

Ministry in the Spirit, 8. Healing, an Introduction

by Michael Flowers

The sermon explores the theology of healing, emphasizing its holistic nature and the role of the church in fostering a healing community.

Duration: 22:59

Scripture: Galatians 4:13

Topics: "Healing"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the topic of healing and the desire for all believers to be healed. They mention that not all are healed, using the example of Paul's eye affliction in Galatians 4. The speaker emphasizes the importance of not hiding from the devil, but rather confronting and overcoming him. They also highlight the holistic nature of the Gospel, which includes the healing of the spirit, soul, and body. The sermon concludes with a call to prayer for those who are ill and a confession of faith.

Transcript

Father, let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our rock and our Redeemer. And we invite your healing presence today to be upon our hearts, to be upon our minds, to be upon our bodies, to be upon us, Lord, as whole persons. Thank you that you are restoring us and making us new.

You're making all things new. And this, Lord, is your healing presence throughout all creation. Thank you that you're Christ, our healer.

And we bless you. Come and heal us. Come and deliver us.

Come and save us. In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Amen. I threw some notes at you this morning because we're only going to do one little session on healing before we get ready, start getting ready for Advent. And I wanted you to have some stuff to take home if you're curious or if you have more questions.

This will be just a little place to start. All right. I feel like it's really, really important to have a solid healing theology because without a solid healing theology, we can really do a lot of damage.

As we go back to the scripture and we and we mine what scripture teaches, we have a solid theology in the scripture. It's when we get away from that, that we can do some damage with assumptions that are not biblical even. Right.

So how do we view healing? Christ, the second Adam, came to restore all that was lost in the first Adam's disobedience. And note that word restore. It's a word of healing, isn't it? When you need to be healed, you need to be restored.

And so the restoration of the cosmos, the restoration of all things, you can look at it as the healing of all things. This is the way the church fathers has looked at our salvation. Our salvation is actually a healing from the original wound, you know, as St. Augustine would say, the wound that came in with this massive thing called sin, where there was a place of life that introduced death.

And so Christ has come to restore and heal that original wound that was inflicted. Because often the gospel we hear is limited to saving souls. Right.

And I would just say that God is not the gospel is not about saving your soul. The gospel is about saving the whole person, spirit, soul and body as a composite. We don't isolate the soul from our bodies and what our bodies are doing.

Paul says, present your members, the members of your body right to the Lord as instruments of righteousness. Right. And so our bodies will be in ultimate healing when when at the resurrection, right at the resurrection.

That's when those who go on to be with the Lord before the resurrection of the body will be waiting for that final restoration, which is that final, complete healing of our bodies. Even so, God is not just interested in our souls. It's not just spiritual healing.

It's holistic healing of the whole person. Right. Christ came to redeem the whole created order.

The disobedience of the first Adam introduced the curse of death throughout God's good creation. And since through Christ in the Nicene Creed, we say this, all things were made in Christ. All things shall be restored.

All things shall be healed. The scripture says in Acts 10, speaking of Jesus, Acts 10, 38, Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit and power and went about doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil because God was with him. Interesting how the scripture is using the concept of healing and oppression from the devil, who is the source of the original wound.

You see, that's where he's taking it right back to the source. It's not necessarily our individual sins. It's that massive thing that happened that fractured the cosmos in our bodies, in our souls, in our minds, where we struggle with all kinds of disorders, right? All kinds of disorders.

It's a result of that original wound. And Christ has come to heal that. He announced his ministry as the coming of God's kingdom.

Said this in Matthew 12, 28. But if it is by the spirit of God that I drive out demons. Then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

OK, so the activity of the spirit in driving out demons and healing the sick, there are other passages that would equate healing the sick with the coming of the kingdom of God. And we would just say this, that Jesus is the embodiment of the kingdom. He's the king of the kingdom, right? And the king is in the land.

