

Can You Buy Your Healing?

Where in Scripture does Jesus ever link the promise of healing with donations?

In the 16th century some sectors of the Roman Catholic Church fell into the trap of selling “indulgences,” saying there would be relief in purgatory from the consequences of sins already forgiven. The Catholic Church became rich and powerful, but the people were financially and spiritually raped through this abuse. I’ve watched a number of Christian TV shows recently and I have been shocked at how close some high-powered evangelists are to falling into something similar to an indulgences trap.

I saw a very well-known preacher speaking on TV directly to one of his donors. After telling his viewers how much this donor had just pledged, he then said to her: “You are being healed now. Consider yourself healed.”

I both wept at the abuse of the sick and rose up in anger at the travesty made of the gospel. Where in Scripture do we find Jesus or the apostles ever linking the promise of healing with donations?

The apostle Peter roundly condemned Simon the sorcerer for offering money in exchange for the gift of God. “Your money perish with you!” Peter exclaimed (Acts 8:18-20, NKJV). Strong words indeed.

In the Old Testament, Elisha refused gifts from Naaman in exchange for healing. However, Elisha’s servant, Gehazi, succumbed to greed. He lied to Naaman and said Elisha wanted a gift, and came away clutching two talents of silver and two suits of clothing. The story ends with Gehazi becoming sick with the very leprosy Naaman had been healed of (see 2 Kin. 5:8-27).

When preachers and evangelists call for people to give money in exchange for God's benefits, they are encouraging vulnerable people to participate in the sin of Simon and are becoming like Gehazi-only worse. At least Gehazi was asking money from someone who had been healed, not from the sick and vulnerable.

We don't obey God to get blessed. We obey Him, or should, because we love Him, regardless of whether or not He blesses us materially.

I have heard preachers imply, even promise, to those who give in their offerings that their debts will be resolved, their family and friends will get converted, they will have a year of blessing, and many other alleged benefits the vulnerable are itching to hear. The subliminal message is: "Think what you might miss if you don't give." This manipulates people to give from fear of missing God's blessing, not out of sacrificial love either for God or God's people.

I passionately believe in true prophecy, which is a gift of the Holy Spirit given freely. But when offers of healing and prophetic words get mixed up with fundraising for the ministry, we should all recognize that a big warning flag is being waved in the spiritual realm.

As the founder of an international ministry, I understand more than most how important finances are to making the gospel available. God told us very clearly that for our particular work we should never charge money.

So in the last 21 years we have conducted thousands of three-day healing retreats in many parts of the world and have never once charged for the ministry or the stay in one of our centers. People can make donations if they wish, but that is very different from offering healing in exchange for money.

So how do the ministry bills get paid?

Largely through the sacrificial giving of those who give so that others will be blessed. This is the giving that truly blesses the heart of God. After all, isn't that what was in Jesus' heart when He went to the cross?

Peter Horrobin is the founder and international director of Ellel Ministries, a nondenominational missions organization with healing centers located worldwide. For more information, visit online at www.ellelministries.org or call 813-737-4848 to reach the U.S. center based in Tampa, Florida.