



GO IN PEACE.

It's a simple message but oh so difficult.

by Barbara Lynn Cull-Wilby, PhD, RN

I begin with two quotations: one from Albert Einstein and one from Jesus of Nazareth. Let me say right at the beginning, I find it difficult to find language to describe Jesus without scaring a lot of people away. My husband for example. It seems that the mere mention of the name Jesus is enough, in some circumstances, to make him leery, perhaps even a little nervous. He is not alone. Be that as it may, Jesus interests me because he was a healer; one of the finest healers that I have read about or known. As a nurse, I have been actively in the pursuit of understanding healing since 1987. Healing I've discovered is connected to our personal relationships with what we understand to be God. Einstein knew it as the experience of awe and this is why I quote him. Jesus lived and used his understanding of this Awe to heal. My article is based on Jesus' response to a woman who desires healing. But first,

Albert Einstein:

"The most beautiful emotion we can experience is the mystical. It is the power of all true art and science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead. To know that what is impenetrable to us really exists, manifesting itself as the highest wisdom and the most radiant beauty, which our dull faculties can comprehend only in their most primitive forms - this knowledge, this feeling, is at the center of true religiousness. In this sense, and in this sense only, I belong to the rank of devoutly religious men."

Jesus of Nazareth:

"Your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."

Mark 5:34b

And now my discussion: Mark, one of the devoted friends of Jesus, wrote the above quote as something that Jesus said to a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. Merely

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Dr. Barbara Lynn Cull-Wilby, RN

Founder of Wholecare

271 Woodstock Road, Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada E3B 2H8

506-455-0877

<mailto:barbara@wholecare.ca>

www.wholecare.ca



touching his clothing healed her. The woman “had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought, ‘If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.’ Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering” (Mark 5:25-29). As a professional educated in the medical model, I am interested in the assessment and prescription that Jesus gave this woman.

He told her: “Your faith has healed you.” He did not take credit for the healing. Nor did he say that God had healed her, as he did on other occasions. Rather, he told her it was her faith that healed her. What is it to have faith that can heal? What faith does it take to be able to reach for the touch of a robe? Faith is something we believe. We think it in our minds and feel it in our bodies. We silently express our faith in the manner we are with each other; and in the way we trust or don’t trust (trust life, the weather and each other, for examples). Our faith is an attitude of our hearts and minds. For faith to heal, it must let go completely of doubt and worry; of fear. She must have had great faith! As had Jesus. He was so centered and aware that he felt the woman touch, with the intent to heal, his clothing even though he was surrounded and being pressed by the crowd. This level of awareness is impressive. He was aware of her mind and her heart - that is how he knew the degree of her faith. She must have been in awe of him. As I reflect on my own experiences of awe, a few times stand out. As a child, I remember feeling awe sitting alone at Camp Wegesegum in the tall pines of the outdoor chapel along the Salmon River, near Chipman, N.B. In 1998 I sat in awe listening to Thich Nhat Hanh, a Zen Buddhist monk, author, poet, peace activist, and Vietnamese exile. Last year, I felt awe milliseconds after I released my grip of the cold wing of the airplane floating with parachute at 3000 feet. Whenever I offer a Therapeutic Touch treatment, I feel an awe-like honor for the privilege of the experience. This awe is a mystical experience.

“Go in peace,” Jesus told her. It was no easier in that day than it is today to go in peace. This morning my cousin was parking her van. Three people gave her a nasty look as she maneuvered to back into the parking space in front of the bank. They seemed in a rush, she said. My husband Joe has chosen a life profession of helping others. As a lawyer his days are fraught with people trying to get court ordered access to their children, spousal support payments, and insurance cheques for injury claims. As a lawyer he sees and hears the rawness of our humanness. Blame rather than peace is the goal of our current legal system. It is the way of our world.

“Be freed from your suffering,” Jesus said to her. Suffering is the first noble truth according to the Buddha’s teachings. We all suffer. It is something that we learn to do. My grandmother suffered. My mother suffered. I suffer. I pass it on to my three children. It is a learned response to pain, jealousy, hurt, disappointment, deceit, loss of expectation (a job or money for example). My husband suffers too. He also learned it from his parents and his ancestral lineage. And yet Jesus had the boldness to suggest to this person who had suffered with this problem for 12 years to “be freed from your suffering.” Wow. This degree of bold confidence is exemplary. It is a real challenge to change a life pattern immediately; chronic problems become a lifestyle. We tolerate them; cope with them; maintain and even nurture them. If we are used to suffering, even if the pain no longer exists,

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choosing joy or bliss or even just contentment can be very difficult. There is a whole thought process that goes with the suffering that must be released if we are to be freed from it. Our friends expect us to suffer and have created relationships that take this suffering into account. What's to talk about if we can't complain about our suffering? It is what makes our headline news.

I've often wondered what follow-up studies would have shown if there was research that pursued those individuals whom Jesus healed. I think perhaps we would discover that healing is a process. And like life, it requires a commitment to choose it: daily. I think the commitment command was in his prescription to "go in peace."

World peace begins with each of us. If we practice experiencing peace in all of our relationships, then Peace ripples outward like the circles from a stone thrown into the river.

So when you get up from your chair. Or when you lift your head after reading this. Or as you walk down the sidewalk or into your home, just for today, do it in peace. And if it is the faith that heals that you desire, then may I suggest you practice experiencing awe as you go in peace as often as you think it. Pick up the telephone and say "Hello" in peace. Stand in line at the bank in peace. Park your car, pay your bills, hug your family, and greet a stranger – in peace. After all, as a global community we date our time based on this man's life. His words are wise. And we need wisdom. "Go in peace."

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