

The Heart of Healing: Foundations

Elizabeth Leon - 2025-03-06

INTRODUCTION: We welcomed Elizabeth Leon as she began our Lenten series focused on healing. Elizabeth shared the beautiful slides from her presentation, which will frequently be referenced in this write-up. They can be found [HERE](#). She is the founder of the Journey of the Beloved, a ministry that aims to inspire and equip women to find healing in the heart of Christ. Elizabeth shared much of her personal healing in her two prior TASTE talks, and how she found healing in the Heart of Christ when He met her in the darkness of her deepest wounds. He was already there, waiting for her to find Him, so He could fill her heart with His Heart.

She prays that our time together this Lenten season will be an invitation for each of us to have a similar encounter, or equip us on our journey to such an encounter. In this talk, Elizabeth focused on laying a strong foundation for a healing journey: What are the components that a healing journey should have in order to be the most effective possible?

A COUPLE OF QUESTIONS: What thought comes up for us with the word “healing?” What stirs in our bodies with the idea of healing? This stirring gives us information that is already influencing our healing journey. It is important that we be curious and kind about what is going on in us, whenever we draw closer to the Lord, whenever we are talking about healing, or any topic in the spiritual realm. Our bodies are telling us something, and we may not remember how to listen to them, or it may feel too uncomfortable. What is our posture towards healing? Do we think it is a great idea for the person sitting next to us? Do we think it might be risky, do we not want to open that door? Are we afraid it might not work, or that if we begin to open that door, we are not sure we are going to survive the process?

Where are we on our the journey of the beloved? Slide 2 gives an intentionally vague drawing of a path on a landscape, and Elizabeth had us ponder where we were in that landscape. Are we at the bottom, are we hiding behind the tree, or are we not there at all? Are we walking, running, skipping, sitting, face down on the path? What part of the journey is this: Mile 25, mile 500? Do we see a finish line? And where is Jesus: Right next to us, holding our hand, far in the distance, hidden, carrying us? We need to understand our truth versus the Truth when we begin to enter our healing journey. We need to be honest about where we are right now, and what the process feels like and where we believe Jesus is for us. Do we have hurts that we have carried for many years, wounds that we do not think can ever change? Do we believe that healing is not for us? Maybe we are not sure we are important enough to God, or maybe we are somehow attached to our brokenness. Maybe we have given up on anything changing, not just the hurts and the wounds, but maybe the dreams and the longings too. It is into this place that the Lord offers His Hand, and are we willing to get up and take it?

Elizabeth prays that by the end of this series of talks, we will have a firm and renewed conviction that, not just is healing possible, it is the promise: As the Lord’s beloved, there is nothing He wants more than to heal us for our freedom and our flourishing.

TYPES OF HEALING: There are many different types of healing: 1) **sacramental healing** (confession, Eucharist, anointing of the sick), 2) **spiritual healing** (forgiveness of sin through relationships, deliverance ministry), 3) **physical healing** (illnesses, wounds that the body holds, including trauma stored in body), 4) **psychological/emotional healing** (trauma, memory, relationships). Elizabeth focuses on inner healing, a combination of spiritual, psychological and emotional healing. Inner healing works with the Lord to liberate us from the burdens we carry. The burdens have come as a result of the adversities we have experienced in our lives – big and little traumas. The burdens typically include unresolved wounds, unexpressed emotions, unacknowledged pain or harm, and identity lies.

Elizabeth proposed four questions as the foundations of inner healing: What is healing? Who is the Healer? Who does the Healer say I am? What is my role in the healing process?

