

A Demonstration of Our Faith

By Dr. David Fisher

This is a transcription of his testimony, the second part of the Sermon "Connecting With God: Healing Through Prayer " given at CPC on Aug 28,2005

Scott Farmer, Senior Pastor, first met David and Denise Fisher when they asked to meet with the elders on a Tuesday morning for prayer and anointing for Denise. Then they renewed their acquaintance in June 2005 during a Renovaré Conference in Denver Colorado on spiritual renewal and the With God life. Scott says "I got to hear David's story about how God worked with him in this area. He has 17 years of practice in general surgery and with Denise 3 and 1/2 years as medical missionaries in Kenya. He has operated on and cared for 100's of cancer patients including over 200 women with breast cancer. I will have David tell you how medicine and prayer relate to God's healing. He has done a lot more thought on this than I have. David, thank you for being willing to come and share with us your story and insights."

Scott: How did you come about the medical profession and missionary service?

David: My wife and I were medical missionaries in Kenya for 3 and 1/2 years returning to the states in 2000. Denise was involved in training anesthesia nurses LVN's and RN's in the field of anesthesia and I was teaching Kenyan residents and

interns general surgery as well as surgical principles. My parents were also missionaries in Viet Nam. I grew up on the mission field and I have had a long standing interest in over seas missions and in medical education and discipleship and development issues.

Scott: Then what caused this interest in spiritual healing and prayer and the medical profession?

David: In January of 2005, Denise was diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer to the plural space, the space around her right lung. Her right lung was completely encased with tumor and in chest X-rays and CAT scans (CT - Computed Tomography) could be seen from across the room to be something terrible. 12 Years ago she was treated for a primary breast cancer and it was felt to be very favorable, the world's experts gave it less than 5% chance of recurrence. Therefore, our response to the news in January was one initially of shock, dismay and despair. We reflexively called the church and asked to come before the elders and had prayer on Tuesday morning. The next day we went to the oncologist's office and were really given little hope and little offer of hope with medication and were certainly not offered surgery or radiation and no chance for cure. At this point neither one of us had any teaching or any exposure really to healing prayer in ministry despite having been in medicine and medical missions. My understanding was God was able to heal, certainly He is willing to heal, He would not have asked us to pray for healing [James 5:13-15] if He wasn't willing to heal. I guess the follow-up question was if I asked "will God heal?" my answer would be "I don't know, I'm not sure." I had previously been very skeptical of vague diagnoses with little scientific or social credibility and I was very dubious of any healing ministries.

We began seeking God for answers and comfort. One tired night in anguish Denise cried "I think it would be easier to just die rather than fight this battle." I said I'll support you in any way, however you choose, but I don't believe this is God's will.

That night Denise began a courageous journey that has led me and several others along a path that my skeptical scientific mind would never have imagined. As Scott said in Psalms 147:3 He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

We believe this disease process is one of spiritual, emotional and physical battles. In response to that [understanding] Denise began a program of prayer, rest, nutrition, exercise and stress reduction that will allow her body to fight and heal from this cancer. Prayer is certainly the most critical of these changes she has made in her life. In a verse that she has claimed for this journey 2 Cor. 10:4-5 The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

Since we believe that the disease is not of God any more than sin is, we believe it is God's will for healing.

Isaiah 53:4-5 [NKJV] says "Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed."

Matthew 8:16b-17 [NIV] refers back to this prophecy and says

"[Jesus] healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: 'He Himself took our infirmities And bore our sicknesses.'"

Going on to James we are instructed to pray for healing [James 5:14]. The Gift of Healing is listed among the Spiritual Gifts of the Spirit in 1 Cor. 12:1-11. All 5 of the commissions in the N.T. are accompanied by commands and provisions in authority to do such works that Jesus had been doing and what His disciples had been doing during His lifetime here on earth. [Matthew 10:8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give. NIV]

We began to realize that belief in healing is a demonstration of our faith, that is believing what scripture said and taking it literally for what it meant. Hebrews 11:1 has a definition of faith, which is "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see." [NIV]

If we waited for a change in an X-ray to believe in healing, that's not faith, that's simply acknowledgement of something that's already happened. That's already proven by man's means.

