

Questions about Healing (Part 2)

by Bayless Conley

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Hello, my friend. It's good to be with you once again. I've said it many times, but it's true. If I could come into your flat, your apartment, or your home, sit down and enjoy a cup of tea with you at your kitchen table and sit and talk about whatever is going on in your life, talk about the Scriptures, talk about God's faithfulness, and grab hands and pray together, I'd love to do that. But obviously, I can't do that with everyone. This is the next best thing.

If you have a Bible, I'd like you to grab it. Let's just sit together for the next few minutes dealing with, right now, a very important subject that we began last time. If you were with us for the last broadcast, we're looking at questions that are posed in the Scripture by God, by the Lord, Jesus Christ, sometimes by a prophet, and sometimes just by an individual. Questions that have to do with the subject of healing.

Then, we're exploring those answers. I had a good time last week. I got off track a little bit in the sense that I didn't follow my notes. There were just some things that I got off on. I actually felt like the Holy Spirit was helping me say some things that were necessary and perhaps some things that were provocative if you were with us because I know that I may have plowed somebody's field crossways.

Sometimes, that needs to be done because if you're putting your furrows this way and the Scriptures say, "No, the furrows are supposed to go that way in your field," where you need to put things in direction, the direction of the Scripture, so to speak. We've looked at a number of questions, and this is an important subject. Jesus spent much of His earthly ministry healing the sick. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever, the book of Hebrews teaches us, and some of these questions are pretty simple, and their answers are quite direct. Others, we may need to take a little more time digging and thinking about them.

Today, we're going to begin in the book of Acts in chapter 4. There was a man who was paralyzed from his mother's womb. He'd never walked, and he was healed. It got everybody's attention. The religious leaders, it got their attention. The church was rejoicing. The man himself was walking, leaping, and praising God. Peter and John got called on the carpet before the religious leaders. This is the question that's asked in Acts 4:7 NKJV.

⁷ And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, "By what power or by what name have you done this?"

Was this the power of mind over matter? No, it was the power of Christ over disease. In Acts 4:10 NKJV, Peter gives a very straightforward answer. He says,

¹⁰ "Let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole."

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It's by the name of Jesus, and through faith in that name that he was healed. Friend, the name of Christ has been given to His Church. Jesus said, if you read in the Gospel of Mark in the last chapter there, "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved. He who believes will not be damned or condemned. These signs will follow them that believe in My name. In My name," that is in the name of Jesus, "they will cast out demons. In My name, they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover." Literally, says, "They will drive away serpents. If they drink anything deadly, it shall not harm them." Friend, that's a good promise when you're out on the mission field, when you're obeying Jesus and taking the gospel to the four corners of the world.

I remember being in some mountain villages somewhere and having to eat some things that were set before me that I would not have wanted to eat. In fact, one time, I was given some things to eat and drink in a little Indian village in some mountains, in the interior of Mexico. I'd been preaching the gospel there. I had a gentleman with me from Mexico City, and he wouldn't eat the food or drink anything. He just leaned over and said, "Bayless, don't." He said, "It'll make you sick." I listened to what he said.

Then I looked at my host. He was the actual head tribesman of the village there. I just preached the gospel to them. I just preached about a miracle, working Jesus, and the smile on his face because of what they'd prepared for me. But here, my friend from the capital city there said, "Look, if you eat that, you'll get violently sick." Said, "I won't drink it. I won't eat it myself." I looked, and I thought to myself, "I'm not going to offend my host."

The Scripture says to eat what's set before you, asking no question for conscience's sake. Jesus said, "If you drink any deadly thing, it will not harm you." That is when you go out and preach the gospel. That's the context. It was the perfect context. I smiled, and I thanked my host. I took a big bite. I grabbed the cup, and I took a big swig. I drank it all. I ate it all, and I never got sick. God protected me. It's in the name of Jesus that these things happen. Peter said, "Hey, you want to know by what power, by what name this has been done? This is through Jesus Christ." He was, and He is, a healer. We come to another question, Galatians 3:5. I want to read this to you from James Moffat's translation. It just struck me. I like the way he worded it. Galatians 3:5 MNT, again, there's a question here. It says,

⁵ When He (that is when God) when He supplies you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, is it because you do what the Law commands or because you believe the gospel message?

