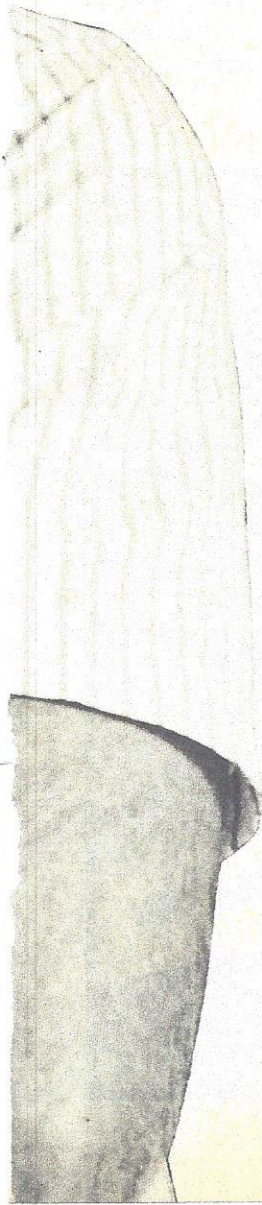


My Summer of Miracles

It took a deadly cancer—and a miraculous healing—for me to understand fully the power of God's Word.

By Jamie Buckingham



The diagnosis of cancer the doctors gave me last July had a terrifying way of clearing my life of all other priorities. Helpless, I was face-to-face with the possibility I could die within weeks.

Many doctors examined the three CAT scans, the bone scan, the kidney biopsy and two kinds of angiograms. All agreed. The cancer had spread from my left kidney to the lymph glands in my abdomen, and possibly to other organs as well.

The verdict: The kidney was inoperable and the cancer incurable by conventional methods (that is, chemotherapy or radiation). A powerful force, evil and visible, was inside my body, determined to kill me.

I'm covering the details of the miraculous healing in a book—*Summer of Miracles*—soon to be released by Creation House Books. Through a series of miracles, I did have surgery. The cancerous kidney was removed as well as most of the tumorous lymph glands. After surgery, the lymph glands, examined by the pathologist, were judged non-cancerous. No further treatment has been needed. I have since been back for two post-op exams and my body remains cancer free.

Now, however, before the book is published, my publisher has asked me to share with *Charisma* readers what I think was the single most important factor in my healing.

Of course, that's impossible to discern for sure, so much remains a mystery—known only by God. My personal repentance was important, for God wanted to make major spiritual revisions in my lifestyle. Prayer was also paramount—and who knows how many believers touched the heart of God on my behalf. Prophecy played a major role as well, as people heard from God and spoke words of direction and encouragement to me.

But as I look back, one reality seems to overwhelm

everything else. It was not what I did—but what God did, and my acceptance of what He did. It can be encapsulated in what my brother Clay, a retired U.S. Army general, said to me on the phone: “Jamie, faith is not believing *in* God; it is believing God.”

Jesus Purchased Your Healing

Since my healing I’ve been overwhelmed by people calling and writing me from all over the country. They are dying of various “terminal” diseases. Many weep over the phone as they call for themselves or for their loved ones. Some think that because I’ve received a miracle, I now have miraculous powers. They plead: “If you will only pray for me...”

When I explain that God was responsible for the miracle, not me, they ask: “Will God do the same thing for me?”

My answer is simple. “No! God will not do it again because He has already done it at Calvary. Jesus not only died for your sins—He died for your sick-

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“All you need to do is receive it. You do not need a second work of grace. You only need to accept what He has already done.”

It took deadly cancer to bring me to that point of understanding. I had always been in good health. I had felt little need to think about or claim healing since I was not sick. I was like the haughty man in Psalm 10:6 who says to himself, “Nothing will shake me; I’ll always be happy and never have trouble.”

Then trouble was upon me, big-time trouble. I was like a boxer who had been hit in the stomach. All I could do was roll on the floor, gasping for air, desperate for help.

But one day my wife, sitting quietly in the den reading the Bible, suddenly spoke aloud. “Calvary!” Jackie said. “Your healing was purchased at the cross.”