And he says the king has promised us, lo, I am with you always, even till the end of the age. And so he's promised his presence to us until he returns, where his presence will go into effect, where God, Paul says, will be all in all. The marriage supper of the lamb.

He will wipe away every tear. You see, that's a that's a that's a statement of healing, ultimate healing at the return of Christ. He will wipe away every tear from our eyes.

The healing of the heart, the healing of our emotions, the healing of our tormented minds, the healing of our fractured bodies, the healing will take effect and death shall be no more. It's a beautiful vision and hope. The kingdom of God on Earth is currently considered already and then not yet.

It's already not yet. And so what does he say that the kingdom of God is considered already? It's already here, but it's not yet in fullness. Right.

And so what do we do as the church every Sunday? We pray that thy kingdom come, right? More and more and more until thy kingdom come on Earth as it is in heaven. So every time the Holy Spirit manifests in blessing the elements, even that's a charismatic that's a kingdom operation where the elements actually become the real presence of Christ for us. Right.

And when someone gets healed, that's a manifestation of the kingdom of God in our midst. Right. It's already here, but it's not in fullness yet.

We await a savior. We await our king. And so we have to wait until the final coming of Christ when all things will be completely made new.

And so we're living in between the times of the first advent and the second advent. And we're going to be looking at these passages and considering this throughout the four weeks that precede Christmas. That's what Advent is all about.

The first and the second coming of Christ. We're living in between those times where we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers in heavenly places where things are still broken. But the kingdom of God is advancing and the forceful ones lay hold of it, Jesus says.

The kingdom of God is advancing and the forceful ones lay hold of it. Can you feel that? Can you feel that you have to lay hold of it sometimes with spiritual violence, spiritual violence? Sometimes it takes all that you can, all the grace that you can get to lay hold of it at times because the gravity is so hard coming against you. Right.

It's like the sloth just so wants to come upon us. Right. And just put us to sleep.

We're battling to see we're battling for everyone's salvation. We're battling for the church to be built so that the gates of hell will not prevail against it. And that image, he says, I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.

That's not an image of a church that's under attack. That's an image of a church that's on the offensive, going for it, forcefully laying hold of the kingdom. That's what the image of that is all about.

It's not like we're trying to hide from the devil and the gates of hell will not prevail against us. It's no, it's going to we're going in the face of the devil and we're taking ground and we're taking territory and we're casting him out. The gates of hell will not prevail against us.

And it's much easier if you don't believe in a devil and you don't believe in any of this. Right. Then you've got a nice cultural religion.

Join the frogs in the kettle. You won't be jumping out. Welcome to a nice death.

Right. So we're fighting for life. I've come to give you life and life more abundantly.

But what is Jesus right there in that statement where he says, I've come to give you life and life more abundantly. What's the next phrase that Satan comes to steal, kill and destroy exactly where life is. The enemy is out to rob you of that life.

Even you go back to the garden where the first Adam was, the tree of life was there and the serpent was slithering all around it. And Jesus, the second Adam, has broken his power and has broken the power of death through his resurrection. And we're awaiting hours in him for full healing.

OK, that's the gospel. So does everyone always get healed? Absolutely not in this life, I would say. In my experience, everyone doesn't get physically healed.

There's an interesting thing when you compare your life to Jesus. Most people always got healed in the ministry of Jesus. I want to show you some passages in the New Testament, though, were apostles.

Not everybody did get healed. OK, so this takes a big load off of you. Right.

OK. It's a it's a good theology of healing that we need. Right.

So that we're not left in condemnation or some kind of weirdo. Name it and claim it kind of thing. Right.

Here it is. There were frequent situations where Jesus healed everyone, although this appears to be the norm for Jesus. There were exceptions at the Pool of Siloam there in John 5, 1 through 20.

Look at number three. I'm just going to skip around here because we don't have time to cover all this. Jesus, he only healed one person at the pool, even though there were tons of sick people there.

