

JESUS HEALS AND SAVES

Jesus Christ came with authority and power to usher in the kingdom of God wherever He went. Luke 4:38-44 demonstrates how. In the gospels, Jesus healed by word and by touch. He came "to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10). He proclaimed the good news of God, saying, "the time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:15). His miracles authenticated and demonstrated His unique message.

1- Jesus is the miracle-worker. The parallel passage in Matthew 8 says "He cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick. This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah, 'He took our illnesses and bore our diseases'." This is an allusion to Isaiah 53:4, "He took our griefs and sorrows, and by His stripes we are healed."

This speaks of God's suffering servant, the Christ. And 1Peter 2:24 declares, "He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed." The words "healed" and "saved" translate from the same word. Of 108 occurrences, it is rendered "saved" 88 times. The focus of salvation is spiritual.

2- How has Jesus healed you? The gospels warn us not to be like those who clamored for miracles, but not salvation. Really, what good would it do to be healed of disease for your earthly life, but not for eternal life? Your real problem is not physical, but spiritual. Romans 5:1-11 reminds that we are justified by faith, and have peace with God through Christ. This gives us hope. Regardless of sufferings, we have the power of the Holy Spirit to endure, even with joy.

Why would you want to miss any part of God's plan for you? Ask Joni Eareckson Tada, a paraplegic for over 50 years. "Faith-healing tends to focus on the physical, but faith's focus must always be Jesus," she says, "and nobody draws near to Christ who doesn't first share in Christ's sufferings." This is her response to people who ask, "If I have enough faith, will Jesus heal me?"

3- What does faith have to do with it? If you're praying for healing, is the real question the quantity of your faith? As if you have "enough" you will be healed? Or the quality of your faith, as whether it is strong enough? Neither. The question is always the *object* of your faith, which must be trust-worthy. If your faith is in "faith," that is unreliable. That's like feelings, which change constantly. But only Jesus never changes. Only Jesus saves. Only Jesus heals.

When your faith is in Jesus, then the focus is not on you, or what you do or decide or feel. Then it is on what you're dependent upon: the Lord Jesus Himself. Because God has marked Christ as the Deliverer, the anointed one, the trustworthy unchanging one. The only Savior.

4- What about a crisis of faith? False teachers say it's your words of faith that God must answer, doing miracles according to your prayers of faith. As though you control God. That's the travesty of proclaiming a false half-gospel that the Bible doesn't teach. That's the tragedy of people coming to Jesus just for physical healing. Only Jesus saves. And that is not for what you can get, on your own terms, as though you can make a deal with God.

What if God doesn't answer your prayer for healing the way you want? A crisis! But is that His problem or yours? In 2Corinthians 12:8 the apostle Paul pleaded with the Lord three times to be healed. God replied, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness." Pastor Randy Alcorn notes, "I've prayed more than Paul did for healing, and I've also seen God's sovereignty, grace, and humbling purpose in my disease."

5- Will you receive what God chooses to give? Alcorn says he would rejoice if God healed him. "But if I could snap my fingers and remove my disease, I would not. Because God actually has the power to heal me, and He has chosen not to." A powerful testimony! We are all broken, needy people. But it would be greedy to demand that God's will be your will. "God can and sometimes does heal," notes Alcorn, "but all healing in this world is temporary, since our bodies inevitably deteriorate and die. Only resurrection healing will be permanent."

So what's your response? Will you receive whatever God gives? "Sadly, those who will break their necks to get to Jesus the Physician will scarcely move to reach Jesus the Redeemer," notes RK Hughes. First pray for salvation, then for healing, and that God would use afflictions for His good purpose. Because our trust is all and only in Him, the all-powerful sovereign Lord God Almighty, who the Bible says does all things for His glory and our good! ☐