Gradually it dawned on me, too. A series of miracles followed through which God gave me direction, climaxed by a miracle when He changed the cell structure in my lymph glands. I'll cover all that in the book, but for now I want to say this. All that happened rested on this foundation: Jesus died not only that I might have eternal life, but that I might be healed.

I can best explain it by reminding you of an incident in the Lord's own life, recorded in the Gospel of Mark (see 11:12-14, 19-24). On the evening of Palm Sunday, following His triumphal entry into Jerusalem earlier in the day, Jesus returned to the suburb of Bethany to spend the night. The next morning He arose early to go back to Jerusalem.

As He was descending the Mount of Olives, Jesus saw a fig tree in the distance. Its leaves were full, indicating it should have been abounding with fruit. Hungry, He stopped to pick a few figs for breakfast. But the tree was barren. So, with His disciples listening, He cursed the tree.

At the time, nothing visible happened. Later that night, when the disciples left Jerusalem to return to Bethany, they passed the tree once more. Still it looked normal.

The disciples looked at one another, questioning. Why had there been no change? Had Jesus lost His power?

Early the next morning, they once again left Bethany to head down the hill toward Jerusalem. One more time they looked at the tree—but this time it looked different. "Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!"

"Have faith in God," Jesus answered. "I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours" (Mark 11:22-24).

Despite all appearances, Jesus had not lost His power. The curse was effective, though it took time for the results to become manifest. Yet faith was necessary to see beyond appearances.

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We Have What We Say

Here is what I discovered. You have what you speak. If you want to change something, you must believe it enough to speak it. Jesus told His disciples, "If anyone says to this mountain...and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him" (Mark 11:23).

Over the last few years, thanks to the so-called "faith movement," we've

heard a lot of emphasis on this concept. We've also heard a lot of extreme and often heretical applications. We've tagged the concept with uncomplimentary names: "name it and claim it," "blab it and grab it." But last summer I discovered that despite the extremes (and the often accompanying arrogance), there is a basic Bible truth here that must not be overlooked: *We have what we say.*

If you talk poverty, you'll have it. If

you say you're sick, you'll be (and remain) sick. If you say, "I'm defeated," you'll be overcome rather than be an overcomer.

Before going on I must say this. There is no formula you can repeat, no laws by which you can live, which guarantees healing. God alone makes the decisions concerning life and length of life.

I would be a presumptuous, arrogant fool if I said your healing depended on something *you* do. The wives of two of my dearest friends, for example, women of great faith who as far as I know did everything I did, still died of cancer.

Healing must never be the primary goal of your life. That goal should be your submission to God's loving rule. As my 93-year-old mother said when I told her of the cancer: "Son, don't give God orders. He loves you and will only do good things to you."

How I Was Healed

Nevertheless, when I accepted that God's "good thing" was to heal me—and that it had already been arranged at Calvary—something wonderful happened in my body. The date was July 13. For two weeks all I had heard from the medical experts was that I was dying.

It was a Friday afternoon. Feeling punk, I popped a videotape into my VCR and lay down on the sofa. I was tired, my energy sapped from the cancer. My wife relaxed in a chair across the room. The tape was an Oral Roberts' sermon preached at the Charismatic Bible Ministries Convention in Tulsa. Roberts was re-telling the story of how Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law.

I was half-dozing, picking up only phrases here and there, when I heard Oral shout: "If Jesus says you're healed, you are! Get up! Everybody get up and say, 'I'm healed.'"

The tape, of course, was a month old, and he was speaking to the audience in the Maybee Center on the ORU campus. But that afternoon the word was for me.

I came up off the sofa, shouting, "I'm healed!" My wife leaped out of her chair and shouted, "Hallelujah!" For the next 30 minutes all we did was walk

around the house shouting thanks to God and proclaiming my healing—based solely on the promises of the Bible.

Fortunately, no one else was home at the time, nor did anyone knock at the door. But it would have made no difference. When you're dying and you're talking to your God, you don't care who's puzzled or offended by your behavior.

That night we had dinner with close friends, a married couple who had been praying for me. The wife, a nurse, met us at the door. "I'm healed," I told her.

She caught her breath and stepped back, looking me in the face. "How do you know?"

