

“Who Needs Your Help to Get Well?”

Isaiah 53:1-5

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First Baptist Church

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Communion Devotion

Something very significant happened in the life of our church last week, and I do not want you to miss it. We celebrated the tenth anniversary of Mission Frankfort! Mission Frankfort is a free clinic housed in our church where people who have no insurance come to receive medical or dental treatment and pick up prescribed medications.

The idea for the clinic was birthed on a soccer field while former pastor, Dr. David Hinson, and local orthodontist, Dr. Clark Cash, watched their children playing. The two began talking about the people in our community who had no access to dental care. This led to a discussion about forming a free dental clinic at First Baptist.

I am confident this conversation caught God’s attention and put a smile on God’s face. God began working in the hearts of others who helped Dr. Hinson and Dr. Cash turn this dream into reality.

Available space at the church was transformed into a clinic, and equipment and supplies were donated or purchased. The Crest Company made the Mission Frankfort Clinic a part of the Healthy Smiles program and they donated toothpaste, toothbrushes and educational pamphlets. On September 27, 2002, the first patients were seen by Dr. Cash.

Two years later, in 2004, four medical exam rooms were added, along with a pharmacy. As you expect, the number of people coming to the clinic grew rapidly, and that number increases every year.

In 2011, 58 medical clinics were held, which included 1,112 patient visits, an increase of 252 from 2010. Last year, the clinic also recorded over 100 dental patient visits. We are on track this year to have 1,500 patient visits and the pharmacy will give out approximately 6,000 prescriptions, free of charge.

The number of volunteers who staff the clinic has grown, too. I am grateful for the doctors, nurses, dentists, dental hygienists, pharmacists and other volunteers who have donated their time these last ten years.

Mark Howell, our Missions Minister, recently told me Dr. Cash, Dr. Ben Huneycutt, Nurses Tammy Shouse and Janice Wolford, and pharmacist, Larry Hadley, have been at the clinic the longest. I appreciate their faithfulness, along with all who have volunteered in the clinic.

I mentioned earlier I felt Dr. Hinson and Dr. Cash's soccer field conversation caught God's attention and brought a smile to God's face. Why?

It is because the physical wellbeing of people is important to God. The sheer number of healing miracles recorded in the Old and New Testaments reveals God's passion for helping people when they are sick or injured.

God's heart breaks when our bodies are broken, and the Mission Frankfort Clinic enables God to answer the prayers of those crying out for help. Through the good work of the volunteers in the clinic, desperate people find help when they need it most. God is always pleased when churches make room for those who feel hopeless and helpless.

What an honor it is to be the pastor of a church which puts people first and has such a significant impact upon the community. My hat is off to everyone who had a part in opening and staffing our clinic, and those who have built upon their good work.

I am especially grateful for Mark Howell, our Missions Minister, and Marian Braden, our full-time registered nurse. Marian oversees the day-to-day operations of the clinic, working closely with the volunteers and the Franklin County Health Department. Mark and Marian are the main reason our clinic operates at such a high level of efficiency and receives excellent reviews from the medical community.

When I first toured the clinic a year ago, I was reminded of the words in Isaiah 53:4, "By his stripes, we are healed." I don't know if Isaiah had Jesus in mind when these words were penned, but Jesus certainly had them in mind as he lived his life and ministered to those around him.

Jesus knew people's health was important to God and healing would not occur in a vacuum. Empathy and sacrifice always accompany healing. *The broken hearted heal broken hearts. The wounded become "wounded healers."*

In light of this, who needs your help to get well? Who is struggling with health issues and needs you to reach out to them? Is it a family member or friend battling an illness or addiction?

What sacrifices will this require of you? What changes must you make in your lifestyle and schedule, the use of your time and the way you spend your money?

“By his stripes, we are healed,” Isaiah wrote. *Sometimes, those stripes fall on us.*

Who can help you make these changes so you can help someone deal with their medical issues? Jesus can. He knows how demanding it is to be a caregiver. He also knows how important it is and will empower you. I am confident the Lord will give you wisdom, courage, strength, guidance and patience.

I wonder what sacrifices others made for you when you were at a low point in your life and needed help? Why did they make room for you and nurse you back to health?

“By his stripes, we are healed.” Love is willing to do the difficult and finds a way to help others when they need it most. Jesus will fill your heart with this kind of love. I hope you will let him.

I also hope you will receive help from those reaching out to you in love. They have been sent to you by God and can make such a difference in your life. Think about this as we focus upon the one whose stripes have given us new life.

