

A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

An Expositional Study of **The Gospel According to Luke** **Chapter 4- Luke 4:38-44** 54- Jesus the Deliverer- Part 3

November 8, 2009

Luke 4:38-44

Now as I have been teaching you over the last two weeks- this passage here at the end of **Luke 4** was written by Dr. Luke to a Roman dignitary named Theophilus and to the larger pagan world around him to show us, and him, that Jesus is, indeed, the Messiah that the Old Testament Prophets foretold.

And the issue that Luke is dealing with here in these seven verses is can this Man named Jesus rescue our physical bodies and our human minds and our eternal souls from sin and disease and death and hell and the grave? If Jesus is the true Messiah- then it isn't enough that He can walk on water or go back up into Heaven Himself- I need to know if Jesus can rescue *me*- can Jesus deliver *me* from sickness and the eventual end of all sickness- that is death. If I am going to *worship* Jesus, if I am going to *follow* Jesus, if I am going to *believe* Jesus- then I need to know if Jesus can deliver *my* body and *my* mind and *my* soul.

Is Jesus able to deliver my body out of the ground when I die and give me a new body that is immortal, and can this Jesus rescue me from my sin and rescue my soul from eternal damnation? And Luke answers those questions with a resounding, "Yes!"

Now what we have to realize, dear friends, is that the issue of physical healing expands out into two other larger and more important issues:

1. The issue of physical death
2. The issue of human suffering in general

Death is the great equalizer of all mankind because everybody dies. And sickness is primarily the way that we get to our deaths. That is the reason why accident insurance policies are so cheap and health

insurance policies are so expensive- only a very small percentage of people who die- go by way of an accident. The overwhelming majority of all people who die- die with diseases. So anytime we speak about sickness- we must include the greater issue of death in our discussion.

But as we speak about physical diseases and sicknesses- we also must go to another huge issue and that is the issue of human suffering in general. And what Luke is showing us here is that because God is a healing and a saving God by Nature, and because Jesus is God in human flesh- therefore, Jesus is a merciful and gracious Healer and Deliverer for our bodies and our mind and our souls.

Now, there have always been and there always will be false healers who prey on people who have illnesses and who take advantage of the weak and the sick and the mentally unstable and the simple minded- whether they're selling snake oil out of the back of a chuck wagon back in the old West, or whether they hold themselves out to be mystics and soothsayers and magicians in ancient times, or whether they're modern-day tent healers or stadium healers or TV healers in our day- there are always people out there who will prey on sick people.

There are always evil and sinful and wicked people out there who will take advantage of desperate people who are financially ruined or who are suffering- and these ungodly charlatans will use the precious Name of Jesus to get money out of those people by promising them any number of miracles or healings or blessings. And, of course, all that ever happens is that these desperate and sick and ruined people end up in even greater and more profound pain and sorrow than they already were in.

Since the Fall of Man in the Garden- disease has been a terrible reality. For 6,000 years- men have sought unendingly for cures to alleviate illness and suffering and much has been done. The Common Grace of God to all men- both lost and saved- has allowed for medicine and doctors and surgeries and therapy and treatment, and these things have helped hundreds of millions of people all over the world to feel better and to live more productive lives and to enjoy life far more than they would if there were not these things.

But, after all of the combined efforts of all the people in the entire world - working non-stop to alleviate disease for 6,000 consecutive years- sickness and ultimately death have conquered every single person who has ever lived, except Enoch and Elijah.

Proper diet can help, and as believers we should eat right; proper exercise can help and as believers we should exercise. Proper living habits can help and as believers in Jesus- we should engage ourselves in those proper living habits that are productive to good health. But after all the diets and all the exercises, after all the good habits are put into place- no one lives one second longer than what God has allowed for them and death claims every single human on earth.

Only two people- who were born after Adam fell- have ever escaped death- Enoch in **Genesis 5** and Elijah in **2Kings 2**. Everybody else who is born of woman- saved or lost- dies. And before they die- everybody on earth- whether they are saved or lost- at some point in their lives- they get sick- and they usually get sick many, many times over the course of their lives- and they suffer in some way in their flesh- whether through injuries, malfunctions of their bodies, or through *external* means such as persecution or afflictions- whether they are saved or lost.

And the question about human suffering that has baffled people for centuries is this:

How can a loving and a Sovereign God allow human suffering?

