



Is Christianity a Healing Religion?

Luke 6:19: (NASB) *And all the people were trying to touch him, for power was coming from him and healing them all.*



The fountain of youth. The cure for cancer. A magic diet pill. We would all love to have these incredible “miracles” for whatever ails us. When Jesus walked the earth two thousand years ago he, in a sense, was a life-changing elixir and a source of quick fixes as he healed the masses. Who would not have wanted to be near him, for wherever he went, godliness, healing, and wisdom followed. Fast forward those two thousand years, and even though Jesus is no longer walking the earth as a man, much of Christianity is still claiming and teaching the healing Jesus did. Should they be? The Apostles and the early church

were able to heal so maybe we should ask, why is everybody not doing it? Has something changed regarding Christian miracles and healing? If so, what, and most importantly why?

 **Introduction, *Faith Healers Tricks Exposed! - Miracles For Sale, Derren Brown***

- *(Derren Brown) Today, we're going to witness the miraculous. The blind will see, the deaf will hear, limbs will grow out. These are faith healing miracles, and I'm going to show you how to perform them.*
- *(Faith healer) Take these hearing aids out. You foul spirit of deafness, take your hands off this woman in Jesus' name! How do I sound now?*
- *(Audience member) Loud.*
- *(Derren Brown) Here is a popular miracle of making the deaf hear. I'm going to demonstrate this and some other miracles exactly as they might be presented at a faith healing event like the one you can see here. The people you see being healed at these events are selected by the faith healer's team, the "catchers," who bring them up on stage to present them to the healer.*



The healing Jesus did was a gift of grace and a fulfillment of prophecy:

Malachi 4:2: (NASB) *But for you who fear My name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall.*

What does “faith healing” mean? Faith healing is founded on the principle that if someone has faith, a believer, they can be made whole.

Did Jesus perform faith healing? Consider the following examples.



The man in the synagogue with the withered hand on the Sabbath and the Pharisees' trap:

Matthew 12:11-15: (NASB) ¹¹And he said to them, What man is there among you who has a sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will he not take hold of it and lift it out? ¹²How much more valuable then is a man than a sheep! So then, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath. ¹³Then he said to the man, Stretch out your hand! He stretched it out, and it was restored to normal, like the other. ¹⁴But the Pharisees went out and conspired against him, as to how they might destroy him. ¹⁵But Jesus, aware of this, withdrew from there. Many followed him, and he healed them all.



He healed them all - how many did he heal? We do not know, but assume "many" is more than ten. Perhaps fifty is a reasonable number.

Were these people following him as disciples? It does not say, but if he could fix your malady, why not follow him? "Maybe he can help me, too." We assume these are not disciples but were people following for the sake of a chance at a miracle.

After Jesus prayed through the night and chose the twelve Apostles, two types of people were present:

Luke 6:17-19: (NASB) ¹⁷Jesus came down with them and stood on a level place; and there was a large crowd of his disciples, and a great throng of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon, ¹⁸who had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were being cured. ¹⁹And all the people were trying to touch him, for power was coming from him and healing them all.

1. A large crowd of his disciples - the disciples were here because they went where Jesus went.
2. And a great throng of people - this group was here for the miracles.

Those who were troubled with unclean spirits - we see those with specific issues being cured.

How many is a *great throng*? Maybe 500 or 1,000?

The spectacle of this healer would have been a worldwide viral video today... free (and real!) healing! *And stood on a level place* - all done out in the open.

After feeding the 5,000, it is again all about the grace of healing for the average person:

Mark 6:54-56: (NASB) ⁵⁴When they got out of the boat, immediately the people (not disciples) recognized him, ⁵⁵and ran about that whole country and began to carry here and there on their pallets those who were sick, to the place they heard he was. ⁵⁶Wherever he entered villages, or cities, or countryside, they were laying the sick in the market places, and imploring him that they might just touch the fringe of his cloak; and as many as touched it were being cured.

How many were healed? **MANY!** He went to several villages and each had many who were anxious for healing. We can speculate hundreds to thousands might have been healed.



Those who were healed were not deserving beyond any other, and most often were NOT shown to have faith in anything beyond their Jewish heritage and their hope of healing.

Jesus healed out of graciousness - and not just a few, but thousands.

We want to explore how healing was done in the Bible compared to how it is done today.

Didn't Jesus often say that it was someone's faith that made them whole? What about *those* examples?