All right, when God works miracles among you, when He supplies you with His Spirit, when people are filled with His Spirit, is it because you've kept the law, or is it because you believe the gospel message? Is it because of your works or because of your track record? Is it because of faith? The answer came in Galatians 3:6 MNT. He says,

⁶ Why, it is as with Abraham, he had faith in God...

My friend, that is how miracles happen in the Church in its beginning, in its early years, in its early days, and that's why and how miracles happen today. It's through believing the gospel message. It's not through our good works. It's not because I've spent an hour praying every day, even though that's really helpful. It's not because I spent half an hour every day reading my Bible, even though that's really helpful. It's not because I haven't kicked the dog or said anything unkind to anyone. It's not because I've kept the law. It's not because of my track record. It's not because of my behavior but because of my faith.

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Obviously, and certainly, when we embrace Christ, it affects our behavior. It changes us from the inside out. The law tries to mold us from the outside in. Grace changes us from the inside out. It's through believing the gospel message that miracles and healings occur, not through good works and not through keeping the law. His answer, Paul writing to the Galatians said, "Man, it's as it was with Abraham. He had faith in God." How was it with Abraham? Let me read to you from Romans 4:17 NKJV. It says,

¹⁷ (As it is written, "I have made you a father of many nations")

Now, that is what God said to Abram was his name. "I have made you the father of many nations." God changed his name from Abram, which means "Father of height or Father of altitude," to Abraham, which means "Father of nations." God changed Sarai's name to Sarah, and Sarah means "young princess." God said, "All right. From now on, Abram, Father of height, Father of altitude, you are now Father of a multitude. Now, your wife's name is young princess."

Now, they're up in age, about 100 and 90 or whatever. She's past the age of childbearing. She's been barren her whole life. It's a physical impossibility for them to have kids. God said, "I have made you, not I'm going to make you. I have made you." God put it in the past tense. When God changed their names and said, "Now, you call yourself by this name. Abraham and Sarah, you call yourself by this name." God put things in the past tense when He made the promise. By changing their names, He authorized them to do the same thing.

Every time Abraham said his name, every time he called his wife's name, Sarah, he was calling things that were not as though they were; he was putting it in the past tense as if it had already happened. Faith does that. Faith connects with God, but there has to be a point when it's put in the past tense. Not just after it becomes a physical reality, but you've received it in your heart. You count it as done. Jesus said this in Mark 11:24. It says, "What things, soever you desire, when you pray, believe that you have received them and you will have them." I have to believe that I have received it, and then I will have it. I don't have to have it and then believe I received it. That's backward. I have to believe I've received it. I've received it in my heart. God has sent the answer.

The Amplified Bible says something along the lines of believe that it has been granted to you and you'll get it. If I believe that it's been granted to me, I'm going to thank God. "God, I thank You that I have this. I thank You that it's done." Now, somebody may walk up and say, "What are you talking about? You're still bent over. I can see you don't have that. Why are you saying you have that?" Abraham was saying, "I'm the father of a multitude." "Abraham, where's the multitude? You're saying Sarah's a young princess. Hey, she's an old woman! What are you doing? I can tell she's not young. I can tell you don't have kids. What are you saying?"

Abraham said, "Look, God said it. God put it in the past tense. I'm doing the same thing," and faith does the same thing. Again, the question to the Galatians. Paul said, "Hey, God supplies you with the Spirit. He works miracles among you. How does He do it? Is it because you keep the law or because you believe the gospel message? It's as with Abraham; he had faith in God." We're reading here from Romans 4:17 NKJV about Abraham. It says that

¹⁷ (As it is written, [this is God speaking] "I have made you a father of many nations")
in the presence of Him whom he believed—

All right. In the presence of God, Abraham believed

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—God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did.