And he asked that person, do you want to be well? And that's a big question, isn't it? Do you really want to be well? Jesus healed that person and left all the others there. And he explains his actions by this phrase, I only do what I see the father doing. Jesus knew, you know, he had boundaries that the father had placed upon him and he was an obedient son and he learned obedience, scripture says, by the things which he suffered.

OK, Hebrews. And so Jesus walks into that hospital. It's like a hospital really at the Pool of Siloam where the healing waters would come.

And tradition said that the angels would come and stir the waters. Right. And people would be healed.

Right. So they were waiting on the angels to come. And Jesus walks in and heals one person and walks out because he did what he saw the father doing.

He was being led by the Holy Spirit. And then I love this in verse in number four. When the crowds came to be healed, Jesus would often withdraw in solitude to pray.

So all these people were pressing in on Jesus and he was healing and just tons of people were just crowding in on him and Jesus would disappear and Jesus would go off to pray. I tell you, man, Jesus did nothing apart from the anointing and power of the Holy Spirit. And he realized in his earthly body when he was depleted, he was tired and he says, I'm done.

I can't do anymore. I'm going to go pray and I'm going to seek guidance so that I can know exactly what to do tomorrow. It's a great pattern of ministry.

Let's go down to number two. So conclusion, not all are healed, although our desire is for all to be healed. Let's go over to let's go over on the back and let's juxtapose that with number five.

What about believers who do not get well, who do not get healed? OK, Paul had an eye affliction in Galatians four. He lets us in on a little bit of what's going on. It says, as you know, it was because of an illness that I first preached the gospel to you, even though my illness was a trial to you.

You did not treat me with contempt or scorn. Instead, you welcomed me as if I were an angel from God, as if I was Christ Jesus himself. What happened to all your joy? I can testify that if you could, you would have done so.

You would have torn out your eyes and given them to me. And so the assumption is, is that Paul was losing his eyesight or Paul had a failing eyesight. But Paul is saying because of a bodily illness, I first preached the gospel to you.

Number two, Paul leaves us with the assumption that sickness is an evil with which we continue to battle. Sickness is an evil with which we continue to battle. There has been teaching throughout church history that that sickness is meritorious and is from God and that we do not accept that at all.

That's not a biblical understanding of evil or a biblical understanding of sickness. Erastus remained at Corinth, it says in Second Timothy 4:20, but Trophimus, I left sick in Miletus. OK, so now you've got Jesus and you've got Paul and Paul had to leave Trophimus sick in Miletus.

OK, so not all people get healed, even when they're prayed for by the apostles. Number three, Epaphroditus was ill and almost died, but God had mercy on him, Philippians 2, 26 and 27. Epaphroditus was ill and almost died, but God had mercy on him.

Apparently, out of a prolonged, protracted illness, he almost died. But then God had mercy on him. He healed him.

Right. Beautiful. And then Timothy, we've been talking about Timothy, this timid apostle where Paul says God is not giving you a spirit of fear, Timothy, but a spirit of power and love and a sound mind.

Don't let anybody look down upon you because you're young. He once told Timothy again. So Timothy probably had these insecurities.

Right. Anyone that would be released and working under the apostle Paul would have, I would think so. But Timothy had a persistent stomach weakness, it seems.

And so in First Timothy 5.2, Paul prescribes a little wine. That's why we know Paul was an Anglican. Not a good one because it was just a little wine, but all right, a little medicinal help for my in the dipper.

Is that right? So bring your dipper. All right. No doubt that Paul and others prayed for Timothy's healing.

I'm sure I'm sure when he told him to take a little wine for your stomach, say that doesn't mean that he hadn't prayed for him. I don't believe I believe that he had prayed for him again and again and again. But he said, oh, this is medicinal as well, because there's no difference between nature and grace.

God works through all of it. And that's why we value the medical community as a gift of healing. Just like over here, someone who lays hands on somebody and they get healed.

It's all coming from God. It's all coming from the Lord. And we all have different gifts.

