

Is Healing for Today?

What Does the Bible Say About Healing?

I would like to speak a little bit today about healing. In the Pentecostal Church, healing has a very significant place -- praying for the sick. But the question I want to ask today is, "What exactly does the Bible say about healing?"

I'll take as my text Isaiah 53, which is often quoted. Reading verses 4 and 5:

"Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed." -- Isaiah 53:4-5

Now there are many televangelists and others who will take that last part -- "by his stripes we are healed" -- and say, "There you are! Because Jesus was scourged, we can receive healing." But let's look at what the Scriptures actually teach.

"By His Stripes We Are Healed" -- What Does It Mean?

If you go to 1 Peter 2:24, where that very phrase is quoted -- "by his stripes we are healed" -- it has nothing to do with physical healing. It says:

"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." -- 1 Peter 2:24

There you see that "by his stripes we are healed" refers to **being dead to sin so that we can live unto righteousness**. Jesus became a sin offering upon the cross, and it is through that sacrifice that we are reconciled to God. The healing it is talking about is being reconciled to God -- our relationship with God has been healed, not physical healing.

Isaiah 53:4 and Matthew 8:16-17

Well then you say, "Do any of these two verses refer to physical healing?" Actually, Isaiah 53:4 is quoted in Matthew's Gospel. If we turn to Matthew 8:16-17, it says:

"When evening had come, they brought to him many who were demon-possessed. And he cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, 'He himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses.'" -- Matthew 8:16-17

Although the words are a bit different there, that is a quote from Isaiah 53:4. So these hyper-faith preachers will come along and say, "Well, there you are -- everybody can be healed!" But it doesn't actually say that. It only says that they were all healed **at that time**.

The Lord Heals, But He Does Not Heal Everybody

Many years ago, I was speaking at a church here in Denmark. I was having translation, and the person who was translating me believed in the hyper-faith teaching, prosperity teaching. I happened to say when I was preaching that the Lord heals, but He doesn't heal everybody. I didn't think I was saying anything controversial, because it is obvious that many people are prayed for and many people are not healed. But he was very upset with what I said.

What was said to me afterward was that the early Pentecostals taught that if it appears a person is not healed, they should deny symptoms. That was their idea of faith -- to deny symptoms.

I know that the early Pentecostals did say that, and **it is to their shame that they said it**, because that is not just wrong, **it is extremely dangerous**. It is not faith to deny symptoms -- it is stupidity. Symptoms are a blessing given to us by God so that we know something is wrong. If I start feeling a sore throat coming on, those symptoms tell me: get warm, drink some hot drinks, do something to prevent it from getting worse. If I feel pain in my leg, I know something is wrong. Those symptoms are a blessing.

False Teaching About Confession and Faith

It is the same with the faith preachers who say that it is unbelief to confess negative things. Listen -- your faith does not depend upon what you confess. That is totally wrong. **Your faith is of the heart. It is trusting the Lord in everything.** If you have a sickness, it is not unbelief to say, "I have a sickness." It is not unbelief to go to the doctor. But if you start denying it and pretending you haven't got it, then you are lying about it. If you're sick, you can speak about it. There's no problem with that and at the same time, you can trust the Lord.

As for these big-name hyper-faith preachers -- I would suggest: have nothing to do with them. They are covetous. They will offer you everything, divine favour, blessing, prosperity, healing -- but they are not rightly dividing scripture. **Faith is trusting the Lord Jesus Christ on a daily basis and trusting in His word.**

Jesus Has Conquered Death -- But We Still Die

You say, "But look that scripture in Matthew 8 says He healed them all." Yes, but healing was not the primary objective, their need was greater than their sickness, they needed to be saved from sin. Jesus healed them all at that time so that they would recognise who Jesus is, that He is the promised Messiah, and put their trust in Him. It is false teaching to suggest that because Jesus healed them all at that time, then everybody can be healed. Jesus conquered death on the cross. It says in 2 Timothy 1:10 that He has abolished death. But I am still going to die. Well, why am I still going to die when Jesus

has abolished death? Because everything has not yet been completed. Death will be put under His feet when He returns, 1 Corinthians 15:25-26 -- that's the final enemy.

One day Jesus is going to come again, and all who trust in Him will be caught up in the clouds to meet Him in the air. If we die before that day, it's okay, because we are going to be resurrected -- it's a promise in the Bible. But the point is this: **Jesus has conquered death, but we will still die. And because He has conquered death, He has also conquered sickness -- but we can still be sick.**

So, it's on a day-to-day basis that we trust the Lord. It is not rushing off to some healing evangelist to get healed. We learn to trust Him on a day-by-day basis.

