

Questions about Healing (Part 4)

by Bayless Conley

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Hello, my friend. My name is Bayless Conley, and I want to invite you to spend the next few minutes with me as we study God's Book together. Jesus said, "The words that I speak to you are Spirit and life." He also said, "If you know the truth, the truth will make you free." It will set you free. In the book of Hosea, God said, "My people perish for a lack of knowledge." In the book of Isaiah, God says, "My people go into captivity because they have no knowledge and their young men are dried up with thirst." That is a thirst for knowledge. My friend, it is so important that we know what the Scriptures say.

We're on a subject that is really important right now. It's the subject of divine healing. Our God is a healer. In the book of Exodus chapter 15, God revealed Himself to His people as their healer. "I am the Lord, your physician, Jehovah Rapha," He said. That was even prior to giving them the Ten Commandments. It's like a mother tending to the physical welfare of her child and the physical health of her child before she even sees to that child's education. God wants every one of His children to know that He is a healer. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He was a healer when He walked the shores of Galilee. He's still a healer today.

It's so important to know what the Scriptures have to say. Many, many, many, many times over the years when I've had people come up to me, in fact, we just had services yesterday. I didn't preach. Actually, our oldest son preached the message in the services at church yesterday. I preached the previous two weeks, but he was on last weekend. After service, I stood up and found a short line of people wanting to talk to me and wanting prayer. So, I stayed until the auditorium was empty, talking to people and praying for people. A number of those people wanted prayer for healing. Many, many times, I will ask people, and I didn't specifically do that yesterday.

But many times, when people come up and want prayer for healing, I ask them, "Okay, what Scriptures are you standing on? What has God spoken to you from His Word? What promises have you laid hold of?" For most people, the answer is, "Well, nothing in particular. I don't really know any healing Scriptures." Well, a lot of times when there's nothing in particular that you've laid hold of by faith, that's what you get in response to prayer, nothing in particular. "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God." I'm doing my best to say this in the kindest of ways. I believe this is such an important subject.

You're going to need it in your own life or in someone else's life at some point. You need to know and understand that our God is a healing God and that healing is available to us as His children. The Bible says in Isaiah 53 that our sins were laid upon Jesus. It says by His stripes we were healed. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes, we were healed. Salvation and redemption, thank God the most important thing is that it provides rescue from sin and its consequences.

Thank God the iniquity of us all was laid upon Him. Thank God that He bore our sin. Thank God He was punished for us. It goes on and says that by His stripes, we were healed. If you look at Matthew 8:16-17, it confirms that's actually what that's speaking about in Isaiah 53. Jesus

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healed all who came to Him that it might be fulfilled. Which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, He, Himself, took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses.

Now, I will wholeheartedly agree with you that healing is not as important as the forgiveness of sin, as the redemption from sin and its consequences. But why ignore that? I remember it was the first time I'd ever eaten in a restaurant like this. I was with some friends and they'd invited me and the person I was with to come eat at a restaurant. Man, the food was amazing. It was really upscale. I was impressed by the service and by the food. We had a beautiful meal. I remember seeing this big area. There were the most amazing desserts, just layer upon layer and row upon row. They must have had a top pastry chef at this restaurant; the desserts just looked amazing. We got done eating, and our host asked, "Bayless, are you going to get a dessert?" I go, "I don't know."

I realize the meal's been expensive, and he's paying for it. So, I'm not going to go get a twenty-five-dollar dessert. They probably weren't that much, but it's a twenty-dollar dessert in addition to this expensive meal he's paid for. He said, "See the dessert bar over there?" I said, "Yeah." He said, "Dessert is included. You buy your entrée, and then you get the dessert, whichever one you choose along with it." I said, "Really?" He said, "Yeah." I said, "I think I'll have dessert." So, I walked over and I chose a nice pastry and enjoyed it. But my point is this: it was included in the price of the meal.

Healing was included in the price that Jesus paid. Yes, His death paid for our sins. Without the shedding of blood, there would be no remission of sins. The truth is that Jesus could have died a relatively quick and painless death and paid for our sins. Why, then, did God allow Him to suffer so? Well, the Scriptures are clear. "By His stripes, we were healed." He was the chastisement needed to obtain peace for us, which was laid upon Him by punishment.

Jesus went through all of that suffering and that torment, the stripes on His back, the crown of thorns on His head so that we could be healed and know peace. So, what we're doing is sort of an introduction. What we're doing right now is looking at different stories in the Old Testament and in the New Testament where healing took place, or the subject of healing is addressed. It's very interesting because a lot of times in these stories, questions are actually asked. Sometimes the Lord, Himself asks the question. Sometimes, the people in the story ask a question. Sometimes, there's just this inherent question embedded within the fabric of the story.

So what we're doing is we're looking at these questions, and we're just talking about them. We're sort of drilling down into them as to why they were asked and what the answers to these questions are. We come today to a question that the Lord Himself asked. It's in Mark 2, and we're going to begin in verses 1–12 NKJV. It says,

¹ And again He entered Capernaum after some days, and it was heard that He was in the house. ² Immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to receive them, not even near the door. And He preached the word to them. ³ Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men. ⁴ And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying. ⁵ When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you." ⁶ And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, ⁷ "Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" ⁸ But immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, He said to them, "Why do you reason about these things in your hearts?"