First Corinthians 12, this is gifts, plural of healing, gifts of healing. I know several of you, I'm not going to mention your names, but just who you are brings healing to people. And some of the capacities and some of the vocations that you're working in as a result of who you are and who you're gifted to be in your very presence brings healing to people.

It brings a calmness to people. I won't point you out, but I'm tempted to. But we have people with that beautiful healing presence on them in our congregation this morning.

It's a beautiful thing. And all we want to do is acknowledge that comes from the Lord. Thank you, Jesus.

You know, you're in our midst through manifesting your power and your presence and your grace, your gentleness through this person. Thank you, Lord. And so I'm sure that Paul prayed for Timothy's healing.

With an apparent lack of immediate relief, and so he prescribed a little medicine, a little wine. Conclusion, the Bible never assumes that every sick person must be healed. The sight of heaven healing bears witness to the end of all sickness.

Revelation 7, 16. Francis McNutt gives 11 possible reasons why people may not receive healing. And he at the same time, he's careful to say that none of the 11 reasons that he gives are absolute.

Nearly possibilities he's encountered in his healing ministry. If you are familiar with Francis McNutt, his first book is just simply entitled Healing. It came out in 1974.

I pulled it out this week just to look at it again. It's still the best book on healing I've ever read. And I remember going and listening and watching Francis McNutt minister.

And he's this tall, thin Catholic priest who, you know, had multiple degrees and taught in Catholic seminary. And he heard some Protestants teach on healing. Actually, Agnes Sanford, who was an Anglican back in the 50s, who was a woman who really was used in healing ministry, physical and emotional.

And he heard Agnes Sanford and Tommy Tyson, another person who traveled with Agnes, and he was captivated and he started pursuing healing. And when you hear and watch Francis, you realize he was already a healer. He just found out who he was because he's this beautiful man who just radiates.

And just thousands upon thousands of people would come and be prayed for by Francis and his wife, Judith. And when I say his wife, he did get married and left the Roman Catholic priesthood. And so beautiful, beautiful book, though.

Well, these are 11 reasons, 11 possibilities why a person may not be. He lists a lack of faith in the person praying for healing, Matthew 17, 14. But that's not always the case.

It could be a wrong view of suffering, and he brings out in his Catholic tradition where there is a tradition of meritorious suffering. He spoke against that. Sin.

Not praying specifically for what needs to be prayed for a faulty diagnosis, confusing the need for physical, emotional and demonic healing. A refusal to see medicine as a way that God heals, not using the natural means of preserving health. Now is not the time.

A different person is to be the instrument of healing. Someone may be carrying that gift that's been foreordained for that person to be ministered to, because this is why we need one another. We don't all have the gift of healing.

And that's why we value those who do. How can the eye say to the hand, I have no need of you when you're carrying the very gift that's going to heal my body? He says the social environment prevents the healing from taking place sometimes. And so, you know, if you want to read that chapter, he gives more explanation on all of those 11 points.

And that book is called Healing by Francis McNutt. And that's one of the last chapters in the book. I'm going to leave you with those notes and what I want to do is give us more time because we're going to pray for those of you who are ill and would like prayer in the place of prayers for the people today.

And so we're going to confess the Nicene Creed and then we're going to confess our sins. And so when we confess our sins, we are cleansed. We are healed from those sins and the power of that over us.

And then we will spend some time praying for those of you. And we're going to begin with Bill Baldwin, who actually requested that we pray for him today in service. And so we just want to call upon the Lord's healing presence and all of you and your seats.

If you want to come forward when we're praying for people, you're invited to do that. But if you're in your seats or if you're standing, just be prayerful and say, Holy Spirit, come and be our healer. Holy Spirit, come and be our healer.

I feel like this is something that God wants to insert and increase in our midst so that we can be a healing community. Issues that are in our nation that need to be healed as a people, as a nation, right down to our physical well-being. Let's stand together.

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