

Prophetic Word: 'Take Up Your Bed and Walk'

As many of you know, I was stricken with Chikungunya virus in May of 2014 while in Haiti, which made walking painful. The doctors told me it could take up to two years for my body to be totally healed. Although I was recovering well, growing stronger every day and praising my Healer, evidently with the two-year anniversary date approaching, the Great Physician decided it was time to bring closure to the matter.

While I was sitting in my study on Feb. 4, 2016, I experienced a supernatural encounter with the Lord when He suddenly spoke to my spirit and said, "Take up your bed and walk." I felt like lightning from heaven was going through my body, even causing me to scream. The encounter with God lasted for several seconds, and was a powerful, life-changing experience.

From that day forth, I have been walking, leaping and praising God. My youth has been renewed. As I continue to walk, I go from strength to strength and glory to glory. I immediately started losing the extra weight I had gained during the illness, often a pound a day. The living Word was alive and active in my study on that amazing day, and I was restored and made whole. And this is what Jesus wants for you!

Take Up Your Bed

John 5 teaches us about the pool of Bethesda, where many sick, blind, lame and withered people would gather together, waiting for an angel to stir the waters. When the waters were stirred, the first person to get in was healed of whatever disease he or she had. Being the first to get in the pool does not imply a point in time here; rather, it implies those who first seek God's affection, His kingdom and His righteousness.

John tells us that a certain man was there, who had been

unable to walk for 38 years. When Jesus came by, He saw the man lying there, and knowing that he had been unable to walk for such a long time, Jesus asked him, "Do you want to be made well?" (John 5:6). The man explained that he had no one to help him. Upon hearing this, Jesus said to the man, "'Rise, take up your bed and walk.' And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked" (John 5:8-9). When Jesus speaks, we have proof of the omnipotence of Christ; He not only restored this man to health, but He gave evidence to those around Him that this was a real miracle.

Some of you may want to ask the Lord if you've been lying on a bed for too long. When the Lord says, "Rise," it is a command from heaven. It's awesome to know that this man was made whole and was obviously strengthened, as he was able to pick up his bed and walk. We can receive that same command of healing today. It only takes one word from Jesus to make us completely whole. The man at the pool was paralyzed, his body was contorted, and he was unable to walk, but when Jesus spoke, he was restored. I think it's amazing that Chikungunya means "contorted." If you're feeling paralyzed in any way, remember that our God is an awesome God!

Qualifiers

If we are to experience restoration, we must believe in one true God and in His living Word. God promised us this very thing through Joel: "I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the crawling locust, the consuming locust, and the chewing locust, my great army which I sent among you" (Joel 2:25). What a magnificent promise. Do you believe it? I've been around long enough to be able to decree: God keeps His promises! They may not always line up with our time frame, but always with His.

If we are to experience restoration and completeness, we need to repent. A great army of locusts was sent among the people

of God. Who sent the invasion? God did. Joel is speaking of a time when a great empire ruled Israel because of their sins and refusal to repent. The consuming locusts were even a specific kind of locusts—*gryllus gregarius*—that could make things suddenly disappear because of the speed by which they moved through a land, stripping it bare. If we turn to God once again with our whole heart, changing the way we think and thus the way we live, then there are no landing strips for evil spirits to invade and devour.

The Truth and the Whole Truth

To restore means that God makes restitution for what has been taken. It means to complete, finish and to make safe. Interestingly enough, the Hebrew word for restoration is the root word of *shalom*, which means that God makes us whole, He strengthens us, and restores our peace. When God says that He will restore to us what the locusts have eaten, He is promising to make us whole and complete, which will in turn lead us into our destinies.

God is not just talking about restoring a few days; He will restore the years that have been lost. This is a supernatural act of God. Perhaps some of the lost years came about by our own poor choices; or maybe they have been lost by the choices of others, circumstances we had no control over. Whatever the case, God promises to be the God of restoration, and He says to you today, "I will restore all of those years!"

What Can God Restore?

Since we serve a God of restoration, we might ask the question: "What can God restore?" The answer is that God can restore everything that has been lost; nothing is impossible with Him (Luke 1:37). Whatever has been lost in your life, whatever has been stolen and whatever has been taken from you, God is able to restore it. Not only that, but whatever you have willingly given up for God can be restored too.

Consider Abraham, who willingly climbed Mount Moriah with his son Isaac, preparing to sacrifice him in obedience to the command of God. As Abraham had the knife raised above his head, God called out, "Stop! Now I know that you love Me." Because Abraham was willing to give up his promised son, God gave him many sons in return, making him the "father of many nations."

And Jesus likewise promises, "Everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life" (Matt. 19:29). In other words, what we give up, God gives back.