When God calls something that doesn't exist as though it did, when God puts it in the past tense, He authorizes you to do the same thing. Faith does the same thing. It goes on and talks about Abraham, Romans 4:18 NKJV,

¹⁸ Who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, (He believed in supernatural hope) so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, "So shall your descendants be."

All right. It says, "He believed according to what was spoken. According to what was spoken." Abraham didn't believe according to how he looked. He didn't believe according to how he felt. He didn't believe according to how Sarah looked. He did not believe, according to the fact, that Sarah had been barren for her entire adult life. He didn't believe according to the doctor's report. Abraham believed according to what was spoken by God, who said, "I've made you the father of many nations. I have already done it. As the sand by the seashore and as the stars are innumerable, and you cannot count them, so shall your descendants be." It goes on. Romans 4:19 NKJV says,

¹⁹ And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old)...

One translation says he already had one foot in the grave or already dead. Romans 4:19 NKJV says,

...and the deadness of Sarah's womb.

Her womb was dead when he's calling her a young princess. He's got one foot in the grave, so to speak. He's 100 years old, and this thing's not going to happen, but he believed according to what was spoken. It goes on in Romans 4:20 NKJV,

²⁰ He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God.

The Living Bible says,

²⁰ ...he praised God for this blessing even before it happened.

That's the same way that miracles occur in the church today, my friend, is by believing according to what God has stated, not according to how things look or how we feel. Miracles in the church today happen the same way. They'll happen for you, and they'll happen for me the same way, by believing the Word that has been preached. Not because I've earned it by the time that I've spent in prayer, or I passed out so many gospel tracts today, or I've towed the line, and I've not said anything wrong, and I've guarded my mind against dwelling on it. Those things are important.

Certainly, our behavior and our thinking are important. Our words are important. Kindness is important. Obeying the Scripture is incredibly important, but it's because of faith that God works miracles and supplies the Spirit today. All right, we're going to move on. I have a lot more I can

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say about that, but I have a lot more questions too. Here's another one. This is from Matthew 9. Interesting. In Matthew 9:27 NKJV, Jesus is speaking. The story is self-explanatory. It says,

²⁷ When Jesus departed from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out and saying, "Son of David, have mercy on us!"

Now, I just want to stop right there. Two blind men followed him. You know it's not easy for a blind person to follow someone. Obviously, they're following the sounds and following the crowds, but that's an important thing that what they did was difficult. As you read the story, Jesus actually eventually entered into a house. He didn't stop and address these guys. He made them follow Him. He kept going. He ends up in a house, and somehow, they find the house, and somehow, they get in. Just imagine what that was like for them. They're stumbling along. "Listen, do you hear Him? Do you hear Him?" Maybe they're clutching one another. "I think it's that way. I think it's that way." They're going that way. Then the crowd moves this way, and they know it's Jesus in there. They'd grab somebody, asking, "Is He still there? Is He still there?" It was not an easy thing for them.

It's interesting. You will find that in many of the stories where people were healed in the Bible, they sought Jesus out. They came. The woman with the issue of blood came in the press behind and grabbed the hem of Jesus' garment. Jairus came to Jesus and fell at His feet, on behalf of his little daughter that lay at home dying. Again and again, the Roman centurion sent the elders of the Jews to find Jesus; there was action on their part. They were proactive. They went after Him. It wasn't, "Well, God knows where I live, and if He wants me to have this, He'll do it. If He doesn't, He won't." No, you don't read about any stories like that in the Gospels. Here, the two blind men follow Jesus, and they're crying out, "Son of David, have mercy on us!" Matthew 9:28–31 NKJV,

²⁸ And when He had come into the house, the blind men came to Him. (Amazing!) And Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord."²⁹ Then He touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith let it be to you."³⁰ And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, saying, "See that no one knows it."³¹ But (it says) when they had departed, they spread the news about Him in all that country.