WHAT IS HEALING?: Elizabeth began with three beautiful definitions on healing that can be found on slide 5. It is not just fixing what is broken, but becoming who God created us to be. We may not like the second definition because it speaks of bringing our suffering with us. We want healing to bring our suffering to an end, and it may, but it may not. For St. Paul, the thorn in his flesh remained with him, and Jesus Himself still had His wounds after the resurrection. It may be that our wounds are still there, but we know them, and they are no longer an obstacle to being the women the Lord wants us to be, and to living the fullness that He desires for us. The place of our wounds can become a source of grace through us for others. His light shines through our wounds. Finally, Elizabeth shared with us her own definition which can be found on slide 6 - healing is restoring what was lost. On the same slide is a piece of Japanese art, where a broken bowl is put together with gold, and becomes more beautiful because of the breaking. Inner healing always involves peeling back the layers of our deepest selves, our anxieties, our wounds, and our sufferings to experience the healing gaze of Christ. And during this healing, that exposing and revealing can feel very uncomfortable. In the images of the immaculate heart of Mary and the sacred heart of Jesus on slide 7, they are revealing their hearts, which is what the Lord wants from us. We must initiate this revealing. Sr Miriam James Heidland says “Time does not heal all wounds, Love does.”

WHO IS THE HEALER?: We are not the healer, food is not the healer, shopping, addiction, gossip, alcohol are not the healer. Perfectionism and control are not the healer. Self-reliance is not the healer. Only God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is always and exclusively the Healer. The Lord may use human instruments, but it is always He Himself who is the Healer. Slide 8 lists four Old Testament passages that answer the question “Who is the Healer?” Once we are clear who the healer is, the next prerequisite for healing is our belief. We must have faith that the Lord is all powerful and desires our healing. He is already there, longing and waiting to begin the process of healing IF we give Him permission. Do we live with the firm conviction that with God all things are possible? Do we have faith the size of a mustard seed, that mountains in our lives can be moved? On the opposite point, Mark 6:5 tells us that when Jesus went to Nazareth, He was unable to heal, because of the inhabitants’ unbelief. Are we willing to give Him our belief, our cooperation with His Grace through faith?

Once we have declared that God is the Healer, then what is the goal of healing, the destination? What are we using to determine if we are well or not? We are incredibly adaptive and resilient. Yet in order to be resilient, we have to normalize trauma. Where have we normalized wounding, distortion, or disordered thinking? What about our way of being have we decided is the way we are, rather than it being a maladaptive response to suffering? Are we resigned to the belief that life will not get any better? That is not what God says, and it is not the invitation He is giving us. What is the goodness we are promised? Slide 10 lists many beautiful scriptural passages speaking of God's promises for us: Do not be anxious, do not be afraid, be joyful, have an abundant life, be loved, be peaceful, live a life of peace, calm, love, joy and rest - this is the promise, the destination, the goodness of the Lord that we are made for, and the healing the Lord wants to bring us on the journey of the beloved.

WHO ARE WE IN RELATION TO THE HEALER?: What/who does Jesus see when He is looking at us? For some of us, this shift inward may be uncomfortable. When we get to healing, we have to look into our own hearts. What does Jesus see when He looks in us? Are we willing to be vulnerable, to get so close to reveal who we really are to the Lord? Do we trust Him enough to let Him really see us? Very gently and with trust, we can begin to unburden ourselves and let Him see our true selves. For many of us, the experience of being deeply seen can be unsettling. If we feel uncomfortable or anxious, we need to know that this is part of what we are bringing on the journey and there is no self-blame, no self-contempt, no self-rejection. There is acceptance, but there is also the Truth. Our feelings matter, but they do not always tell us the Truth. We need to root ourselves in the Truth of who we are to the Healer — we are His beloved. Slide 13 lists four scripture passages about how deeply God loves us. We may know that we are beloved daughters in our heads, but do we know it in our hearts? Do our hearts love as beloved daughters of God? Do we move through the world as beloved daughters of God? Do we relate to self and others as beloved daughters of God?

