoke faith in him as Savior and Lord.<sup>4</sup>

Jesus says, "Your faith has made you well." Becoming well is exercising your faith in Jesus Christ. It is believing God is at work for good during the crushing and waiting. Faith in Jesus Christ produces an outcome of re-creation in your life. Again, T. D. Jakes in *Planted with a Purpose* writes, "We often don't exercise the patience to wait and watch and wait some more. But patience may be the ultimate source of quality control for what God is [doing] in your life.... When everything falls apart in our lives, we are broken but not destroyed."<sup>5</sup> The broken and crushed places in our lives is where

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<sup>4</sup>In the two paragraphs of textual analysis above, I have benefited from the thinking of Anatheia E. Portier-Young, Brady Banks, Donna Giver-Johnston, Jennifer T. Kaalund, George R. Hunsberger, Alicia D. Myers, and Nontombi Naomi Tutu in Joel B. Green, Thomas G. Long, Luke A. Powery, Cynthia L. Rigby and Carolyn J. Sharp, editors, *Connections, Year B, Volume 3* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2021), 407-410, 410-412, 413-415, 416-417, 418-419, 420-422, and 422-423.

<sup>5</sup>T. D. Jakes, *Planted with a Purpose*, 13-14, 21.

we are presented opportunities to grow, to gain what we need for next steps to become who we are purposed and designed by God to be.

Be faithful. Quoting E. E. Cummings, “I thank you God for most this amazing day ...”<sup>6</sup> Bartimaeus made his way to the place Jesus was and then cried out to him. He was patient in faithfulness as he waited for his opportunity to ask Jesus for healing. Are you being faithful, patiently waiting in the “crushing” to act in faith by asking Jesus to heal you? Jesus’ words, “I am the way, the truth and the life,” the words of the Greatest Commandment, the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount and Matthew 25 are encouraging you to be faithful. Jesus is saying to you, “Your faith has made you well.” Amen.

*This sermon was preached (for the In-Person, Online, and Village TV 6 congregations)  
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<sup>6</sup>The source is Leslie Scanlon, “Columbia president affirms faith despite spreading cancer,” *The Presbyterian Outlook* (7-29-14).