Yes! Jesus did say that at least seven or eight times throughout his healing work. This brings a really important question into play: Why would so much of Jesus' healing be done so freely - just because someone happened to be there - and why would some healing have required faith?

Ten lepers were healed - only one has his healing attributed to his faith. Was this healing a 90 percent failure?

Luke 17:15-19: (NASB) ¹⁵Now one of them... turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice, ¹⁶and he fell on his face at his feet, giving thanks to him. And he was a Samaritan. ¹⁷...Jesus said, Were there not ten cleansed? But the nine—where are they? ¹⁸Was no one found who returned to give glory to God, except this foreigner? ¹⁹...Stand up and go; your faith has made you well.



All received the gift of being made whole. Nine were in the “eat and run” category. Only one had faith enough to pursue humble gratitude and praise. In such a heart lies the potential for an even deeper healing in a similar way to the Samaritan woman by the well and the living water. (John 4)

The tenth leper's faith had a role in his healing from the standpoint of meaning. His healing meant more because he had gratitude. This opened the door to potentially, at some point, having even deeper faith focused on following the giver.

Hearing miracle, Faith Healers Tricks Exposed! - Miracles For Sale, Derren Brown

- (Derren Brown) *All of our volunteers have genuine registered disabilities. I have merely asked them to respond completely honestly and imagine they were at a real event with an audience. (Talking to a volunteer) You can lip read? Okay. This one has been deaf since she was born. She doesn't know what it is to hear. You can read my lips? So, I'm going to turn away and say a word. Twenty-seven. Nope, she can't hear she needs to lip read to hear what I'm saying. Let's heal these ears. She hasn't heard a word for 39 years without lip reading. She doesn't know what I'm saying to her. Heal this woman, restore her hearing. I hate those devils of deafness, I hate those devils of deafness, and I cast them out now. I command this hearing to be*



*restored, to be restored now! (clicks fingers three times, standing behind her)
How many clicks? Say, "Jesus."*

- *(Volunteer) Jesus.*
- *(Derren Brown) She's no longer lip reading. A miracle seems to have happened!*

Jesus healed to show the glory of God's coming kingdom. Healing was a free gift of God's love through Jesus. Many were in the "be healed and run" category, but the gift was still freely given.

Healing was a sign of the Messiah's presence, possibly it was especially for the Pharisees' benefit.

An example of healing tied to faith is that of the woman with the 12-year blood issue showing faith in the gift:

Mark 5:27,28,33-34: (NASB) ²⁷*after hearing about Jesus, she came up in the crowd behind him and touched his cloak.* ²⁸*For she thought, If I just touch his garments, I will get well.*

She had faith in the gift. She is healed and Jesus responds in the midst of this jostling crowd with "who touched me?"

³³*But the woman fearing and trembling... fell down before him and told him the whole truth.*

³⁴*And he said to her, Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your affliction.*

Go in peace - in other words, "You can go home now," not "Come, follow me." Did she become a follower of Jesus? We are not told. But we know she had faith in the gift. She was fighting her way through that crowd, knowing if she could just touch the hem of his garment she would be healed. This does not show that she had faith in Jesus as her Lord and Master, but she had faith in the gift.

We see two types of faith in this example of the Jewish official who met Jesus on behalf of his dying son:

John 4:47,49-53: (NASB) ⁴⁷*...he went to him and was imploring him to come down and heal his son....* ⁴⁹*The royal official said to him, Sir, come down before my child dies.* ⁵⁰*Jesus said to him, Go; your son lives. The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and started off. (The man had faith in the gift.)* ⁵¹*...his slaves met him, saying that his son was living.* ⁵²*So he inquired of them the hour... Then they said... Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.* ⁵³*So the father knew that it was at that hour in which Jesus said... Your son lives; and he himself believed and his whole household.*

Now faith in the giver of the gift is added.



He himself believed and his whole household - they became followers.
The ultimate blessing was to have the miracle move them to follow Christ's footsteps.



Two blind men healed as a result of their faith:

Matthew 9:27-31: (NASB) ²⁷As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, crying out, *Have mercy on us, Son of David!* ²⁸...and Jesus said to them, *Do you believe that I am able to do this?* They said to him, *Yes, Lord.* **(Faith in the gift)** ²⁹Then he touched their eyes, saying, *It shall be done to you according to your faith.* ³⁰And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them: *See that no one knows about this!* ³¹But they went out and spread the news about him throughout all that land.