Scott: Can you tell us more about your discoveries. A you can tell David is a scientist and you have thought and you have researched and you have a lot of empirical (direct or indirect observation) evidence and a lot of biblical study. What are some of the discoveries you have made as a result in this journey?

David: I'll share just 3 with you. There have been many, and certainly Denise and I or others around us that have been with us in this journey would be more than happy to share with you.

Here are 3 that I think are very different types of things that we have learned and that might be helpful.

My scientific skepticism of healing and suspicion of others who did believe in healing was not pleasing to God. I had erected a golden calf in my life and that was the one of rational thought and reason, intellectual thinking (as superior to belief or faith). My education, my training, my profession and personality all contributed to this idolatry.

One morning as I was walking into the hospital I had this vision, certainly given by God, a vision of the hospital as a Greek temple on a hill. The priests and priestesses were the doctors, the physicians with large support staffs of administrators and nurses. The worshipers were the patients coming to the temple, they were seeking truth and then based on that truth they were asking for direction for their life, often at great expense both to their body, possibly their life (and often financial expense) based on these recommendations. The money changers perhaps were some part of the medical industry [health care expenditures rose from 5.1 percent to 13.4 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) between 1960 and 1993], maybe those making it a business or even kind of a shady business at times possibly some drug companies. The reality is that the truth that we so attentively seek and hold true in medicine can change by the year and that it is not absolute truth, it is what humans understand at that time in this discipline.

We have come to worship images of the body, rather than the creator of our bodies, and we believe an X-ray more that we would believe scripture or God's word.

Sadly, the church in general has outsourced healing to western

medicine (and I am still a part of that and a big beneficiary of western society), literally outsourcing and putting into our (the medical communities hands) custody of healing of all sorts. I believe I still practice a noble profession, I would not discourage anybody from seeking western medicine. The progress and miracles that occur inside of western medicine are remarkable, however the great physician is the one who truly has healing powers. I repented of my scientific skepticism and I believe that this pleases God.

The second thing is as Scott was saying about the body of Christ, is we have been touched by the body of Christ and people literally around the world have been praying with belief in complete healing for Denise. As in the battle in the Old testament with the Amalekites where Israel was fighting the Amalekites, Joshua was leading the battle, but Moses was praying for the Israelites as they fought and as he held out his hand the Israelites would prevail, but when he tired and his hands drooped then the tide would turn against Israel and Joshua was losing the battle. Then Aaron and Ur came along and would hold Moses' arms up in intercessory prayer, the tide would then again turn towards Israel. Joshua was fighting the physical battle, but really the victory hinged on the spiritual warfare that was taking place.

As with Aaron & Ur there have been friends from CPC, Stephan's Ministers and friends from other churches who have held up our arms when we were weary in this battle. These people literally have been the people to sustain us in weary times for this we are very grateful.

The third thing we are learning on this journey is perhaps the most fundamental, perhaps the most important and that would

be we are learning that we can't interpret God's word according to what we experience in life. That's our human nature, but that's what we did on occasion, if not most of the time. Rather, we need to view our life experience according to what scripture says. The knowledge of God is provided in scripture and we need to live our life according to the knowledge of God that is revealed to us, rather than trying to frame who God is around our life's experiences. God reveals himself through His word, He is spirit and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth. And those who know Him must know Him in spirit.

So those are the three things in the journey that I have learned so far. It has been since January and just as a follow-up Denise had a repeat CAT Scan some months ago of her chest and there was resolution or disappearance of the fluid that was around her lungs that was related to the cancer. We asked the oncologist is there any explanation for this, which you know of because Denise isn't taking medication and he said no. I had an expert radiologist friend of mine who specializes in body CTM (Computed Tomography with Metrizamide) imaging. He looked at the CAT scan and he asked did she have this drained. I said no, she didn't. Several of the nodules were smaller. We don't obviously know what the future holds as far as the healing goes, but we continue to believe that healing will take place. Our minds have been renewed as Scott was saying by the knowledge provided as in scripture. It has produced faith, and faith in the provisions for healing. It has brought us to live in spirit with God on a daily basis. Just as in the Lord's prayer we ask His will is done in our lives daily. As we do this His kingdom is here.

Thank you.