Because of those kinds of things, He wasn't able to travel about freely like He wanted to do. They didn't do what He said to do after they were healed. He said, "According to your faith." Well, their faith was demonstrated by searching Him out and coming after Him. Jesus asked them the question, "Do you believe I'm able to do this?" That's important, but it's not the entirety of the equation. Now, most people, saint and sinner alike, if you ask them a question, do you believe God is able? Do you believe God could heal this cancer? Do you believe that God could open these blind eyes?

Do you believe that God could provide work for you? Do you believe that God could turn the tables in your favor so that the situation you're currently in shifts? Do you believe God could take that arthritis out of your body? "Certainly! Yes, Lord!" That's how they answer. It's good to have that. It's good to be able to answer a resounding yes. In fact, you might even say right now, "Yes, Lord. I believe You're able. I believe You can." Which brings us to another question that is very important as well. It's in the Gospel of Matthew 8:1. We go back one chapter, Matthew 8:1–2 NKJV. It says,

¹ When He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him.

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Again, that's just an important thing to realize that people followed Him. They went after Him. It says,

² And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."

Now, there is a question embedded in his statement. He knew the Lord was able. He said, "You can make me clean. Lord, I know You're able to do this if You are willing." The question that's embedded here is, "Lord, are You willing? I'm not sure You're willing. I know You can. I know You're able. Are You willing to do this?" That's where a lot of people tend to stumble. They know God can.

Listen, whoever you are watching right now, you may be with a bunch of your mates sitting in a pub right now, drinking a beer. For whatever reason, I've gotten your attention. Hooray. Keep watching. God's trying to get ahold of your heart. You and your mates, your friends, certainly, we all know God's able. There's nothing He can't do. He is God. The question is, "Lord, are You willing? I know You can heal me. Do You want to? Is it Your will?" That's where a lot of people stumble. Matthew 8:3 NKJV,

³ Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

Now, it's important to be able to answer that. God showed His willingness to heal us by sending His Son, Jesus, and by Jesus taking the stripes on His back. Think about this. The Bible says the wages of sin is death. Without the shedding of blood, there's no atonement, and there's no remission for sins. Christ came and died and shed His blood. That atoned for our sins. He paid the price through His death.

There's no theologian virtually in any denomination or movement that's going to argue with that. The price of sin was paid through the death of Christ and only through the death of Christ, through the shedding of His precious, priceless blood. If that's true, then Jesus could have died a relatively painless, quick death and shed His blood and paid for our sins. Why, then, did the Father allow Him to suffer so? Why did He wear the crown of thorns on His head? Why was His back laid open with that Roman whip?

If you do a little studying, you find out that a Roman cat of nine tails, the kinds of whips that they used, had little beads of lead or pieces of bone sewn into the end of them, and it literally tore pieces of flesh off. Now, under the Jewish law, one of the punishments was 40 stripes, save 1, 39 stripes. Some people say, "Well, Jesus was whipped 39 times." Actually, the Jews weren't the ones who whipped Jesus. The Romans had no such law, and their whips were quite different. There's no indication, nothing in the Scriptures that says they stopped at 39. Most people never lived through a Roman scourging.

Read in Foxe's Book of Martyrs, and it talks about people's backs that were laid open, their muscles were laid bare, and their bones were laid bare. You could see their organs. Like I said, most people never lived through it because when they would whip them, the beads of lead or the bone would go into the skin. When they pull, it would rip chunks of flesh off. Jesus' back was laid open. The Scripture says, "By His stripes, you were healed. 1 Peter 2:24 NKJV,

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²⁴ Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.

Again, it's in the past tense. I was reading a Greek scholar the other day. Actually, it was some, a few years ago, really. It's been a while since I picked it up, but I was thinking about it the other day. He said that actually, the word stripes there, it's stripe, singular. He said, "The Greek demand," this is what he said, "The Greek demand that if you could have even discerned one stripe from another, it would have had to be, according to the Greek language, stripes, plural. Jesus' back was just one bleeding mass, just a gaping wound. It was one. There was no flesh left on His back. There weren't individual stripes that you could see. His back was completely ripped off. Therefore, in the Greek language, it's by His stripe, you were healed. Putting in the past tense. Again, Peter, there is looking to the finished works as it's done by His stripes, you were healed. The prophecy looking forward to that is found in Isaiah 53:4–5, and let me read it to you. Isaiah 53:4–5 says, "Surely," and that, by the way, means just what it says, surely. Absolutely, beyond argument and beyond all doubt,

⁴ Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.