Biblical Evidence: Not Everyone Was Healed

Paul himself, in 2 Timothy 4:20, writes to Timothy and says, "Trophimus I have left sick in Miletus." Well, if everybody can be healed, why did Paul leave Trophimus sick in Miletus?

And then there's another account in Philippians 2:25-26, where Epaphroditus was close to death. Paul is just thanking God that God raised him up, and he said it was grace given to Epaphroditus but also to himself, because this man was a wonderful man of God serving the Lord. It was because of the gospel that he became so terribly sick.

Sickness is a part of life. That's how it is. We trust God at all times -- in sickness or in health, in poverty or in wealth. We trust Him. We walk with Him. We rely upon His promises. It's a daily walk. We do not claim this or claim that. Neither can we declare or decree these things. No, no, no. We trust Him.

James 5:14-15, The Prayer of the Elders

But this is what the Bible says:

"Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven." -- James 5:14-15

The Lord says, "Call for the elders." Who do the elders represent? They represent the church. So, James is calling for the local church to pray for the sick, and the Lord will raise him up.

But concerning big healing crusades there is not much evidence that genuine healings take place. However, God is sovereign and He knows our heart. He is able to heal at any time and in any place. Mostly, it is in the local church that healings are likely to take place, when Christians pray for one another, and this way God gets all the glory.

It is wonderful when somebody in the church goes to the doctor or to the hospital, and then the doctor looks and can't believe what they find. They say, "This is surprising -- why is this?" And the person can say, "Well, the church was praying for me." It's a wonderful testimony.

I know of stories of people going to the hospital and finding that what they went in for is gone. It's a wonderful testimony to the Lord.

A lot of times big preachers want testimonies of healings to boost their ministries. My friend was prayed for at a healing crusade a few months before he died. He was ready to die and loved the Lord with all his heart. But it was in the paper saying that he was healed, he knew he wasn't healed, but the preacher obviously had wanted that to happen, this doesn't glorify the Lord. But when we pray together as part of the body of Christ, and afterwards someone who was prayed for goes to the hospital, it is a wonderful testimony when doctors can't understand the change. **Nobody gets the glory except the Lord Jesus Christ.** That's how it should be.

The Gifts of Healing Are Still for Today

I believe that the gifts of the Holy Spirit have always been in the church. It's just that people have not recognized them or not called them by that name. When we pray for someone in the church and the Lord heals them, or they go to the hospital and find there's been a fabulous change -- that is the gifts of healing as mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:9.

Ministries sometimes hold conferences to show the gifts of the Holy Spirit are not for today, this is the cessationist view. They rightly condemn much of the false teachings of the charismatic movement, and they do not deny that God is able to heal. They agree that we can pray for people and sometimes the Lord heals them. Well, that is the working of the Holy Spirit, and the person who is healed has received a gift of healing! The gifts are still evident today. It's just that people are calling these things by a different name.

Within the Pentecostal and Charismatic world, there is a lot of manipulation, a lot of false teaching, and a lot of dishonesty. But when we trust the Lord on a daily basis, when we love the Lord with all our heart and when we meet together, praying together, being of one mind, caring for one another, loving one another and praying for one another -- then the Lord does wonderful things.

But even if God doesn't heal in this life, we know that we have eternal life. When we go to be with Jesus there will be no more sickness, no more death. Jesus has conquered death. He has conquered sickness. But when Jesus comes, that's when we will see this wonderful reality fulfilled. What we see now is just a partial thing. But when Jesus

comes, we're going to see the fulfilment of the promise that *"This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."* -- 1 Corinthians 15:53

It's wonderful! But that's the day that's coming. Right now, we have bodies that get sick. We have bodies that die. And we must trust God on a daily basis.

Sometimes I will quote the scripture from Romans 8:11 that says "But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwells in you." I know that when Jesus comes, this body is going to be changed. But I can also say: the Spirit of God dwells in me now, so I will trust the Lord now, knowing that He is able to heal but even if He doesn't -- **I still love Him with all of my heart, and I will trust Him**, because I know there is a day coming when I'm going to be changed, and this mortal body will put on immortality.

So, in conclusion, does the Lord heal? Yes, He does heal. But it is on a one-to-one basis. Sometimes people die and go to be with the Lord. Sometimes we go through sickness and it's a testimony because even in the sickness we trust the Lord knowing that He gives us grace to bear it. Everything is for His glory. We are being changed into the likeness of Jesus, and the Lord is able to use sickness so that we become more like Him.

We trust Him. We walk with Him. Our life is in His hands. We pray for one another, and the Lord does His work, His way.

God bless you. Amen.