And in the mind of an atheist- a loving God would stop suffering out of His kind and benevolent Love, and a Sovereign God would stop human suffering because He has the Power and Authority to do so. But since human suffering obviously exists in the world, and since much of that suffering is unjust and evil and horrible and ongoing- therefore, in their mind- God must either not be loving or else God is not Sovereign or else God simply doesn't exist.

And what is tragic is that it is the atheist- the unbeliever who thinks this deeply about a serious issue like human suffering, and not the believer.

God has allowed human suffering because through all the pain and misery that suffering brings- God's Mercy shines the brightest. And when you consider that suffering changes us and it transforms us- if you allow God's Goodness and Grace to work in your life- suffering can become a tool in the Hand of God that will mold and shape us into the Image and Likeness of our Lord Jesus Christ. Please turn with me to **1Peter 5:8-11**:

8 Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

9 But resist him, firm in *your* faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.

10 After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen *and* establish you.

11 To Him *be* dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Now the suffering that Peter speaks of here is that kind of suffering that is the result of the devil being that roaring lion and walking about- seeking whom he may devour, and we are resisting him- steadfastly in the Christian Faith. So, there are several things about this passage that we need to know that will frame our understanding about this kind of suffering.

If the devil was not walking around and devouring people- we would not have this suffering. And if we- as believers- do not resist the devil- steadfastly in the Christian Faith- we would also not have this suffering. So if we sit back and allow the darkness to descend without resisting that darkness steadfastly- we won't suffer. This suffering is caused by our faithful resistance to satan and his ways. This kind of suffering is that suffering that is brought about by our faithfulness- not our sin.

And the Apostle Peter says in verse 10 that after we have endured this kind of suffering that is brought about by and through our faithful resistance to evil for a little while- God has promised to do four things for us and in us:

- A. God will perfect us
- B. God will confirm us
- C. God will strengthen us
- D. God will establish us

So this is the kind of suffering that is not only good- but it is highly productive in our walk with God, and something that is the Will of God for all believers. So, do not ever seek to be delivered from this kind of suffering- but rather seek to be engaged in it. To seek to be

delivered from this kind of suffering means that you seek not to engage satan, and that you seek not to resist evil and that is never God's Will.

This is one of the biggest reasons why I hate the so-called Prosperity Gospel. I hate this false "gospel" because it robs people of the desire to suffer for Christ's sake. It robs people of the desire to endure suffering as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. It robs from people the desire to be found faithful- regardless of the personal cost, and it measures our relationship with God by the size of our bank account- and that is not Christianity- it is simply pagan idolatry.

Remember, dear friends, God did not call us to be safe and happy and secure and rested. God called us to be busy and to be productive and to be faithful and to be inconvenienced by the radical demands of this Heavenly Love, and we have been called to expend ourselves and to pour out of ourselves that which God has poured into us- so that at the end of our lives- we will be completely empty- nothing will remain- because we will have poured out everything that God put in us.

We are all going to die- we are all going to taste of death- but I beg you today saints of God- do not die full, do not die content; do not die rested- but, die faithful, die busy, die following Jesus, die right in the middle of pouring out yourself to the Lord. Do not seek to simply live well- but seek to suffer well, and seek to die well.

Now the reason that all men get sick and all men eventually die is because all men are sinners. Please turn with me to **Romans 5:12:**

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—

Now the Apostle writes here that all men have sinned. And look at the very beginning of this verse. Paul says:

... through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin

The Bible says here that death entered into the world by one single man. And the one man by whom sin entered into the world is, of course, Adam- the father of the human race, and when Adam blatantly and premeditatedly manifested his hatred toward his Creator and sinned- he doomed all of mankind- because all of us were in the loins of Adam when he sinned. This is what is called "Original Sin", and the

Bible teaches that this Original Sin of Adam is *imputed* to every single human being who is born after the Fall to the point that in our mother's womb- both the sin *nature* of Adam is placed on us, and the *guilt* of the very sin of Adam is placed on us - so that from the very instant of conception- all babies in the womb are sinful in God's Eyes because they are personally guilty of Adam's sin. And that is why babies die- even though they have not committed sin themselves, and that is why even unborn babies die- because the Bible says right here that

... death spread to all men, because all sinned ...