If the truth of scripture conflicts with our lived experiences, there is a bind. We know scripture is true, so we must be the problem. We begin to turn on ourselves, with self-rejection, self-judgment, self-contempt. Then, our identity becomes too much, or not enough. How did we end up here, believing lies about ourselves, instead of the truth of our belovedness? Part of the path of healing is reckoning with what we learned about who we are and how to receive love from our family of origin. For many of us, this was the place of core wounding. It takes courage to enter these places of core wounding, to receive the truth of who we are. We do not blame. The goal is to seek the truth, to go back to the moments of wounding and tell the truth. A healing journey will include a large amount of grief. If we are coming from a hurtful, harmful, abusive, traumatic background, the experience can be even more painful, and will require a great deal of courage. Diminishing ourselves is not the answer. We have taught ourselves to not be the beloved because it was a way to make sense of our situation. Healing means wrestling with our identities and exploring what we learned about relationships, about how couples express love, about how parents treat children, about how to handle conflict. Was there the presence or absence of a predictable, stable caregiver? All of these reflect something of what we believe about God, and what we believe about ourselves. Did we learn we were a burden? Did we only receive attention if we performed or did our very best? Did we have to work hard to get attention or feel loved? Did we learn that we were delightful? Did we consistently have a warm, open, safe place to go with our hearts, with our hurts? When we come before the Lord, we come as His beloved daughters, but we come with the reality of our lived experiences, and there is so much that needs to be unpacked in these areas, so much that needs Truth spoken over the areas of identity lies. The goal of this talk is to have a firm and renewed conviction of what is true.

WHAT IS OUR ROLE IN HEALING?: The simple answer is to surrender and cooperate with God's grace. The Lord is by nature a healer and He desires our healing. And though there are many examples in scripture and in the lives of the saints, where the Lord swoops in and heals people in spite of themselves, this is not actually how it works most of the time. Most of the time, God respects our free will. He is always there, eternally reaching out His Hand to initiate a healing encounter with us, but He will wait for us to say yes, for us to begin the work of revealing.

Our role in the healing process is surrender. Surrender requires that we feel safe enough to lay down decades of coping mechanisms, decades of looking through distorted lenses at the world and at ourselves. We have to feel safe enough with our Healer, we need to trust the Lord with our hearts. Surrender is believing that our suffering is not the end of our story. Surrender is active, it is not passive, it is not giving up. It is saying we care about this so much, we are going to put it firmly in the hands of Someone who can actually do something about it. Surrender is admitting that our way has not worked. Surrender is the gift we give to the Lord. Surrender is trusting that God's dreams for us far exceed any dreams of our own. We need to let go of self-reliance. A healing journey is NEVER a self-reliant one. We need our Healer, we need our Redeemer, we need our Savior. Maybe our prayer is not just "Jesus heal me," but "Teach me to surrender. Teach me how to give You even more." Maybe our Lenten plan can be less about what we are going to do for God, and more about what we are going to allow Him to do in our hearts. Surrender can actually be the most challenging penance that we undertake.

COOPERATING WITH HIS GOD'S GRACE: In addition to surrender, we need to cooperate with God's grace. Elizabeth gave us four practical steps to cooperate with His grace. We need to be as well-positioned as possible so we can receive His healing on the journey of the beloved.

1. Be in a state of grace. Frequent confession — ideally once a month if not more often.
2. Go to daily Mass. Experience the intimate closeness of Jesus in the Eucharist.
3. Go to Adoration. Come as we are, and let Him love us.
4. Seek help. Seek help from Catholic therapists, spiritual direction, pilgrimages, retreats, books, prayers.

Finally, we should expect resistance from the enemy. As we embark on the healing journey, we can expect things may get a little worse before they get better. But we are not powerless! We have the power and the authority of Christ. We have nothing to fear, the resistance is more of an annoyance than anything dangerous.

CONCLUSION: We are all the great and beautiful works of our Lord. The Lord wants us to claim the promises that He died on the cross for. Healing is not just possible, it is His promise. We are meant to receive the fullness the Lord offers us on the journey of the beloved. We only get this one life, so we need to embark on this journey with conviction, faith and joy, knowing where the destination is that we were made for — to live with the incredible dignity and beauty of being His beloved daughters.