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⁹ Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise, take up your bed and walk?' ¹⁰ But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"—He said to the paralytic, ¹¹ "I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." ¹² Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"

The question we want to look at is the one that Jesus asked. He said, "Which is easier to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven you' or to say, 'Arise, take up your bed and walk?' Which one is easier?" Interesting that Jesus said, "But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins." He said to the paralytic, "I say to you, 'Arise, take up your bed.'" Now, He didn't say, "So that you know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins. I declare you forgiven from your sin." No, Jesus said, "You want to understand and know that I have power on earth to forgive sin? I'm going to prove to you that I do, and I'm going to prove it by healing this man."

The same authority that forgives sin, heals disease. I'll say that again. The same authority that forgives sin, heals disease. Both sin and sickness are the result of Adam's transgression. There was no sin in the world before Adam transgressed. The Bible says in the book of Romans 5 that through one man, that is Adam, sin entered the world, and death through sin. Well, sickness is just incipient death.

There was no sickness in the world before Adam's transgression. Sickness is just the offspring of sin. Once God makes a new heaven and a new earth and sin is forever banished, there will be no more sickness, no more crying, and no more pain ever again for God's people. Both of them, sin and sickness, have the same cure. His name is Jesus. There's something else in the story, and I just love it. These guys can't get into the house. So, they haul their friend up on the roof. They tear the roof apart and let him down. It says, "Jesus saw their faith." Faith is invisible. You can't see it, but you can see things that express it. Jesus saw their actions. The book of James says, "Faith without corresponding actions is dead."

Faith is expressed through action. Jesus saw their faith because He saw their action. We need to deeply consider this. The same faith that receives the forgiveness of sins can be exercised to receive healing from sickness. I know some people say, "Oh, come on, Bayless." Well, think about what Jesus said, "So that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. I say to you, 'Arise, take up your bed.'" The guy took up his bed, and he was healed. That was proof that Jesus had the power to forgive sin. It's that He healed. And people think, "Well, then why are not more people healed?" Well, I think it's pretty basic. We preach very, very little on the subject of healing. Romans 10:17 NKJV says,

¹⁷ So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

We preach truckloads and truckloads and truckloads of sermons on forgiveness and on that aspect of redemption. You, virtually, can't go to a church in any Christian denomination, that on any given Sunday, you won't hear a message preached about God's mercy to forgive. The Bible says in the book of Psalms, "Bless the Lord, oh my soul, and forget not all His benefits, who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all of your diseases." It's the one-two punch of God, but we only preach half of that. We preach about God's benefit, that He forgives all of our iniquities, but very, very rarely do we preach about Him healing all of our diseases.

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No wonder people have such great faith to put their trust in Christ as the Savior from sin because it's preached over and over from this angle and that angle and from this Old Testament story and that Old Testament story and from this New Testament example and from that New Testament declaration. And from this experience that we've had when the burden of sin lifted off our soul and we hear it again and again from person after person after person after person, a flood of teaching about forgiveness and about God's mercy to forgive and about the fact that Christ bore our sin and that whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. And God's not willing that any perish, but that all come to repentance. We hear it, and faith comes from hearing the Word preached. But we almost never hear a sermon preached on divine healing.

I have friends who have pastored for many years, and I will sometimes go preach at their church. I may feel led to preach a message on divine healing, and I do. More than once, I've had those pastors come up to me and say, "I have never once preached a message on healing in all the years that I've pastored this church." Yet some of them have preached hundreds, maybe even a thousand or more messages on forgiveness, and that's not an exaggeration.

If we heard even one-fifth of the amount of messages we hear on God's forgiveness and on Him reconciling us from sin and its consequences and His rescuing power to deliver even the worst of sinners, if we heard even one fifth of that amount of messages and they were directed about healing from the stories in the Gospels, from the stories in the book of Acts, I think we would see many, many, many, many more healings. My friend, the same power that forgives sins, heals disease.

The same authority that forgives sins heals disease. So, I think the answer is pretty simple. We just need to preach a lot more, study a lot more, and spend a lot more time looking at the subject of healing. Our faith will rise in proportion to the time that we spend in God's Word along these lines. I want to move on to another question. This one is found in James 5. Here's the question. James 5:14–15 NKJV,

¹⁴ Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵ And the prayer of faith will save the sick...

The word save is the same Greek word translated "to heal" in the New Testament. It's interchangeable. It just depends on the context.

¹⁵ And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.

Again, this is proof that the same power that heals disease is the power that forgives sin. The same power that forgives sin is the power that heals disease. "The prayer of faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he's committed sins, they will be forgiven him." The question is, "Is there anyone sick among you?" This is what the sick person is supposed to do. The sick person in the church is to call for the elders of the church, and the elders will come and pray over that person. They will anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will raise him up.

The Lord is the healer. Now, the sick person has their part. The elders have their part, and the Lord has His part. Everybody needs to do their part. First of all, the sick person is the one who needs to call. It didn't say let the sick person's wife call for him. It didn't say let the sick person's children call for her. It didn't say let the sick person's friend call. It says, let the sick person call.