So the logic goes like this. This verse says that nobody dies except they are a sinner. And yet everybody dies- even unborn babies die. So the conclusion that we rightly come to is that everyone, including unborn babies, are sinners in God's Eyes- not because they have done anything wrong *themselves*- but simply because the Original Sin of Adam has been imputed to them at the moment of conception.

Now why is this important to know when speaking about physical healing? Because ultimately the end of all diseases is death, and everybody dies. So death comes away because of sin, and, therefore, sickness is the life long process of dying. We begin to die the very moment we are born and death is inevitable to all human beings as is sickness. People can have relatively healthy bodies and some people are blessed with a strong physical constitution- but, even at that- they are human and they still die.

So the issue is this. Did Jesus come to alleviate sickness in those who are saved for all time, or did Jesus use a season of physical healing to demonstrate His Divine Authority? Was healing done in portions and to selected individuals to simply demonstrate that Jesus Christ was the Messiah, or did Jesus bring physical healing with Him so that all those who are saved can be healed every time they get sick? Is Physical Healing a demonstration of Christ's Authority over hell, death and the grave, or is Physical Healing part of the Atonement? Is God a healing God by Nature and does God mercifully heal the sick bodies of human beings according to His Own Will as a demonstration of His Goodness, or is physical healing something that is guaranteed if we have enough faith and pray the right prayers and command sickness to leave? Is

Physical healing the result of *our* faith, or the result of God's Will in that particular situation?

There is a teaching out there in the modern Church that has circulated around the world over the last several years that says that Physical Healing is part of the Atonement. And that sounds very spiritual and that sounds great and that even sounds Biblical- but is it true? And in order for us to know- we need to examine this issue because it affects the way we look at God and Prayer and Faith and even Salvation.

The Atonement is the reconciliation that God has brought to Man based upon the Death, Burial, and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Atonement takes unworthy sinners and allows them to be justified in God's sight. The Atonement is the single event that happened 2,000 years ago- that allows lost people to be saved, that allows sinful people to be made righteous, and that allows people who natural hate God and rebel against Him to love God and serve Him with Joy. The Atonement restores Man to the original state when he was created in the Garden with a few notable exceptions. That is what the Atonement is.

We- who do not deserve God's Mercy- receive God's Mercy in Salvation so that we may love and follow Jesus down here- humbly and graciously submitting to the Lordship claims that Jesus makes over our lives now and living our lives to the Glory of God- and when we die- we have been called and chosen to have the honor and the privilege to worship God forever in Heaven in sinless perfection.

But this errant teaching says that because we belong to God now that we are saved- that God will always heal our physical bodies when we get sick, because somehow we are *entitled* to that healing by virtue of the Atonement.

But we need to know, dear friends, that the Bible specifically exempts our physical bodies from the Power and the Glory of the Atonement. Please turn with me to **Philippians 3:17- 21**

17 Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.

18 For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are enemies of the cross of Christ,*

19 whose end is destruction, whose god is *their* appetite, and *whose* glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.

20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;

21 who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

So from that we see that our physical bodies are *not* saved- even *after* Jesus saves our souls. Our physical bodies are *not* redeemed in this present world. All of the sin and all of the carnal lusts that were in our bodies before we were saved are still there after we are saved. In fact, it is our physical bodies that constitute 1/3 of all our problems in this life.

As believers- the Bible says that we face three adversaries on a daily and constant basis that fight against our redeemed souls. One of them is the flesh- our natural physical bodies; the second is the devil - the fallen arch angel named Lucifer whom God cast down into the earth like lightning; and the third is the world- the unsaved, pagan *system* of this life that resists the Will of God.

And it is these three elements of the world, the flesh, and the devil that constitute our battle on this earth. Satan and the demons powers fill the earth with false teachings and false doctrines and false hope and false security and false prosperity and false joy and false satisfaction and false religion- all in direct rebellion and direct hatred and direct warfare against the one true living God Who alone created all things, and who alone is entitled to all praise and worship and adoration and obedience.

The pagan world system takes those false concepts that come out of the mouth of the dragon and it promotes them and teaches them and upholds them and embraces them as being true.

And our flesh is enticed by those things and we are tempted to trust in those things that came out of the dragon's mouth rather than what came out of God's Mouth, and we are tempted to find peace and safety and comfort and joy in those things that are passing away rather than in the Arms of Jesus, and our flesh is tempted to embrace and believe those things rather than put all our hope and all our trust and all our joy in the Promises of God- which are eternal.

