

**ONE HEART, ONE MIND**  
*Healing*  
**Layne Lebo**  
**James 4:6-10 & Luke 4:14-21**  
**October 3, 2021**

During my Sabbatical, I spent a week in late May in the inland valley area just East of Los Angeles. I did a variety of things over the course of that week, but my primary reason for going was a 2-day life planning session with an executive coach I've been meeting with over Zoom for the past 2 years. After spending most of two days circling around questions about my identity and calling and where I most see evidence of God's work in and through me, I was asked to tie all the work we'd done together by creating a personal mission statement. I landed on the statement, *"I'm a bridge builder who facilitates collaboration among leaders to advance God's Kingdom."*

The longer I live and learn to know myself better, the more I realize I'm a bridge builder—I invest much of my time connecting with people and helping people connect with each other. I build bridges in my role as a pastor, as a community leader and as a leader who works with pastors in our community and in our denomination. The phrase *bridge builder* has great importance for me, because God laid it on my heart when I was wrestling with God's call to become McBIC's senior pastor over 20 years ago. As I questioned whether I was the person to lead McBIC into the future, I sensed God impressing these words on me, *"You're a bridge builder and I'm calling McBIC to be a bridge—a bridge to those who don't know Jesus in the community and a bridge between churches."* As a bridge builder, unity is very important to me, and I'm convinced it's critical for Jesus' Church. Unity moves us past differences that could divide us and focuses us on a common goal. Unity isn't about uniformity—unity leverages the differences we have in a way that allows us to more effectively pursue a higher purpose.

4 or 5 years ago when our local pastors' network was just beginning, I came across a quote of Henri Nouwen's that captured what I sensed God was doing among churches in our community. This quote highlights unity in the midst of diversity. Our staff later gave this framed statement to me as a gift. I'd like to read the quote from it...

A mosaic consists of thousands of little stones. Some are blue, some are green,

some are yellow, some are gold. When we bring our faces close to the mosaic, we can admire the beauty of each stone. But as we step back from it, we can see that all these little stones reveal to us a beautiful picture, telling a story none of these stones can tell by itself.

That is what our life in community is about. Each of us is like a little stone, but together we reveal the face of God to the world. Nobody can say: "I make God visible." But others who see us can say: "They make God visible." Community is where humility and Glory touch. Henri Nouwen

Nouwen's statement is true for churches and it's true for us as a church family. Each of us is like a colored stone that reveals a facet of who God is. As we join together in unity we give a fuller picture of the incredible God we serve. That's Jesus vision for his Church.

The mission we've crafted as a staff is *Experiencing Jesus and sharing his love*. In every aspect of our church life, we're committed to helping people experience Jesus and out of our experience with Jesus, sharing his love with others. Our vision states how we'll accomplish our mission. We landed on the vision statement: *Disciples who bring restoration and wholeness to Mechanicsburg and to the world*. The core values that we've been highlighting each week during this series are the building blocks—the foundation—on which our mission and vision rest. So far, we've explored Worship & Prayer, Transparency and last week Cody preached on Integrity and Maturity. The value I'm preaching on today is Healing. And like last week's description of Integrity and Maturity, Healing has a rather long explanation: *"We pursue restoration, justice and wholeness for all people—spiritually, emotionally, physically and relationally."* More than any other value, healing ties back to our vision of bringing restoration and wholeness to Mechanicsburg and to the world.

To place this value in context, I want to go back nearly 30 years ago to the early-1990s when Pastor Ken Hepner was our senior pastor. Our church had experienced significant growth, but that growth wasn't without its challenges. We sensed significant resistance both on a human level and in terms of spiritual warfare. On a Sunday evening, following our Sunday night church service, a group of 25 McBIC leaders met in Room 8 for a time of prayer and worship. Specifically, Pastor Ken led us in confessing sin from our church's history of which we had become aware. In the 1920's and 30's leaders from our church had participated in a ritual known as pow-wowwing. Pow-wowwing was a blend of ritual and folk magic combined with

prayer that was common in rural farm communities. Without going into great detail, the problem was that pow-wowwing focused people on folk magic and ritual, rather than on God's healing power. That night in Room 8 we confessed the pow-wowwing we had become aware of in our church's history as sin and acknowledged that Jesus alone was our source of healing. As we prayed and worshipped and confessed sin that night, we could sense the Holy Spirit's presence. There was a joy and lightness that was palpable. In many ways that night was a catalyst for McBIC's healing ministry. In the ensuing days people from the community and from within our church began to contact us about receiving prayer and counseling for healing of past wounds and sins. God directed Pastor Ken to James chapter 4 verses 6-10.