These men became strong followers. They had faith in the giver!

Jesus challenged them, *Do you believe that I am able to do this?* They had faith in the gift and were healed. Even though they were not supposed to, they spread the news about him *throughout all that land.*

Once people were healed, their malady did not return. Today, too often when someone who was "healed" is interviewed, we find they "felt better" but then reverted back to their original state of sickness.

Jesus healed in public and in most of the healings, faith was not required. His healing was not faith healing, it was grace healing.



Healing was received three ways:

1. "Be healed and run."
2. Faith in the free gift, shown in the courage to pursue him for healing.
2. Faith in the giver of this gift, as shown in the act of discipleship.

**The healing Jesus did was NOT primarily faith-based.
How about the healing the Apostles did?**

It would make sense that the apostles' and disciples' healing miracles would follow the same pattern as Jesus', and that is the case. What we will see is the healing of unbelievers not based on faith, but as a free gift for the sake of the gospel being spread, and curiously, not many instances of faith.

Blindness miracle, Faith Healers Tricks Exposed! - Miracles For Sale, Derren Brown

- (Derren Brown) *Blind since birth. How old are you now, Ian?*
- (Ian) *Forty-six.*
- (Derren Brown) *This man is 46; he has been blind since birth. This man has never been able to see. He doesn't even know what it's even like to be able to see. Take a step forward for me. Let's start praying. Father, I command those devils of blindness to come out of this man. I command in Jesus' name those devils of blindness to leave this man in Jesus' holy name! Spirit fall upon this man. Heal this man! Bring him back up, bring him back up. Come forward. Father, open this man's eyes. Ian, how many fingers am I holding up? Tell me how many fingers.*
- (Ian) *Two.*



- (Derren Brown) *He sees! Lord be praised, this man sees! Ian, I've got a handkerchief, take the handkerchief from me. Follow me around, come on, follow me around. Somebody praise the Lord, this man can see! His sight is restored. These are the miracles! I believe in miracles! He has been healed from blindness.*



At Solomon's Portico (also called Solomon's Porch or Colonnade, located on the eastern side of the Temple in Jerusalem), the Apostle Peter performed stunning miracles that resulted in dire opposition. These acts resulted in faith in the free gift, and in many cases, faith in the giver as well.

These were "you gotta see this" kind of events:

Acts 5:14-20: (NASB) ¹⁴And all the more believers in the Lord, multitudes of men and women, were constantly added to their number, ¹⁵to such an extent that they even carried the sick out into the streets and laid them on cots and pallets, so that when Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on any one of them.

(Source: Biblical commentary by Adam Clark) I cannot see all the miraculous influence here that others profess to see... It does not appear that the persons who thus thought and acted were converts already made to the faith of Christ; nor does it appear that any person was healed in this way.

It is not saying the shadow of Peter actually healed them, but we do know from the next verse that healing was going on.

¹⁶Also the people (average people, not disciples) from the cities in the vicinity of Jerusalem were coming together, bringing people who were sick or afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all being healed.

This would have made quite an impression on the Scribes and Pharisees after they had gotten rid of Jesus.

This healing INVITED opposition by its public nature and its overwhelming results:

¹⁷But the high priest rose up, along with all his associates (that is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with jealousy. ¹⁸They laid hands on the apostles and put them in a public jail. ¹⁹But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the gates of the prison, and taking them out he said, ²⁰Go, stand and speak to the people in the temple the whole message of this life.

Again, faith is not a factor in this free gift of healing, but it was certainly a factor afterwards. Sometimes people followed the apostles, but not always. Faith in Jesus was not always present to the point of having someone become a disciple, but they still had faith in the gift of healing. This harmonizes with the way Jesus healed.



The healings were done in public in the face of those who would disagree. (In fact, Jesus purposely did it so they could see!) Healings were a public witness for others - not for disciples.

Acts 9:32-35: (NASB) ³²Now as Peter was traveling through all those regions, he came down also to the saints who lived at Lydda. ³³There he found a man (note - not a believer) named Aeneas, who had been bedridden eight years, for he was paralyzed.

There is no mention of faith or some special relationship to those Peter visited.

³⁴Peter said to him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; get up and make your bed. Immediately he got up. ³⁵And all who lived at Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord.

Peter was not the focus - Jesus was. Note the *public nature* of the healing event. The man's faith was not a factor, and this act of healing turned the public to Jesus.