And so the battle that we face is between a redeemed soul and an unredeemed flesh that is drawn away by its own lusts and enticed by things that are lies and things that are false and things that are unproductive and things that do not and that cannot bring Glory to God.

So because that is true- the biggest problem with our flesh is not that it hurts or that it is dying or that it is sick or that it contains physical pain. No, the greatest problem that we have with our flesh is that it is sinful and that it loves what God hates and that it fights against our saved souls to hinder our walk with God.

So we can no more say that our bodies have been redeemed than we can say that the world is saved or that the devil is saved. The Atonement did not save our physical bodies any more than the Atonement saved the pagan world system, or that the Atonement saved the devil. Those three things are not saved and cannot ever be saved - but will continue their relentless and hopeless war against God and the Lamb until they are finally destroyed by Jesus when He returns as the Conquering King.

So, we must recognize, my beloved, that the battle with saved people is not about *getting* saved or of getting re-saved constantly- that issue has been settled forever in the Death, Burial, and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

No, the battle with saved people is to build ourselves up in our most holy faith that we will have the desire and the power and the strength and the endurance to go on with Jesus and resist what the world and the flesh and the devil throw at us.

So the last thing we need as believers is to do anything or to believe anything or to pray about anything or to hope for anything that would in any way strengthen our unredeemed flesh or to build it up or to make it stronger or to enable it to fight even harder against our redeemed souls.

Because our physical bodies are not saved, and because it will not ever be saved, and because it will not ever become spiritual, and because our physical bodies will not ever be a help to our walk with God- things that appeal to the flesh- like financial prosperity and material possessions and recognition and pride and envy and jealousy and lust must be resisted and rejected and cast down and thrown out and mortified and crucified on a daily basis or else they will get the

upper hand in our walk with God. Christianity is not about the elevation of Man- Christianity is about the elevation of the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ and the humiliation of Man. The Gospel does not seek to make much of Man- the Gospel seeks to make much of God so that men will be in awe of God in His Glory and Splendor, and so that they will understand the infinite value of Who God is- so they will love Him and worship Him and follow Him and adore Him and obey Him. Because, whatever strengthens our unredeemed flesh weakens our soul.

And things that weaken our flesh like prayer and Bible Study and godly fellowship and fasting and being humiliated through sufferings should be promoted and engaged in and sought after and desired and prayed about and longed for. Because, whatever strengthens our redeemed souls weakens our flesh.

The world and the devil team up in perfect harmony with our physical bodies to war against our souls, and our soul teams up with the inward residing Holy Spirit and the ever interceding Jesus Who is at the Right hand of God to war against our flesh. And everything you read and everything you listen to and everything you believe and everything you say and everything you watch and everything you do is either feeding the flesh and strengthening its bond with the other two, or else it is feeding the soul and strengthening its bond with the other Two.

But the Promise of God is that the day is coming when our bodies will be redeemed- but not in the same way as our souls were. Our physical bodies will be redeemed only in the sense that it will be forever replaced with a new immortal body that will not be fashioned from the dust of the earth but will be fashioned according to Jesus' Own glorious Body.

But as long as we are alive- our physical bodies are "lower", or they are of a "lower estate", than our souls, and our bodies are "humiliated" by our redeemed souls in the sense that our souls are saved and our bodies are not. Remember, our bodies were fashioned from the dust of the earth- but it was the very Breath of God that God breathed into Adam's nostrils that gave him his soul. So our soul came from God and will go back to God, and our bodies came from the earth and will go back to the earth. Our souls can and will be redeemed and will live forever because our soul can never die- but our bodies can and

do die because they cannot be redeemed and they can only enjoy temporary comfort, temporary health, and temporary benefit.

This is why we have to have new bodies in Heaven- because our current bodies- which were made of the dust of the earth- are going to go back to the dust after we die. The Promise of Scripture to us is that because we are saved- after we die- we will be raised from the dead in the same way that God raised Jesus from the dead, and we will be reunited with Jesus in Heaven and live there forever in a new glorious immortal body that will never die.