What have you sacrificed, friend? Have you given up money or time? What has been taken from you—your health, your joy, your marriage, or your business? I'm here to shout from the rooftops that God is about to restore what the enemy has taken from you. He clearly showed me there will be a harvest before the Great Harvest. We are about to see the greatest harvest of souls known to mankind, and it's important to be blessed in order to be a blessing to thousands.

- How wonderful it is to cling to God's promises and know that He restores strength, energy, passion and motivation, even in old age? The women said to Naomi toward the end of her life, after she had lost her husband and her sons: "And may [God] be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age" (Ruth 4:15).

- God can restore your flesh: "'Put your hand in your bosom again.' So he put his hand in his bosom again, and drew it out of his bosom, and behold, it was restored like his other flesh" (Ex. 4:7).

- If you have lost property, then know that God is able to restore that as well: "So David said to him, 'Do not fear, for I will surely show you kindness for Jonathan your father's

sake, and will restore to you all the land of Saul your grandfather; and you shall eat bread at my table continually'" (2 Sam. 9:7).

- Positions can be restored too: "Then he restored the chief butler to his butlership again, and he placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand" (Gen. 40:21).

- Our God of mercy, compassion and love can restore those who fall: "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted" (Gal. 6:1). So, not only does God restore our lives, but He then uses us to bring restoration to others. To say it another way, Paul said, "[He] comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God" (2 Cor. 1:4).

- If our health has been taken away, then know that God is the One who restores our health. He said through Jeremiah, "'For I will restore health to you and heal you of your wounds,' says the Lord" (Jer. 30:17).

- Finances can also be restored as seen in Genesis 42:25: "Then Joseph gave a command to fill their sacks with grain, to restore every man's money to his sack, and to give them provisions for the journey."

- God even promises to restore the damages that have taken place in our soul—our mind, will, and emotions—so that we can prosper once again: "He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake" (Ps. 23:3), and, "Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers" (3 John 1:2).

- And last, but certainly not least, if we become discouraged, we must remember that God is the One who restores our joy: "Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me by

Your generous Spirit" (Ps. 51:12). Oh beloved, the joy of the Lord is our strength—if we lose our joy, we lose our strength.

The Conclusion of the Matter

No matter what you are going through today, rest assured that we serve a God of restoration. Restoration is what He does. He even sent His only begotten Son to bring restoration to the Earth. You see, Jesus went to the ultimate length to restore us as the people of God—He died so that we could be restored to life.

God became man in the person of Jesus Christ. Everything that Adam had lost in the Fall by giving over to the enemy, Jesus came to redeem and restore. When Adam and Eve sinned, they allowed the enemy to have access to their lives—body, soul, and spirit—but Jesus came to defeat the enemy and to give us life ... abundantly. John wrote, "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8).

Jesus gave the lame man three commands in John 5:8: to rise, take up his bed and walk. Today, Jesus is commanding us to rise above earthly ways and to step into in heavenly pools of glory, for the glory of God is the divine source of all that's good. Taking up our bed and walking signify a way of giving God the glory in our healing and in our restoration. We are not beggars lying on mats but rather ambassadors of Christ walking in and living abundant lives. God wants us to become miracles for the world to see and ask, "How can I know this miracle-working Jesus?"

Bethesda means the house of mercy or house of grace. It is wonderful to know that God's mercy reigns over judgment, and He pours out His grace on withered, dry bones. It is time to stand to our feet and become an exceedingly great army. It is time for us to believe the promises and speak the promises of God. It is time that we open our mouths, speaking life to each

and every situation, because we are reminded that “death and life are in the power of the tongue” (Prov. 18:21). The power of God is released when we release the power of God.

Are you feeling paralyzed by life today, or perhaps blind or lame—physically, mentally, emotionally or even spiritually? Do you feel like you’ve been lying by the pool for years, waiting for help, waiting for an angel of God to stir up miraculous healing powers? Well, isn’t it fascinating that after waiting for 38 years, the man who was healed never did get in the pool? Jesus just showed up on the scene, singled him out and made him whole.

Let’s ask ourselves that probing question that Jesus asked so many years ago: “Do I want to get well?” Jesus asked the question in order to identify the need. Is there an addiction, a habit or a behavior that you’ve come to enjoy way too much and don’t really want to be healed of? We’d better be ready when we answer the question, because healing and wholeness bring tremendous responsibility to walk in the fullness of God and fulfill the Great Commission.

Today is a great day for miracles. It’s a great day to get up and fight the good fight as a champion of God. Jesus is the Restorer; He’s the One who will single you out and say, “Hey! It’s your turn to rise up and walk.”

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