



... and all of them were healed. Acts 5:16

Imagine an evangelistic series where everyone arrives with broken bones, runny noses, and bodies full of cancer. Then imagine everyone leaving the meeting healed, healthy and completely whole! Honestly!

No need to imagine. You've just described what happened in Jerusalem when the disciples began teaching about Jesus. People came from all over Palestine. They brought old Uncle Benjamin on his bed of rags, Aunt Mary with her arthritis, Cousin Harvey with Down's Syndrome, Sister Sarah with her broken foot, and even Grandpa Mark with his Alzheimer's. Everyone who walked into the churchyard was broken, beaten down, and hopeless.

But the disciples spoke HOPE!

Maybe that is the core of every truly Christian evangelistic service HOPE. The hope that comes from knowing you are adored by the Father of Jesus. The hope that comes from knowing you can be changed, different, better. The hope that comes from knowing God wants to make you whole.

It was certainly that way when Jesus walked the dusty roads of Palestine. "Wherever he went into villages, towns or walked in the countryside, they placed the sick in his way and begged him to let them touch his clothes" Mark 6:56.

It seems so easy and believable in the words of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. "... and he

healed all the sick" Matthew 8:16. " and all who touched him were healed" Mark 6:56. Dr. Luke draws a similar picture of the disciples holding evangelistic services in Jerusalem, " and all of them were healed" Acts 5:16.

The descriptions are "six o'clock news" direct and simple. You can almost hear the newscaster's voice stating the obvious over videos of yesterday's amputees dancing in the streets; "And all of them were healed."

Healings like these would be above the fold on the newspaper and the teaser on every radio news program. Jesus would be the TIME magazine "Man of the Year." He would get interviews with Larry King and a trip to Disney World.

Why so many healings then, but not now? Is our connection with Christ so weak that His energy cannot send a full healing charge through us? Are our meetings focused on the wrong words? Has God chosen to trust hospitals and doctors and medications for healing today? Are people less needy? Have we not learned how to trust?

I would like to be well, to be able to ride a bike like Lance Armstrong and hit a ball like Barry Bonds. I would like to be as strong as a teenager, and as wise as H.M.S. Richards. However, I doubt that Jesus' healing gave anyone skills and abilities they did not already have. Instead, He simply

gave wholeness.

Several times those he healed wanted to know more about the process. Each time Jesus told the inquirer, "Your faith has made you whole."

God's wholeness means something much deeper than physical healing. Wholeness describes a person who is at peace, whose heart beats in tune with the heart of God, who is safe in the world because she has accepted residency in God's country.

Maybe that is the key to evangelism.

My faith in God makes me whole. It gives me the ability to see beyond my fears, to live above my inadequacies, and to be excited out of my depression. It gives me a life from which to speak to you about salvation.

Your faith grows as God draws you toward him. Somehow you know that "just being close" makes you stronger.

Our faith then draws us to each other, and in mutual

support we find peace, courage, and strength as we lean on God.

Maybe that's the purpose of evangelism to offer heavenly green cards to immigrants who need a safe haven for their hearts. Finding that place is like being healed like being made whole!



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