And we will be raised from the dead precisely because our bodies are not already redeemed now through the Atonement. And because our bodies are not redeemed through the atonement- we die and because our bodies are not redeemed by the Atonement- we get sick and we have malfunctions in our bodies and our body parts fail us and we get weak, and our eyes get dim and we need glasses, and our ears become deaf and we need hearing aids, and our bones become brittle and they break, and our livers and kidneys became hard and unable to filter our blood, and our heart arteries become hard and blocked and force our hearts to work harder, and our lungs get clogged up with all the pollution in the air, and we get wrinkles and we start sticking out all over the place and our hair gets gray and falls out, and eventually we die and we are buried and our bodies decompose and they return back into the dust from which we were created.

The Bible says that our physical bodies are vile; our physical bodies are of a lower estate than our souls, and our physical bodies cannot make the trip to Heaven because they are not included in the Atonement, and our bodies will stay behind here on earth and they will either be destroyed in the grave for those who die before Jesus comes or they will be instantly and miraculously changed if we are alive when Jesus comes.

But even though all that is true - because God is Merciful and because God is Good- He periodically heals the sick bodies of human beings. But those healings are carried out Sovereignly by God in accord with His Own Divine Will and for His Own Glory- to further God's Purposes in the earth- and not something that results from what we do or what we say or what we pray or how much we believe.

You see, unlike us- God absolutely knows what He is doing and He is very busy right now- carrying out His Divine Plan that He formulated

from way before He ever made the worlds. And God is moving and shaking and working all things in the Universe together to accomplish His Own Perfect Will so that at the end of time- God will be seated in His Throne- surrounded by the millions of unworthy sinners who have been made white in the Blood of the Lamb- who will praise Him forever.

And so God works all the of the hundreds of billions of prayers that have been prayed throughout all the ages together in complete harmony and context with His Own Will in such a way that what we desire of Him is what He has desired to be, and, therefore, He gets all the Glory and our Joy is made full.

And part of God's Plan involves at times the temporary suspension of the relentless process of physical death in the bodies of certain individuals whom it pleases God to heal. And God Almighty has that kind of Authority and Power. And Jesus is demonstrating here that He has that very same Power and that very same Authority so that we would know that He is God in human flesh.

And the OT Prophets and the NT Apostles had that very same Power and Authority to heal sick bodies in order to attach Divine Credibility to the Words that they wrote down for us in the 66 Books of the Holy Bible- so we would know that we could trust and obey them.

But when somebody teaches that physical healing is part of the Atonement- they are saying that by virtue of the Death, Burial, and Resurrection of Jesus- that God will always, and in all cases, heal your physical body- and that is simply not true.

Only Jesus Christ conquered Hell, Death, and the Grave when He rose from the dead by the Glory of the Father. Neither the OT Prophets nor the NT Apostles conquered Hell or Death or the Grave for us or for themselves- but Jesus did. And that is true because neither the OT Prophets nor the NT Apostles were the Messiah- and neither are we. They came to preach *about* the Light- but they were not the Light themselves. We come today to preach *about* the Light- but we are not the Light ourselves either.

But Jesus didn't come to preach *about* the Light- He *was* the Light. Jesus didn't come to talk *about* the Truth like the OT Prophets did or like the NT Apostles did or even like we do today. No, Jesus didn't talk about the Truth- Jesus *is* the Truth. Jesus didn't come to simply *show us* the way like both the OT Prophets and the NT Apostles did and like we do today. No, Jesus *is* the Way.

No one is like Jesus. No one. No one ever was like Jesus and no one will ever be like Jesus. He is an exclusive. He is the One and only of the Father. Jesus as fully God and fully Man in the same body at the same time without conflict or contradiction. In **John 14:6** Jesus said this about Himself:

I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

All of the OT Testament Prophets were sinners who needed Grace to be saved. Every single one of the Apostles were born in sin and they were shapen in iniquity, and every single one of them needed Grace to be saved. Mary needed Grace to be saved. John the Baptists needed Grace to be saved, and we need Grace to be saved today.

But Jesus didn't need Grace because Jesus was God. Jesus was not saved by Grace through Faith like we are today. Jesus was saved by His Own Works. Jesus lived a perfectly sinless life and He earned His very Own Personal Righteousness because He never sinned one single time, and He didn't need God's unmerited favor to go to Heaven- but the OT Prophets did and the NT Apostle did and we need that Grace and Mercy today.

