**A Healing that Restored Life**

Have you ever known of an instance where someone prayed over a dead person, and they have come back to life? Have you ever tried to do that? Have you personally known someone who believed that they themselves were dead and then came back to life again?

I first heard about a similar situation for a preacher on the Southern California district in about 1970 who gave testimony that he was pronounced dead at the UCLA medical hospital and came back to life again…and perhaps that testimony helped me pray for a man who was pronounced dead in an ICU room by a doctor and saw him come back to life again. This man was a pastor whom I respected on the old Southern California District, and I believed in him and his testimony.

The story I want to tell was in 1972. **And as I tell this true story, I want to say the same thing that Peter said to the crowd that it was not by me or my strength or ability, not by my piety that this occurred.** Acts 3:12 *“But when Peter saw this, he replied to the people, ‘Men of Israel, why are you amazed at this, or why do you gaze at us, as if by our own power or piety we had made him walk?*

In 1972, the Jesus movement was really moving in our culture in Southern California. We had great movements of evangelism such as the “Here’s Life Campaign.” My small church in Wilmington had seen many times of faith where God changed lives as people believed in Christ. Two of these new converts were two brothers—Don and Jack Hawley. They were notorious leaders of an evil gang in Gardena.

Don called me one Saturday, and said that he thought that his father, Don Sr. was close to believing in Christ—and could I come and give a gospel presentation to Him? It had been an exhausting week for me, and I did not have my sermon ready for the next day, so I told him that I would come on Monday. I did not think much about my response to Don all that weekend as I busily prepared for my responsibilities.

All went well until Monday morning at about 5am when Don frantically called my house and said that he had found his father overdosed on drugs and they had rushed him to Gardena Memorial Hospital. It appeared that he had taken pills about 10 pm Sunday night. In about thirty minutes I was in the intensive care unit of that hospital where the body had been hooked up to all kinds of machines for some time with the brain wave showing no activity, and the heart monitor having no response at all—just a flat line at the bottom of the screen. I think they only hooked the patient up because they knew of Don and Jack from previous gun fights and saw how crazy they were acting in grief.

I asked the doctor if I could pray for the patient, and he responded, “Stupid Christians.” He left as I took out my healing oil and **placed my hand** on the patient’s forehead. Don and Jack were outside the room trying to be consoled by some of the hospital staff while I prayed the following prayer, “Lord, I ask you to forgive me for not going on Saturday to pray with this man. If there is any way that he can come back to life and receive you as his Savior, I ask that you heal him and raise him up in Jesus’ name!”

I must tell you that I had not before, nor have I since that time, touched a forehead that was as cold and hard as the head I had anointed. In fact, his whole body had gone into rigor mortis for some time, and he only gradually was able to start to move after the prayer of faith as his body “defrosted.” (I don’t know of any other term to describe it.) He began to sit up, to look at me and said, “Where am I? I told him who I was—the pastor who had helped his sons, Don and Jack, believe in Jesus.

I asked him, “Would you like to have Jesus in your life and be saved?” He said that he would, we asked the Lord right then and there to change him, and he became a believer still in the hospital bed! In just five minutes he was up, was unhooked from the machines. We both went outside the intensive care room together to tell his sons, Don Jr. and Jack, and— believe you me—there was much rejoicing! The staff seemed to be relieved with us that Don and Jack were sane again.

The nurses didn’t know what to do with his left arm that did not “thaw”, and they put it into a sling and said, “let’s see what comes next.” I tried to find that Doctor, but he successfully evaded me as I searched all over the hospital to try and get his perspective on what had happened. In about two months, the left arm did “thaw” and he regained full use of it.

While this story is remarkable, I don’t know of any life that it really changed except Don Sr. who continued to believe and follow Christ. He died about six months after this event in a car accident.  **I do know that it changed my life**. I can never again go into a hospital or anoint the body of the sick and not have faith that God will answer that prayer.

And while I continue to believe, I do not understand why I have prayed for far more times when I did not receive an observable healing than those times when I have. I have come to rest in some verses that help me keep on praying and believing even though there is so much I do not understand. **I do believe, but I do not have all the answers.** I take rest in the fact that I cannot find a command in the Scripture that we understand, only a command that we believe and that we act in faith, trusting our good and wonderful God. (Proverbs 3:5-6). And it is in that faith that we can see God do exceedingly, abundantly above all that we can ask or think.

***Ephesians 3:20 “Now unto him that is able to do exceeding, abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us….”***