

Healing Tears

I love writing narrative-style reflections and trying to understand how various Biblical characters might have thought or felt. Yes, it is pure fiction, as was helpfully pointed out to me by one of my former tutors, himself a Biblical scholar, but this is why I think of myself primarily as a writer and theologian and not a Biblical scholar – I hope there is room for both! Here I wanted to reflect on Jesus as a healer, not so much as a miracle worker, but one who understood that healing is inextricably linked with our relationships with those around us. When we pray and ask for healing, we do so in the name of the one who himself knew suffering and betrayal, yet also received healing from others, most notably the woman who shed tears, healing tears on Jesus' feet and wiped them lovingly with her hair.

He is my life. The one man who could look me in the eye and not feel shame and yes, we're close. How can you not be intimate with someone who can look into your soul, see your deepest fears and gently set you free you from yourself. So I stay close to Jesus, travelling with his disciples, watching him release others from their fears and the dis-eases that bind them, watching him provoke the authorities by healing on the Sabbath, watching his anger rise against the injustices that grind people down, watching his compassion as he reaches out to those others won't touch.

So yes, I made a fool of myself when I began to realise where all this was heading – I needed Jesus to know just how much I love him, needed to tell him I understood where his journey was heading and that I was willing to accompany him into his deepest fears. The perfume, my tears, letting loose my hair were not the act of a prostitute (there, I've shocked you now), the perfume, the tears, wiping his feet with my hair – they were my attempt to reach into his pain and offer him, in my own small way, the healing that he had offered others. So I ask you, who have been gracious enough to listen to the ramblings of a woman who's love stands on the brink of death, to spend a few moments in quiet reflection, remembering all those, who like me come to Jesus in search of healing:

For those who are ill
Grant healing
For Jesus knew what it was
to feel physical pain

For those who are broken
Grant wholeness
For Jesus knew what it was
to feel the bitter disappointment of betrayal

For those who are weak
Grant strength
For Jesus knew what it was
to falter on the journey

For those who are outcasts
Grant welcome
For Jesus knew what it was
to feel the anguish of separation

For those who have no rest
Grant peace
For Jesus knew what it was
to keep watch through a long, dark night

For those who are bereaved
Grant comfort

For Jesus knew what it was
to go through the veil of death.

And as we remember those who need your healing
hold us in your loving embrace
calm our fears
and set us free to be the people we can be.

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