Jesus was not born with Original Sin because Original Sin is passed onto the children through the seed of the father, and Jesus' Father was God- not Joseph. Jesus did not possess any internal lusts in His flesh like we do that satan could appeal to- to tempt Him- but we do precisely because our flesh is not saved or redeemed.

I tell you that our bodies are different from Jesus' Body. And that is why Jesus was raised from the dead in the very same Body that He died in, and Jesus went up into Heaven in the very same Body that He died in. It was glorified- but it was the same. But we have to have a new body- because we are not like Jesus.

Jesus was not a sinner so He did not have the fallenness that sin brings to bear on the rest of us. And because that is absolutely true- aside from Jesus, and from Enoch and Elijah who went to heaven in a special way- everybody else born of woman has died or will die or in the process of dying right now.

Everybody- billions of people have died, they all die, and will all die. Sickness, injury, some kind of infirmity; even the people who claim to have the gift of healing will die- and no one is exempt.

May I confess something to you? As a Pastor I spend a lot of time with people who are ill, a lot of time with people who are dying, people who are bereaved about death. And if I could choose one spiritual gift beyond the ones God has given me to preach and teach- I would ask for the gift of healing if there were such a gift available today.

On innumerable occasions- I have wished that I could heal sick or dying bodies. I've stood with weeping parents in a hospital room watching a precious child die of leukemia, or have brain surgery to remove a tumor from their brain. I've prayed with a dear friend as inoperable cancer ate at his insides. I have stood by as a young 16 year old person fought for life in an intense care unit after an automobile accident had mangled his internal organs. I've seen teenagers crushed in car accidents. I remember walking out of the parking lot at a grocery store one day to find a little baby crushed between two cars. I've watched people lie comatose while machines keep their vital signs alive and their family grieves.

I've watched a close friend weaken and die after an unsuccessful heart transplant. I've been with friends in terrible pain during surgery. I know people who are permanently disabled in every imaginable way, quadriplegia being the severest form of paraplegia. I've seen babies born with heartbreaking deformities. I've help people learn to cope with amputations and other losses.

And through all of this I have very often wished that I could heal people with a word, or with a touch, or with a command- but I can't. And nobody else can either- even those who say they can.

Think of how thrilling and think of how really rewarding it would be to have the gift of healing if you really had it. Think of what it would be like to go into a hospital among the sick and the dying and walk up and down the hall touching people and healing everybody.

And this is my argument against these so-called faith healers on TV. If they have this gift- how could they ever justify going to sleep at night until everybody was healed? How could they sit down to eat a meal while children are still suffering? How could they ever be content with going to football stadiums and basketball gymnasiums and have these massive meetings while the Hospitals are still full?

If they have indeed been gifted by God to heal sick bodies- then go to the cancer wards and clean them out. Go to the tuberculosis wards and set them free. Go to the morgues and lift the dead people by the hand out of their caskets. Go to the Children's Hospitals and go to the burn ward and hear the screams of little children who were set on fire and relieve these little children of their unbelievable suffering, or shut up and sit down and be quiet.

Why is it that these supposed healers of today don't do that? Why don't they all get together and go and do that? Why don't they all assemble, all these gifted healers that we hear about, why don't they go out where the worst needs are and heal those people? Why don't they come out from behind the TV screens? Why don't they come down off the stage of their contrived manipulating tent and stadium events. They could just go to the hospitals and the sanitariums in their own areas and once they had gotten everybody well in their areas, they could just start moving until they covered the four-corners of the earth.

I mean, there aren't really many limits to the opportunities to heal if you can do that. But strangely, they never come out of their tents, and they never come out of their tabernacles, and they never come out of the television studios or off the stages. They always seem to exercise their supposed gift in a very controlled environment, staged their way, run according to their schedule, and when you go back and you look at the evidence, and I did this with Kathryn Kuhlman- who supposedly was one of the first major healers, and when you go back and get away from all the hype and all the emotion and you go back and actually study the facts- you will not find any more healings in those groups than you will in any other group on earth- including unbelievers. And that is because God is a healing God by Nature, and God heals the sick bodies of people according to His Own Will and not through the manipulation of these shysters and not by artificially pumping up your faith.