 **Donations for a luxury suite, Costi Hinn (Benny Hinn's nephew), Wretched Radio**

- *Our hotel when I traveled, one of my favorite places, and I've mentioned this before, was the Burj Al Arab, the massive hotel in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, that's shaped like a sail. It's on a man-made island, you get picked up in three luxury cars, and we stayed in the royal suite. I remember sleeping in my own room within the royal suite. There were multiple rooms and it was \$25,000 per night to stay in the royal suite. And the hotel has actual gold all throughout it, literally thousands and thousands of tons of gold. You can look this up; it's legit. And then we had an entourage with us, and so there were other suites that we had for what was a layover on our way to go and serve in India, in Mumbai, for that crusade in 2004 that had over a million people in attendance. And that would give you an idea of how we're living, or how I was, and still our family members do, off of donations.*



This is not what Jesus taught and is not the example of the Apostle Paul. They did it at a public witness - not for the benefit of followers as is done today.



Trish comments: In Jesus' day, they did not have hospitals, so people who were sick were just out in public. If it were today, Jesus would go to the hospital and clear it out. You would see the hospital be emptied. He would go to the children's hospital and heal these people. If people want to do that, if they say they are truly healing people, go to the hospital and clear it out.

Essentially the hospital was brought to Jesus and he healed them all. Faith did not matter; he healed them because he could. Peter did the same thing.

Faith in the free gift is included in the healing of this man done in an obviously public fashion:

Acts 14:8-12: (NASB) ⁸At Lystra a man was sitting who had no strength in his feet, lame from his mother's womb, who had never walked. ⁹This man was listening to Paul as he spoke, who, when he had fixed his gaze on him and had seen that he had faith to be made well, ¹⁰said with a loud voice, Stand upright on your feet. And he leaped up and began to walk. ¹¹When the crowds saw what Paul had done, they raised their voice, saying in the Lycaonian language, The gods

have become like men and have come down to us. ¹²And they began calling Barnabas, Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker.

The crowds were so impressed with the healing they started calling Paul and Barnabas gods, and were quickly corrected. The point is this healing was done publically for the benefit of non-believers. If the healing of today is legitimate, why is it not done in the same way?

FAITH HEALING



Early Christian healing:

- was public
- usually went "viral"
- was for the sake of unbelievers
- was rarely, if ever, done for the benefit of disciples

Modern healing within Christian circles does not seem to follow any of these guidelines. Why not?

Unfortunately, this is where we begin to look at more of the dark side of healing. As with anything of great value, the miracles of the early Christian church were copied and corrupted by those who were not after godliness but gain. New Testament evidence of this degradation is easy to find.



Healing's dark side: A convert known as Simon the magician shows us the paganizing of Christianity:

Acts 8:9-10,16-23: (NASB) ⁹Now there was a man named Simon, who formerly was practicing magic in the city and astonishing the people of Samaria, claiming to be someone great; ¹⁰and they all, from smallest to greatest, were giving attention to him, saying, This man is what is called the Great Power of God...

Simon was very popular because of his illusions. Phillip comes along and performs (public) miracles that Simon is unable to do.

Peter and John show up and people receive the Holy Spirit:

¹⁶For (the Spirit) had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁷Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit. ¹⁸Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was bestowed through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, ¹⁹saying, Give this authority to me as well, so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.

This desire captures what is so wrong with the way the healing culture is today. "I will pay you for this." Perhaps this example was put in the Bible for us to detect the hypocrisy now. It is done for the sake of making money. Look at how wealthy the big name "healers" of our day are.

Exposure to the seeming "magic" of miracles and the "magic" of transferring "magic" to others appealed to Simon's baser nature - he could now REALLY BE "the Great Power of God," obtained by giving money.



²⁰But Peter said to him, May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! ²¹You have no part or portion in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. ²²Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray the Lord that, if possible, the intention of your heart may be forgiven you. ²³For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bondage of iniquity.

The *bondage of iniquity* is where any perversion of Christian practice or principle for gain comes from. This takes advantage of the weak instead of blessing them with the Good News, which was what the healings were meant to teach.

It displaces that which is good with that which looks impressive. "Impressive" can create cash flow and power.

The *gall of bitterness* - excessive bitterness - used in Deuteronomy 29:18 in reference to idolatry.