"God told me this afternoon. He said it was done at Calvary. This afternoon I accepted it."

She broke into tears and we all started acting crazy again. Outwardly nothing had changed. The cancer was still in my body. Only surgery, which came two weeks later, could remove it. But as the fig tree, still flush with leaves, was dead from its root because Jesus had spoken to it, so I was healed even though nothing had changed in my body.

Surrounded by God's Word

Did my saying it heal me? No, I was healed because of what Jesus did at Calvary. But had I sat around saying, "I'm dying; the cancer has me," I believe I would have died.

There was more. Much more. My wife copied the healing scriptures of the Bible on yellow sticky notes and posted them all over the house. It was her version of spiritual interior decorating. Everywhere I looked I saw the healing promises of the Bible.

Later, at the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston where I went for surgery, she plastered the walls of my hospital room with healing scriptures. She read them to me when I could not read. We listened to them on tapes sent to us from many sources. Scripture choruses filled the airwaves of our home and later in the hospital. I lived, breathed and digested the Word of God. It literally brought life and health to my entire body.

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I went back and read Mark 11 again. So much of what I was doing was by divine direction. I was simply putting into practice principles I had preached but never really understood. Jesus cursed the fig tree, yet it seemed to remain as it was. But while its green leaves seemed to flourish, Mark says it was "withered from the roots." Two days later the leaves fell off. It died when Jesus spoke to it, but it had taken a while for the manifestation to appear.

The Word of God starts with the *unseen* areas of our lives. In Romans, Paul talks about God who "calls things that are not as though they were" (Rom. 4:17). In Hebrews he says that faith is being "certain of what we do not see" (Heb. 11:1).

Words—God's Word spoken through us—reach into the unseen dimension where life finds its source. I said, believing, that I was healed because the Word of God said I was healed. When I did it, life came to the unseen areas.

The cancer did not wither instantly, but the root of death was gone. There were still things God wanted done in my life, so He let me wait for a while. But I am convinced that the cancer began to die as soon as I received—that is, accepted—God's Word as mine.

Power in God's Word, Not Ours

Does this mean I can confess whatever I want and it shall come to pass?

"Million dollars!"

"Mercedes Benz!"

"House on the Riviera!"

Absolutely not. You must confess only what God has already said. The power is not in your word. The power is in God's Word. It is not your desires that come to pass; it is God's desire for you—and that will not happen until His desires become yours enough to speak them.

The "mountain" in Jesus' story, according to John Osteen of Lakewood Church in Houston, represents the obstacles that stand in our way to health and happiness. "We need to quit talking to God about our great mountains," he says, "and start talking to the mountain about our great God."

I saw my wife curse a tornado one day—and it died. We were driving north up Florida's east coast on U.S. 1, along the Indian River, which is the wide expanse of salt water lagoon that runs most of the length of the east coast of Florida. There is one place, just south of Melbourne, where the highway is only a few feet from the water. Looking up the river, we saw a huge water spout form under a low-hanging black cloud. It was moving down the river in our direction.

"That's evil!" Jackie said. Then pointing at it through the windshield, she said, "I curse you in the name of Jesus the Messiah!"

Instantly the tornado separated itself from its life source—the black cloud. As we watched, fascinated, the water spout continued toward us. However, as the gap between its top and the bottom of the cloud grew wider, the funnel grew smaller and smaller. We pulled the car off the highway and parked beside the water's edge. Then we watched as the tornado funnel, now only a few feet high, whirled right up to the edge of the water where we were sitting—and sputtered out to nothing.

So many of us speak timidly—frightened or even overcome by the circumstances. Faith words, however, will both destroy and create. When you speak to the unseen realm, cursing the evil root of Satan, the seen will soon change. When you speak life, through Christ, into the cells of your body, life is yours.

For that reason, despite what the doctors said, I refused to say "my cancer." It was not mine. It was the devil's. I didn't *have* cancer. I had Jesus. The cancer was trying to have me, but the Word of God said I was healed through what Jesus did at Calvary.

Will the accuser try again—perhaps using another method? Only God knows. This I do know. Satan's power was canceled at Calvary. So I choose to be numbered among those listed in Revelation 12:11 who "overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony." ■

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