

The Miracle on Ward 17

Among the three was the miracle of Frederick. He lay in a private cell, which meant, according to the usage of that hospital, that his death was imminent. He was so gaunt and shriveled that he looked like a wizened old monkey. His skin was yellow, the ribs protruded, and the skin fluttered between them as he breathed. There were tubes in both nostrils and attached to both wrists. And usually there was a doctor or a nurse with him. On passing the cell, I always threw him a swift prayer, but did not dare to go within and lay my hands on him. And a general prayer from a distance was not enough. It required an immediate presence and the word of faith and if possible the laying on of hands to provide an adequate channel for God's healing power. One day, however, he was alone and awake. Greatly daring, but compelled by compassion, I went in.

In all these years I have found only one effective motive for healing: compassion. If we desire to heal someone by the power of Jesus in order to glorify Jesus, then somehow we usually fail to reach that person. Jesus is glorified of course through every healing, but only when we are, as He was, "moved by compassion" (Mark 1:41).

"You look like you're about washed up," I said. (I had found that the men liked this direct, unvarnished approach.)

"Yep," he said.

"What's the trouble?" I asked; I could see no wounds, nor could I smell any osteomyelitis.

"Blood clots," he replied, unilluminatingly.

This, thought I, should not be too difficult to heal. Therefore I told him of the power that might help him get well. He was not interested. In fact, he shut his eyes, a clear dismissal. But having got my teeth into this case, as it were, I was not moved to give up easily.

"Listen," I said at last, causing him by my forceful tone to open his eyes. "If you'll just let me try, the way I told you, I promise I'll never mention the matter again, win or lose. Now how about it?"

"Okay," he said wearily, and with a definite lack of enthusiasm. Whereupon he drew back the sheet, and I saw to my horror that

his abdomen looked like a pool of dark blood, barely covered by a thin membrane.

"Guts torn out," he said, noting my dismay. "They didn't want to carry me in from the battlefield, but I told them they had to."

Here was a will to live if there ever was one! He had been kept alive for months by intravenous feeding, drugs, and stimulants. If I had seen his abdomen at first, without stomach or any other digestive organ as far as I could tell, I would not have spoken the word of faith. But there it was, and I could not retract it. So I laid my hands on the two sides of this red gaping pool of blood and envisioned a stomach and all other organs perfect and called upon the Lord to bring this about.

When I reached home I telephoned every powerful prayer group that I knew and called for help from "the Christian underground" as a friend once called it in her amazement, not having known that there are people all over the land who believe that Jesus lives and heals today and who will respond to a call for prayer. And I myself prayed for a miracle to take place in Frederick. This would require an out-and-out miracle. This was no speeding up of normal healing processes. Nothing could do this except the direct work of God through Jesus Christ.

The next week I passed his room with fear and trembling, but he was asleep and I did not go in. A week later, two weeks after our prayer, I again passed his room. It was empty. He was not in his bed. But the bed was crumpled, his things were scattered about, and his name was still on the door. I went on to the common room at the end of the ward where men sat about in wheelchairs, but I did not see him. Across the room my eyes fell upon a young, good-looking, ruddy faced man who bore not the slightest resemblance to the wizened old monkey for whom I had prayed in the cell. This young man gazed at me with a twinkle in his eyes and a knowing grin presently I noticed that there was a tiny shade of resemblance.

"You can't be Frederick, can you?" I asked him.

His grin broadened. "Yes ma'am, I am," he said.

Remembering my promise, I made no reference to his h but simply said, "What are you going to do now?"

"Think I'll go to South America and get a job," he replied.

"That seems like a good idea," said I. "My brother worked there up in the mountains. He liked it." And I glancing at my cart, "Have an apple."

He had an apple, and I turned to leave.

He spoke once more, and I looked back.

"Well, but my feet still swell," said he.

"That's only because they aren't used to your standing than," I replied. "They'll soon be all right." And with this word of encouragement I went away.

The next week he was not in his cell. He was discharged and at home.

Once I had a brief talk with a chaplain. I recounted t the story of Frederick, for I knew that he visited in Ward 17 and must have seen the young man.

"Is that what happened to him?" he cried in amazement. He referred, not to the healing of the young man's body, but awakening of his soul.

"Soon as he could get out of bed, he was down in my every day," said the chaplain. "He wanted a Bible. He wanted to know all about God and about Jesus Christ."

Three months later, to my utter amazement, I passed that cell in Ward 17 and beheld on the door Frederick's name once more.

Within the cell stood a tall, burly, handsome young man who looked like a lifeguard at Atlantic City.

"You can't be—"

And again he said, "Yes ma'am, I am."

"What in the world arc you doing here?"

"Just came hack for my ninety-day checkup," he replied. "I did have the yellow jaundice, but it's all right now."

I never saw him again. But I do pray God that He finds a way to lead this young man gently in His pasture and protect him from the deadly miasma of an unbelieving church. Perhaps Frederick

is one of those who dares to tell the truth, and to help in awakening the sleeping giant of the church into a new life.

Excerpt from the book "Sealed Orders: The Autobiography of a Christian Mystic" by Agnes Sanford. Published by Bridge-Logos Publishers December 1972. The book may be ordered from the Healing and Revival Bookstore at: bookstore.healingandrevival.com