Those who claim the gift of healing simply do not have it. Period. Those who claim a hot hand or a moving or a shaking or a tingle that allows them to heal simply do not have it. They are lying and they are frauds- without exception- and most of them are in some way using this supposed gift for the worst reason of all- to gain wealth for themselves.

I beg you to listen to me, dear friends. God is a healing God by Nature, and God can and God absolutely does heal sick bodies all the

time- but not through the gifts of healing. The gifts of healing that are discussed very rarely in the Bible- were temporary sign gifts for Christ and those who were around Him to authenticate Him as the Messiah and to authenticate the Apostles and Prophets who were writing the Scriptures.

Once He was authenticated as the Messiah, and once the Apostles and Prophets were authenticated as the true preachers of the Gospel and the Scripture was penned and recorded for us- the gifts of healing ceased. And nobody has those gifts today. Nobody. And you find this if you simply study the New Testament.

Listen- in the Gospels- everybody gets healed. You go into the **Book of the Acts** and into the Epistles and you begin to see people who are sick and they stay sick. And yet through history because people so desperately want to be healed- you can make a ton of money taking advantage of these weak and sufferings souls by claiming to have the gift- whether you're selling some phony cancer cure, or some phony spiritual cure. And you can't get any worse than that- to take advantage of a sick or suffering human being by lying to them.

A man left this Church because I taught this and he became terribly offended at me and left because I said that it wasn't always God's Will to heal people, and he went to a Church that teaches that Physical Healing is part of the Atonement. And he wasn't there 6 months and his pastor's wife died of cancer. I knew this lady personally and she was a sweet saint of God who loved God and served Him faithfully.

Well, I went to the wake to pay my respects and this man was there and he took me by the arm and took me off to the side and said, *"You know, Bother Blair- it isn't always God's Will to heal people"*. Well what do you know?

But you know- way before the Pentecostal Renewal ever came to Azusa Street, and way before Jesse Duplantis ever got his own TV show- the Roman Catholic Church led the way in claiming the power to heal. They boasted of healing people with the bones of John the Baptist. They boasted healing people with the bones of Peter. They boasted the ability to heal people with the wooden fragments of the Cross. They even boasted that they healed people with vials that contained Mary's breast milk.

Lourdes- a Catholic shrine in France- supposedly has been the site of countless miraculous healings. Same thing up in Montreal- the great cathedral there has walls all covered with crutches and canes and supposed emblems of healings. Medugorje, in Yugoslavia, has drawn more than 15 million people in the last 20 years and they come in search of a miracle of healing from the apparition of the virgin Mary who supposedly appeared to some children there back in 1981.

And then you've got those psychic healers- who supposedly do bloodless surgery, and all they do is throw around pieces of animal parts with sleight of hand that make people think they're removing tumors.

And then to make matters worse, there are those spiritual healers that are all over the place in Christianity who make people feel that if they don't get healed, it's due to the lack of faith, right? And so you compound these people's disease with a sense of guilt and shame because they don't believe strong enough to be healed- which is the single most cruel and unchristian thing you can do to sick people.

Listen- these people had enough faith to be saved- and they loved God and served God and battled against their flesh and the world and the devil their whole lives- and they should have gone through this time of sickness with hope and assurance that they were ceasing from their labors and would be in the Presence of God at any second- but, instead they go to their graves very discouraged- thinking that if only they had believed more- God could have healed them. I tell you it's criminal.

Or maybe it's because you keep making a negative confession. These people teach that if you speak negatively- you somehow negate the faith it takes to be healed, and so our puny faith stops the Owner and the Creator from doing what He wants to do- which hinders or even stops the healing. And what you are left with in this sick theology to try to explain why the multitudes are not healed is that it's the sick person's fault that they didn't get healed- but it's never the healer's fault.

You know where they got that crazy teaching from? Christian Science. The heresy of Mary Baker Eddy, Todd, Smith- she had a little problem with male authority in marriage. This false teacher invented that heresy long ago that says that if you just ignore that broken bone that is sticking out of your leg- it would all just go away- and if you just ignore the fact that you have 109 degree fever- you will be healed. And

today that very same false teaching it is preached on TV by some of the most famous preachers and so-called faith healers.

But I notice that the healer seems to always leave with the money- even if the people's lives are left in a wreck.

Now let me just take you to the healing of Jesus and make a very stark comparison between what is being claimed today as healing and what the Bible tells us about Jesus- and the difference will be incredibly clear to you.