 **Man of God benefactors, Costi Hinn (Benny Hinn's nephew), Wretched Radio**

- *We tied ourselves into Christ and into the gospel. So to give you an idea we would always elevate the man of God so that when people were giving, they were giving to support the man of God, who is God's mouthpiece and His herald, and therefore when people are giving to us - and we lived - the square footage was just under 10,000 square feet, our mansion up in Canada, with the Benzs and all that lifestyle. I had my own sport court growing up, an indoor hot tub, steam room, outdoor pool. We lived like it was the Ritz Carlton every day. And that is applauded because we're serving the Lord, and we should be taken care of and the laborer is worthy of His wages. And you shouldn't "muzzle the ox while he's treading the grain," and every Scripture is twisted and, of course, we are the benefactors.*

Compare this with the life of the Apostle Paul who spent his life taking care of others. This audio clip shows the opposite - this is greed and power. Compare this with Jesus who owned nothing but the clothes on his back. We see the disciples giving material goods up, not amassing more.

Philippians 3:17-19: (NASB) ¹⁷Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us. ¹⁸For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, ¹⁹whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.

We had hints of what would happen. We believe faith healing is one of the great distortions of our time. By and large, it is an illusion.

 **"Miracles" explained, Faith Healers Tricks Exposed! - Miracles For Sale, Derren Brown**

- *(Derren Brown) Let's go back to Sophie and find out a little more. Have I just really healed you of deafness?*
- *(Sophie) No.*
- *(Derren Brown) You are moderately deaf, you're essentially hearing-impaired. Yes? You can't really hear without your hearing aid if I face the other way. But the clicks (snapping fingers) you could hear anyways.*
- *(Sophie) Yes.*
- *(Derren Brown) And you're not healed because nothing has changed. In a similar way, although Ian has genuinely been blind since birth, like most*



registered blind people he has some impaired vision. And with the right lighting he can see blurred shapes and colors - enough to see the number of fingers I was holding up against my dark jacket, enough to see my bright handkerchief, and of course, his hearing helps him follow me around the room. Both of these major miracles are created by allowing the audience to be misled about the extent of someone's real condition, then presenting things they can already do as evidence of change when actually they're just the same as they were before.

These "healings" happen so quickly and emotionally that people get caught up in the moment. Healings in the Scriptures were unequivocal, there was no marginalization of it. It was clear, concise and undoubtedly true beyond the shadow of a doubt.

We do not see this kind of healing today. Why are there NO viral examples of true, long-lasting healing from these modern "healers"?

Matthew 7:21-23: (NASB) ²¹Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven will enter. ²²Many will say to me on that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name cast out demons, and in your name perform many miracles? ²³And then I will declare to them, I never knew you; depart from me, you who practice lawlessness.

The context is after the Day of Judgment. These are people who did things that were not actually following in Jesus' footsteps.

Are we supposed to be healing now?

1 Corinthians 12:28,31: (NASB) ²⁸And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues. ³¹But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way.

The Corinthian church was too worldly in their thoughts. They wanted to do the "fancy" things of Christianity - the gifts of the Spirit including speaking in tongues, but they were not being appropriate.

The Apostle Paul explained the order: *first apostles, second prophets, third teachers* - THEN the other items. These first three are what the Christian faith is built on in the long term.

1 Corinthians 13:8: (NASB) Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away.

Knowledge, it will be done away - the gift of instantaneous knowledge without taking the time to learn something. This is how the Old Testament prophets were able to speak as a mouthpiece of God.

We are told the gift of prophecy would pass away. Apostles - prophets - teachers: The apostles died. Prophecy passed away. This leaves us teachers, the last of the numbered items in the list.

These verses are telling us we will have to live in a different way, not always relying on those spiritual gifts. Those gifts were there at the beginning to show who Jesus and the apostles were, and who sent them.



Faith healing is NOT a biblical teaching now, and it never was. Biblical healing was focused on unbelievers for the purpose of showing God's grace and the glory of the coming kingdom.

**Aren't there Scriptures that talk about healing within Christianity?
Shouldn't we follow them?**

There *are* some Scriptures that speak of being sick and how prayer can help, and we will talk about them shortly. Think about how Paul told Timothy to drink a little wine for his stomach issues. (1 Timothy 5:23) Why did he not just heal him? Why are there NO plain examples of *followers* benefiting from such miracles?

Christians who go to these faith-healing services seem to be saying, "I don't like God's will for me and the lessons they bring."

