

*Healing service*

There are so many reports of miracles in the bible. These are the spectacular events, the ones that got noticed. It would be talked about for ages if a blind man suddenly could see – even if people had been sworn to secrecy. What we often forget is the huge number of unspectacular miracles that went unreported. You might think that an unspectacular miracle is a bit of a contradiction in terms. If someone gradually gets better or improves somewhat, surely that is chance, not a miracle. Well, I suppose that depends upon your definitions.

But think about light and on a beautiful day such as this there is light all around.

Go outside and feel the warmth of the sun on your skin, and the following day you will have perhaps ever so slightly tanned. The light has an immediate effect, but we don't see that effect instantly. If we speed up a film of a plant in the sun, we find it moves, to follow the sun, but we don't normally see it moving. Most changes happen slowly, so slowly that we don't see them happening, and only notice them when we have been away for a while.

Light produces these changes, but only if we place ourselves in the light and uncover our skin to let the light fall upon it.

When we pray to God for healing it is like bathing in the light of Christ. As our thoughts follow him, and we align our wills with his, changes happen. Subtle changes that may not be immediately obvious.

The strain, the tension, the fear for the future gradually ease.

In that light of Christ we see more clearly how our actions, the way we are behaving, is affecting our families and friends and slowly, gently, the balance of our relationships becomes restored.

But just like sunbathing, we need to shed our covering layers, those preconceived ideas about who we are and how we behave, the way in which we view other people, the rigid ideas that we have about how life should be. We have to be open, in other words, to change.

For, you know, most of the time, God acts in the ordinary. He uses the skills of doctors, nurses and pharmacists. Often he answers our prayers for our relatives

through other people, through friends or neighbours who have offered to help. Just because it seems so ordinary, it doesn't mean that God hasn't got a hand in it.

The one thing that is certain, God is totally dependable. That is what Syrophoenecian women knew about Jesus.

So when illness, or infirmity, or pain, or stress, or depression, or conflict in relationships seems to go on forever with no prospect of immediate respite, sun bathe in the light of Christ. Sometimes he will remove the problem, as he did with the blind man, on other occasions he will help us find joy and delight in life without removing the infirmity. But in both cases we are healed.

Have faith enough to rest in Christ and be bathed in his light. Have faith enough not to keep looking for the sudden miraculous change. Rest. And slowly, imperceptibly, change will occur bringing hope, peace and joy.