

The Gift of Healing

I Corinthians 12:1-11

Before we can even begin to expand on the spiritual gift of healing we need to establish a foundation of what healing entails and of course what healing looks like for God and us. It is often thought that a good abundant life is lived when we are physically fit and healthy. It is also understood that life begins to deteriorate at 40, sorry Tara...for me it started at 39... It is also understood that a good abundant life can never be had if we suffer from illnesses, chronic illnesses if you will, because they rob us from the joys of life. They keep us from enjoying all of what life has to offer. There can be no good life in the midst of health issues, thus the pursuit of physical healing begins.

Whenever we think of healing from our human perspective we automatically move to the thinking that healing entails the curing of an infirmity, a sickness that has rained havoc into the life of an individual for quite some time, but is that really the only sickness that rains havoc in our lives? I am willing to assume that whenever we think or talk about biblical healing most of us would automatically think of infirmities, such as the woman who had an issue of blood. We would think of the blind man who Jesus gave sight to, we think of the man to whom Jesus said take up your matt and walk, of course let us not forget the guy who had leprosy and that only to mention a few. Before we go off on a huge list of people Jesus healed as evidence that healing does happen, we need to back track a little.

To set a clear foundation on healing we must begin with this statement made by Jesus in the gospel of Matthew. It is a statement that comes not in the midst of healing a group of “sickos”, but rather it comes while having dinner at Matthew’s house. Chapter 9 starting at verse 10 ¹⁰ *While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew’s house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples.* ¹¹ *When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples,* “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” ¹² *On hearing this, Jesus said, “It*

*is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.*¹³ *But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."* What I want you to notice here is that Jesus is not referring to physical sickness, but rather the sickness of the soul. That is to say the sickness of sin that leads to eternal separation with God.

A couple of weeks ago we touched a little bit on faith and the gift of faith. It was stated that every good and perfect gift is from above. We also established that faith comes from hearing the message and the message comes through the word of God. We talked about how this message is the message that opens our ears and softens our heart that we may hear, understand and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. This hearing, this understanding, begins the healing process in our lives. How so? The healing of our hearts and minds begins as we are being *"transformed by the renewal of our minds"* Romans 12:2. Why do we need to be transformed by the renewal of our minds? So that we may know *"What God's will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will"* This is why Jesus says *"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."* John 10:10

Ok, so we know that Jesus is interested in healing the soul, but what about this, spiritual gifts of healing? What we must understand about the gifts of healings is that in as much as it is a gift given by the spirit to an individual, there are no guarantees that a person will always be able to heal anyone they desire. The healing is still subject to the sovereign will of God. Wait a minute Pastor! What do you mean? If I have the spiritual gift of healing, why can't I heal whomever I want, whenever I want?

Well, I am glad you asked! Let us take a look at the disciples to answer this question. The Disciples were given authority to heal and cast out demons. Matthew 10:1, 5-8 ***"He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness...these twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions "Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. As you go preach this message. The kingdom of heaven is near. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received freely you give."*** Although they were given authority to do this they were not always successful. Matthew 17:14-

18 “14 *when they arrived at the bottom of the hill, a huge crowd was waiting for them. A man came and knelt before Jesus and said,* 15 *“Sir, have mercy on my son, for he is mentally deranged and in great trouble, for he often falls into the fire or into the water; 16 so I brought him to your disciples, but **they couldn’t cure him.**”* 17 *Jesus replied, “Oh, you stubborn, faithless people! How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to me.” 18 Then Jesus rebuked the demon in the boy and it left him, and from that moment the boy was well.*

This is one of the reasons why the apostle Paul when writing to the Corinthians about this made the statement, *“about spiritual gifts, I do not want you to be ignorant”*. You see, it is easy to think of the gift of healing as something that has been given to a person as a means to heal anyone they want at any time they want, when in fact the gift/s is still very much dependent upon the will of God and not upon our will and or desire. Think about it, the disciples were given authority to drive out demons and heal, yes! But it was given to them for a specific purpose at a specific time, because that is what Jesus sent them to do. If this gifts of healing were permanent for people to use as they saw fit, at any given time, wouldn’t they have healed everyone who they came into contact with? Wouldn’t they have healed each other from sicknesses too?

Oh yes, indeed we have instances where the apostles healed the sick in the book of acts, but this healing was not for personal gain. If any when we read the account of Peter healing the cripple beggar, we see that he does this and the man goes with them glorifying God, not Peter. Then we also see Peter give glory to God saying, *“why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?”* This is a magnificent statement because it addresses not their will, but the will of God for the people, for those who will glorify Him.

What I also want to touch on is the way in which the apostles went about healing people. What we need to notice is that, at no time did any of them asked the person to close their eyes and pushed them on the head so they fall over and yell “I am healed”! Each and every time a healing takes place in the scriptures the command is, “in the name of Jesus”! There is no pushing involved, there is not dramatic act that takes place, there is no passing out that takes place, there is no convulsing that takes place.

Let us for a moment consider this, the only place where you hear of anyone falling to the ground and jumping, bouncing like a fish out of water, is in the story where the disciples could not cure the boy and when Jesus encounters Legion. Each and every time someone is healed the command is simply, Jesus' command was simply "do you believe I can do this? Get up and walk... woman your faith has made you well, (her faith in Jesus).

Let us stop and consider how God works. God is the God of miracles not spectacles. God is sovereign and so are His works. Each and every time Jesus healed, he did it as sign that the kingdom of heaven is near. When the disciples healed, they did it as a sign to the people that they may believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Gift of healing is nothing to take lightly. Healing looks different for everyone. Some may need physical healing and other may need emotional healing, but the healing God is most interested in is spiritual healing. But whatever healing is needed it comes to the person not by our will, but by the will of God, through the gift of the Spirit given to those who love Him.

You see it is often thought that life can only be lived to the fullest if we are in perfect physical health. Jesus on the other hand says No! Living life to the fullest happens when you are healed spiritually. There is a mistake that many people make all the time, and that mistake is the thinking that God will heal anyone at any given time. I am sorry to break it to you, but that is not the case. God does not owe us anything nor do we have the power to demand anything from God. Scripture says this Romans 9:15 "*I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.*"

Call the worship team

True healing has nothing to do with the body. True healing has to do with the spiritual well being of the individual, where by the soul of the person belongs to God, so that on the last days we may rise up and dwell in the house of the Lord forever praising his name. Make no mistake about it, indeed the gift of healing is available to those who love God, but we must remember that it is not for us to will who, when and where, that will to heal belongs to God and God alone.