Christianity is not about feeling better physically; it is about following Jesus and becoming more Christlike.



Look at the way the New Testament is laid out. Jesus in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John is healing thousands. Then after Pentecost, Peter leads the way and heals many. Paul heals many as well. But then in the rest of the New Testament, the instances of healing drop dramatically. Why? Because once Christianity was established, healing was no longer needed as a sign. They fulfilled the prophetic "opening the eyes of the people" and the good news of the gospel itself was to take over. Our path is higher, sacrificial and selfless. Seeking healing would be contradictory to that path.

If Jesus learned obedience through the things he suffered, why wouldn't we?

2 Corinthians 5:1-2,5-7: (NASB) ¹For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ²For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven... ⁵Now he who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge. ⁶Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord ⁷for we walk by faith, not by sight.



We are delivered, not from our physical maladies, but by being faithful unto death and going to heaven, not by giving or receiving physical healing. We cannot look to Christianity to make us feel better, because it is not about us; it is about Jesus and following his example to bring glory to God as he did.

 **False gospel, Costi Hinn (Benny Hinn's nephew), Wretched Radio**

- Faith, not in Christ to save your soul and to be justified by faith, but faith as a force is what we taught, in order to unlock all the windows and riches of heaven. That's not what faith is. Confession is confessing your sins to Christ, Romans 10:9. To believe in your heart and confess with your mouth, that's not a confession to get a Bentley, or a Ferrari or a house. You can't use faith for salvation as faith for stuff. It doesn't work that way. And so knowing now what I understand, having studied the word of God on these topics, and of course the Holy Spirit graciously causing the scales to fall from my own eyes and saving my life, I would never give money to that version of the gospel, because it's a false gospel.*

We have to be so careful not to get involved in an unscriptural gospel.



I have talked to so many people looking for physical healing. Their response to me when I ask them about their experience is, "I just don't have enough faith," (or else they would be healed). But Jesus wouldn't have asked you to have faith! The apostles didn't ask for faith! They just healed. These people who do not get healed walk away feeling like they are the failure, but that is not true. It is the preacher misguiding them who is the failure.

Today's faith healing venues draw on the human desire to be rid of pain and to receive something in return for showing up in faith. They build up hope and adrenaline, only to deliver an empty package.

James 5:13-15: (NASB) ¹³Is anyone among you **suffering <2553>**? Then he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises. ¹⁴Is anyone among you **sick <770>**? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; ¹⁵and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is **sick <2577>**, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.



If healing WERE meant for believers, then simply lay hands on them. The context already is different.



Defining *suffering* and *sick* shows us this is not referring to physical illness, but spiritual illness.

Suffering: Strong's #2553 kakopatheo (kak-op-ath-eh'-o); to undergo hardship

We go through trials to develop Christlikeness. We grow through difficulty, but there is drama in doing this. If you are undergoing hardship, being weighed down by the trials of life, take it to the Lord in prayer. Seek fellowship with those who can bolster you spiritually.



Sick: Strong's #770 *astheneo* (as-then-eh'-o); to be feeble (in any sense)

We can feel spiritually weak at times. We are not taking away from being feeble because of physical sickness, because that is an important part of our lives. For example, a terminal illness creates a significant place of trial and difficulty. We all know people who through suffering an illness have become beacons of light and strength. How is it they are able to do this? They do it by being focused on godliness.

Sick: Strong's #2577 *kamno* (kam'-no); properly, to toil, i.e. (by implication) to tire (figuratively, faint, sicken)

Spiritually we can lose focus, drive and purpose. It can happen to all of us at times, especially when things are going well. Going through difficulties can help reenergize us spiritually.

If we look at these James texts and do not limit them to physical illness, it makes more sense. It is saying as a body together, we can help hold one another up in the most dire and difficult times of our lives. The trials can come from physical illness, but are not limited to them. Healing within the body of Christ should be focused on spirituality.

Can God heal a disease? Yes, it is God's prerogative to do whatever He wants. Is it written for us to expect such healings at this time? No. We believe the purpose of those New Testament gifts were given to identify Jesus, identify his apostles and disciples and to establish the church. Once the church was established, we see in the New Testament the natural fading away of those gifts because the gospel itself became the most important thing.