Our Lord set the pattern for the gift of healing. Obviously it existed in Him, and He gave the power to heal to the seventy who represented Him and to the Apostles who represented Him for that period of time in which He was authenticating His Messiahship and giving Divine credibility to the Gospel and the Scriptures.

Medical science was very crude back then, and also very limited in those days, and, of course, there were more incurable diseases than we have now. Plagues could wipe out entire cities if not entire nations. Jesus came along with the power to heal and it was really an incredibly immense sign of His Divine Authority and Power.

Now I want to give you six characteristics of Jesus' healing. And I'm just going to fire them at you- so you can keep them in your mind.

First, Jesus healed with a word or a touch. And whenever you study the healings of Jesus- He simply spoke the healing or He touched someone, and on some occasions He did both. And you see this in the many, many healings of Jesus in the New Testament.

Secondly, He healed them instantly. It never says, "*Jesus healed him a little bit and he kept on getting better.*" Or, "*as soon as Jesus screamed and hollered and he fell on the floor- he began to feel better.*" It never says that. There never was any progression in Jesus' healings. The centurion's servant was healed in **Matthew 8** that very hour. The woman with the bleeding problem in **Mark 5** was healed immediately. In **Luke 17** Jesus healed ten lepers instantaneously. And He touched another man with leprosy and immediately the leprosy departed from him, **Luke 5**. The crippled man at the pool of Bethesda in **John 5** immediately became well, took up his bed, began to walk. The man born blind in **John 9** had to go and wash his eyes. As soon as he washed his eyes was healed instantly...instantly.

People never said, "I've been healed and I know I'm going to get better." Jesus never did progressive healings. He healed instantly. He

healed immediately. There were no natural processes involved. There were no natural recovery processes involved, and that's what we saw in this mother-in-law of Peter here in **Luke 4**. She immediately gets up, no loss of strength, no diminished energy, and she begins to wait on the people and serve the meal.

Thirdly, Jesus healed totally. There were no *partial* healings that you hear so much about nowadays. I remember a lady telling me, "You know, I believe in healing." I had spoken on this subject somewhere and she said, *"You're wrong about this. I believe in healing. God healed my husband of cancer."*

I said, *"Really, how long ago?"*

She said, *"Two years."*

I said, *"How's he doing now?"*

She said, *"Oh, he's dead now."*

And I asked her, *"What did he die from?"*

She said, *"Oh, the cancer finally got him- but he was healed for over two years."*

That's a very narrow definition of healing to me. It's amazing people wanting to believe something so badly they'll believe what is obviously not the case. But, Jesus healed totally...totally. And, that you see in the case of the healing here of Simon Peter's mother-in-law. There was a full and total restoration. No relapses, no recovery time.

Fourthly, Jesus healed everybody...everybody. Unlike healers today, Jesus didn't leave long lines of disappointed people and wrecked lives. People going back home trying to figure out why it is that they didn't have enough faith, or somewhere along the line they said a negative word and the negative word obviated the positive confession that could have produced their healing.

You notice down in verse 40 here it says, "Laying hands on every one of them, He was healing them." And that is true of the healing of

Jesus. He healed everyone...everyone. There were no disappointed people.

Fifthly, Jesus healed organic disease. That's because He had total Power and Authority over all Creation. He didn't go up and down alleviating low back pain, or heart palpitation, or headache, or any kind of invisible ailment that could have been caused by some emotional stress or some momentary problem. What Jesus did was not anything short of creative...creative. He replaced crippled legs with legs that functioned fully. He replaced blind eyes with seeing eyes. He replaced deaf ears with hearing ears. He replaced paralysis with full function. His healings were creative, they literally recreated on an organic level.

And sixthly, Jesus raised the dead...He raised the dead. **Luke 7** and **Mark 5** says that Jesus raised dead people.

And that is because Jesus is God, and that is because He did all of these things so He could prove to the world that He is God, and that Salvation is in no other Name other than His. So will you come to this Jesus this morning? Will you turn from sin and will you resist the world and the flesh and the devil and come to Jesus for Salvation this morning?

Let's come and pray.

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The Covenant of Peace Church 13600 John Clark Road Gulfport, Mississippi 39503 228.832.7729 www.covenantofpeace.net

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.