But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble." Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up. James 4:6-10

God's grace, embracing humility, resisting the enemy, drawing near to God and repentance and confession of sin as stated in these verses became the backbone of our healing ministry. Since that time hundreds of people in this church and in our community have experienced Jesus' healing, wholeness, and restoration. Experiencing Jesus' healing has become a lens our pastors and leaders look through as we seek to help people grow as Jesus' disciples. Our perspective on healing is foundational for us as we do one on one counseling and work with couples in their marriages. Healing is instrumental in ministries like At The Cross Recovery, Peace Promise and Dad Connection. But healing isn't something that's isolated to a few individuals or to a handful of ministries—healing is part of the fabric of our church and I'm convinced McBIC is called to be a healing church.

Before we look at a Scripture that frames our core value of healing, I want to reiterate something Cody shared last week in his sermon. Cody used the analogy of a road to explain that none of the values we're highlighting in this sermon series are fully complete at McBIC, and they may not be everyone's experience. Healing is a core value for McBIC—it's an important aspect of our identity as a church, but we're still in process. We're on the road to healing, but we're still traveling that path; we've not fully arrived.

I invite you to turn with me to Luke chapter 4 verses 14-21. The event that is written about here, occurred at the outset of Jesus' public ministry. A few weeks earlier Jesus had been an unknown personality, but the news about Him was spreading quickly. On this day He showed up at the synagogue and presumably because He was a rabbi, He was given the scroll to read that day's text. Coincidentally (not really), the reading that day was from a well-known passage of the Prophet Isaiah—chapter 61—that pointed to the coming of the promised Messiah.

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.” Luke 4:14-19

So far in this passage, it's just another typical Sabbath at the synagogue, nothing unusual or very dramatic. Jesus read a passage with which nearly everyone in the synagogue would have been very familiar. In fact, I can imagine that many of the Jews in the synagogue that day had their minds on autopilot. They knew these words by heart. But things were about to get very interesting. I'll pick up reading at verse 20...

Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” Luke 4:20 & 21

Now every eye was on Jesus and every mind was fully alert. Jesus had just identified Himself with this famous passage of Scripture from Isaiah chapter 61. Jesus had put the crowd on notice that He was the Messiah. Let's look again at what Jesus said He would do through the power of the Spirit: proclaim Good News to the poor, declare freedom for prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, He was going to set the oppressed free and proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. There's a lot packed into those statements, and our explanation of healing that I read earlier is our attempt to capture this: *“We pursue restoration, justice and wholeness for all people—spiritually, emotionally, physically and relationally.”*

I want to invite Pastor Susan Vigliano to come up and give us an overview of what this looks like in our healing ministry at McBIC...

### **Susan and Jen**

After listening to Susan and Jen share, I hope you understand that McBIC's focus on healing doesn't take place in a vacuum. We're only a healing church as we continue to pursue and experience Jesus' healing in our lives and share the healing we've received with others. Henri Nouwen, whose quote I shared earlier, is probably most famous for his phrase "wounded healers." Throughout his ministry, Nouwen emphasized that those God uses to heal others are on their own healing journey. My encouragement for each of us is to press into the healing God has for us. Embrace transparency—a value I preached on several weeks ago—acknowledging that none of us is a finished product. I'm currently reading a book called, The Integrity Gap, in which the authors and husband and wife team, encourage followers of Jesus to allow God to bring consistency to our lives between what we preach and how we live. If you'd like to learn more about healing or if you sense incongruence in your life between how you live and how you want to live as a follower of Jesus, I encourage you to reach out to one of our pastors or the leader of your Bible Fellowship Group or small group or ministry in which you participate. As you think about Jesus' healing and the implications for you, I want to share Jesus' words in John chapter 10 verse 10 as words of hope: *"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and have it to the full."* John 10:10 Jesus' desire for everyone of us is that we would experience the full life He has for us.