Once again, healing in the New Testament was to establish Christianity as of God and to give the world a taste of the true gospel, a small picture of what is to come:

Matthew 6:9-10: (NASB) ⁹Pray, then, in this way: Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name. ¹⁰Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

All of the healings showed God's power and what the future holds for the sin-sick world, giving us a taste of what the coming kingdom's blessings will be like. The kind of healings Jesus, the Apostles and disciples did was so impressive that it turned the public upside down. It got the Pharisees to hate Jesus even more, Peter was thrown in prison and it made all kinds of trouble for the Apostle Paul. Christian healing back then was done for the benefit of the public and not believers. This is different than what we see "healers" today doing.

The picture of healing and its ultimate fulfillment:

Isaiah 35:5-6,10: (NASB) ⁵Then the eyes of the blind will be opened and the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. ⁶Then the lame will leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute will shout for joy. For waters will break forth in the wilderness and streams in the Arabah. ¹⁰And the ransomed of the LORD will return and come with joyful shouting to Zion, with everlasting joy upon their heads. They will find gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

This is a picture of the future. Jesus was a picture of the future as was the healing done in the early church.



Revelation 21:3-4: (NASB) *³And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, ⁴and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.*

There are many other verses that show the reason Jesus came and died was not just to bring a few followers to heaven. Those followers will be instruments to bring the rest of the world to reconciliation with God. He healed to show us what the future worldwide healing will look like. The healing he did was a picture to show the world he was, in fact, the Messiah.



The grace healing of the New Testament is but a glimpse of the might and power of God's eternal plan for all humankind.

*So, is Christianity a healing religion?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*



Join us next week for our September 10, 2018, podcast,
Ep. #1038: "What Does True Friendship Look Like?"



Becca comments: I think these people who lead people into error either become obsessed with the money and power or must feel that it is better to fool and tell a "little white lie" in order to bring followers to Christ, and are thereby missing a major lesson from Jesus' ministry.



Healing is a matter of time, but it is sometimes also a matter of opportunity. — Hippocrates

Other examples of Jesus' healing where he tells the healed one that their faith played a role:

A Canaanite woman's daughter is healed of demon possession as a result of the woman's faith:

Matthew 15:21-28: (NASB) ²¹Jesus went away from there, and withdrew into the district of Tyre and Sidon. ²²And a Canaanite woman from that region came out and began to cry out, saying, Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is cruelly demon-possessed. ²³But He did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and implored him, saying, Send her away, because she keeps shouting at us. ²⁴But he answered and said, I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. ²⁵But she came and began to bow down before him, saying, Lord, help me! ²⁶And he answered and said, It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs. ²⁷But she said, Yes, Lord; but even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. ²⁸Then Jesus said to her, O woman, your faith is great; it shall be done for you as you wish. And her daughter was healed at once.

There is no indication she followed Jesus. Not being a Jew, she exhibited a powerful faith in what Jesus could do. She knew she was an outsider and perhaps she took the grace of healing home with her, recognizing it as what it was - unmerited favor.

A demon-possessed boy healed as a result of his father's immature faith:

Mark 9:16-29: (NASB) ¹⁶And he asked them, What are you discussing with them? ¹⁷And one of the crowd answered him, Teacher, I brought you my son, possessed with a spirit which makes him mute; ¹⁸and whenever it seizes him, it slams him to the ground and he foams at the mouth, and grinds his teeth and stiffens out. I told your disciples to cast it out, and they could not do it. ¹⁹And he answered them and said, O unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him to me! ²⁰They brought the boy to him. When he saw him, immediately the spirit threw him into a convulsion, and falling to the ground, he began rolling around and foaming at the mouth. ²¹And he asked his father, How long has this been happening to him? And he said, From childhood. ²²It has often thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us! ²³And Jesus said to him, If You can? All things are possible to him who believes. ²⁴Immediately the boy's father cried out and said, I do believe; help my unbelief. ²⁵When Jesus saw that a crowd was rapidly gathering, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, You deaf and mute spirit, I command you, come out of him and do not enter him again. ²⁶After crying out and throwing him into terrible convulsions, it came out; and the boy became so much like a corpse that most of them said, He is dead! ²⁷But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him; and he got up. ²⁸When he came into the house, his disciples began questioning him privately, Why could we not drive it out? ²⁹And he said to them, This kind cannot come out by anything but prayer.

There is no indication of anyone following Jesus afterwards.