The word there for grief is the same word translated as sickness and disease throughout the Old Testament. Grief is included in the word, but it's the weakest meaning of the word. Literally, "Surely, He has borne our sicknesses and carried our sorrows." That word is also translated as physical pain elsewhere in the Scriptures and particularly, in the book of Job. Surely, He, speaking of Jesus prophetically, beyond all doubt, beyond all argument, surely, He has borne our sicknesses and carried our pains.

⁴ Yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. ⁵ But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.

The punishment that Jesus took and the question, why didn't Jesus just die a relatively quick and painless death and pay for our sins? Why did God allow Him to suffer so? It's because by His stripes we are healed. He wore the crown of thorns on His head so that we could have peace. The chastisement for our peace was upon Him. His brow had the crown of thorns, and He was beaten repeatedly, struck in the face.

If you look at the story and His suffering and persecution up to the time when He was nailed to that rough beam of wood, why did all that happen? Why did the Father allow that? That was for your physical healing. That was for your peace. His death paid and took care of the sin problem. The laceration on His back, the tearing away of His flesh provided healing. In Matthew chapter 8, it actually quotes these verses. This is a Holy Spirit commentary on Isaiah 53:4-5. It says here, Matthew 8:16–17 NKJV,

¹⁶ When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, ¹⁷ that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: "He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses."

Now, here, Jesus is healing people based on the atonement yet future. We can now receive healing based on the atonement past. Again, 1 Peter 2:24 says that, "By His stripes, you were healed." Now, my point in all this, we're talking about God's willingness. "God, are you willing to heal?" Think about what He allowed His Son to go through. He wrote, "I am willing," and He

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wrote it in blood across the back of His Son. I remember one of the—in fact, it was the first time that I traveled overseas. I took my wife with me. I'd been invited to speak at a large conference overseas. I hadn't been overseas before. I had to get a passport. We had to get visas. We both had to get passports, and visas, and arrange the air travel. We had to get babysitters to take care of our young children.

I had to double up on work before I left because back then, I did everything in the church. The church wasn't as large, and I didn't have other people to cover. I did have to arrange to have someone come in. I had to make the call, and arrange for someone to come in from the outside and cover that weekend and the following Wednesday for us. We flew all the way over there, through what seemed like time zone after time zone after time zone. We got there.

We've spent much effort, and when I get back, I'm going to have to double up on work to catch up on things. If I would have gotten there after all that and people asked, "Well, Bayless, are you really willing to minister to us?" I would think, "What? What are you saying? Do you realize that we've gotten babysitters to watch our kids for nine or eight days, and we went through the process of getting visas, our passports, and arranging all the air travel and arranging people to come speak for us and doubling up on my work before I went? Yes, of course, we're willing! Doesn't that prove that we're willing?"

Well, my friend, Jesus left the glory world and came to this world to prove that God loves you. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him wouldn't perish, but have everlasting life." He allowed His Son to be whipped beyond, beaten beyond recognition to provide peace and healing for you. Yes, He is willing. He loves you. If you've never embraced Jesus before, I just want to tell you. He won't turn you away if you will come to Him. You are loved by God.

Listen, if you support this broadcast, I just want to say thank you. Through your faithful support, we're able to take this and put it in multiple languages, and send it around the world, literally into some 120 different countries. I want to say thank you for helping us. If you never have, maybe pray about sending a gift and helping us do this. We just want Jesus to be glorified. We want His Word to go out, and we want to encourage as many people as we can. Until next time, and I'll be picking this up again, may God richly bless you in Jesus' name.

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