Blind Bartimaeus (Also Matthew 20 speaks of two blind men):

Mark 10:47-52: (NASB) ⁴⁷When he heard that it was Jesus the Nazarene, he began to cry out and say, Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me! ⁴⁸Many were sternly telling him to be quiet, but he kept crying out all the more, Son of David, have mercy on me! ⁴⁹And Jesus stopped and said, Call him here... ⁵⁰Throwing aside his cloak, he jumped up and came to Jesus. ⁵¹And answering him, Jesus said, What do you want me to do for you? And the blind man said to him, Rabboni, I want to regain my sight! ⁵²And Jesus said to him, Go; your faith has made you well. Immediately he regained his sight and began following him on the road.

He DID become a follower. His faith helped him move forward. He seems to have responded to the generosity of the grace he was shown by positioning himself to become a giver himself.



The centurion's servant being healed attributed to the centurion's faith:

Matthew 8:5-13: (NASB) ⁵And when Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, imploring him, ⁶and saying, Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, fearfully tormented. ⁷Jesus said to him, I will come and heal him. ⁸But the centurion said, Lord, I am not worthy for you to come under my roof, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed. ⁹For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, Go! and he goes, and to another, Come! and he comes, and to my slave, Do this! and he does it. ¹⁰Now when Jesus heard this, he marveled and said to those who were following, Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel. ¹¹I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; ¹²but the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ¹³And Jesus said to the centurion, Go; it shall be done for you as you have believed. And the servant was healed that very moment.

This centurion was (we believe) Cornelius, the same centurion who became the first Gentile convert.

The paralytic lowered through the roof - faith of others led to forgiveness, which led to healing:

Mark 2:1-12: (NASB) ¹When he had come back to Capernaum several days afterward, it was heard that he was at home. ²And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room, not even near the door; and he was speaking the word to them. ³And they came, bringing to him a paralytic, carried by four men. ⁴Being unable to get to him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and when they had dug an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic was lying. ⁵And Jesus seeing their faith said to the paralytic, Son, your sins are forgiven. ⁶But some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, ⁷Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but God alone? ⁸Immediately Jesus, aware in his spirit that they were reasoning that way within themselves, said to them, Why are you reasoning about these things in your hearts? ⁹Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, Your sins are forgiven; or to say, Get up, and pick up your pallet and walk? ¹⁰But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins—he said to the paralytic, ¹¹I say to you, get up, pick up your pallet and go home. ¹²And he got up and immediately picked up the pallet and went out in the sight of everyone, so that they were all amazed and were glorifying God, saying, We have never seen anything like this.

The grace of the healing came as a result of the faith of others. This gave the man an opportunity to go home and now build a new life. No indication that he became a follower.

Scriptures that refer to Christians being healed:

1 Peter 2:21-25: (NASB) ²¹For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in his steps, ²²who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in his mouth; ²³and while being reviled, he did not revile in return; while suffering, he uttered no threats, but kept entrusting himself to him who judges righteously; ²⁴and he himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by his wounds you were **healed <2390>**. ²⁵For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.

Suffering: Strong's #2390 ee-ah'-om-ah-ee; AV-heal, make whole; 1) to cure, heal; 2) to make whole; 2a) to free from errors and sins, to bring about (one's) salvation



Perhaps the source of the healing references:

Exodus 15:22-26: (NASB) ²²Then Moses led Israel from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness and found no water. ²³When they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they were bitter; therefore it was named Marah. ²⁴So the people grumbled at Moses, saying, What shall we drink? ²⁵Then he cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a tree; and he threw it into the waters, and the waters became sweet. There he made for them a statute and regulation, and there he tested them. ²⁶And he said, If you will give earnest heed to the voice of the LORD your God, and do what is right in His sight, and give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have put on the Egyptians; for I, the LORD, am your healer.

Isaiah 53:4-5: (NASB) ⁴Surely our griefs he himself bore, and our sorrows he carried; yet we ourselves esteemed him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. ⁵But he was pierced through for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon him, and by his scourging we are healed.

One other example of New Testament healing:

Acts 8:3-8: (NASB) ³But Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house, and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison. ⁴Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word. ⁵Philip went down to the city of Samaria and began proclaiming Christ to them. ⁶The crowds with one accord were giving attention to what was said by Philip, as they heard and saw the signs which he was performing. ⁷For in the case of many who had unclean spirits, they were coming out of them shouting with a loud voice; and many who had been paralyzed and lame were healed. ⁸So there was much rejoicing in that city.

This is the same pattern - in public, for the public and faith is not a mentioned prerequisite.