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Faith without corresponding actions is dead, being alone. The sick person is the one who needs to call. Listen, if you don't believe, you're not going to call. The sick person needs to call for the elders. Hopefully, you have some elders in your church who know how to pray the prayer of faith.

The elders are to come to anoint that person. It means that they'll put oil on them, and there's no special healing power in the oil. You can use olive oil. You can use motor oil if that's all you have. Oil is symbolic for the Holy Spirit. It's symbolic for the presence of the Holy Spirit. We are believing that the presence of the Holy Spirit is going to come upon you. Anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will raise them up. What is the prayer of faith? Well, Hebrews 11:1 NKJV, actually, gives us the classical, technical biblical definition for faith. It says,

¹ Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Faith deals with unseen realities. If you can see it, if you can touch it, if you can taste it, if you can smell it, you don't need faith for it. But before the thing you're trusting God for arrives in physical form, faith is the evidence that you have it. "Now, faith is the substance of things you hope for, the evidence of things not seen." Let that sink in. Faith deals with unseen realities. James 1 talks about asking for wisdom or anything else that you need to ask in faith. Nothing wavering, for he that wavers is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind tossed to and fro. Don't let that person think they'll receive anything from the Lord. Not the wisdom they ask for or healing or anything else.

Faith has a steadfastness about it. Regardless of the fact that the wind wants to blow us this way and public opinion wants to blow us that way. This person's experience that they share wants to blow us this way. We stay steady in God's Word in agreement with what we have asked Him for and what we've prayed for according to His promise. It's the prayer of faith. The prayer offered in faith. The prayer of the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen will heal the sick and the Lord will raise them up. It's interesting. Right there in James 5, it goes on and gives an example of someone who prayed a prayer of faith and got results. In verse 17, it says Elijah was a man. I like one translation. It said he was every bit as human as you are. He wasn't Superman. He wasn't superhuman. He had flaws and stuff going on just like you do, just like I do. James 5:17-18 NKJV,

¹⁷ Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. ¹⁸ And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

So Elijah is given as an example. This is directly in connection with praying the prayer of faith for someone's healing. Elijah is given as an example of someone who prayed the prayer of faith. You read the story. He prayed that the heavens would be shut up and it wouldn't rain. It didn't rain for three and a half years. Elijah didn't just one day say, "I think I'm going to pray against rain. Yeah, that'd be fun." No, the scripture promised. God promised in His Word that if His people turned away from Him, He would shut up the heavens, and the heavens wouldn't give their rain. If the people began to worship idols, that was God's promise. "I will shut up the heavens, and it won't rain."

You read the story, and specifically, you can read about Elijah and the time that happened. It's actually found in 1 Kings around chapter 18 and the surrounding chapters there. The people had wholly given themselves to idolatry. They turned away from the Lord. But every

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rainy season, the clouds came in, and they dropped their rain. The crops grew. Year after year, the clouds came in and the rain fell. It's like, "Wait a minute. Wait a minute, God. You said that if the people worshiped idols and turned away from You, You'd shut up the heavens." Then Elijah prayed.

It takes someone grabbing a hold of the promise of God. The promise is filled with potential, and we need to lay hold of that promise through faith. The Bible says of the children of Israel who didn't enter into the promised land; it says they didn't enter in because they did not mix His Word with faith. Faith activates the promise. Faith releases the power and the potential of the promise. Elijah prayed because God made a promise, and the heavens were shut up. Then he prayed again. It was a prayer of faith. Prayer of faith is based upon the Word, first of all, because Elijah's prayer was based upon the Word. Then, when he prayed again, it was a prayer of faith. Let me read it to you. This is amazing. In 1 Kings 18:41 NKJV,

⁴¹ Then Elijah said to Ahab, (Ahab was the king of Israel. He said,) "Go up, eat and drink; for there is the sound of abundance of rain."

Now, when Elijah said that there wasn't a cloud in the sky, there wasn't any thunder, and there was no lightning. There was no wind, but he said there's the sound of the abundance of rain. He heard it with the ear of faith. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. It talks about the story of Abraham in Romans 4. God, who calls those things that are not, as though they were, said, "Abraham, I have made you a father of many nations." Abraham believed Him, and God said, "Okay, I'm changing your name from Abram, father of height or altitude, to Abraham, father of a multitude."

So Abraham said, "Okay, I'm Abraham. I'm the father of a multitude." And just like God was calling things that were not as though they were, Abraham, every time he said his name, was doing the same thing. "I'm Abraham. I'm the father of a multitude," before he and Sarah ever had a child. So here Elijah is calling things that were not as though they were, based upon God's promise. He said, "Go eat and drink. I hear the sound of abundance of rain." 1 Kings 18:42 NKJV,

⁴² So Ahab went up to eat and drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; then he bowed down on the ground, and put his face between his knees.

The posture of prayer. He's praying. We know he did because James 5 tells us that he prayed. He prayed that it would rain and the heavens open up. 1 Kings 18:43 NKJV,

⁴³ And said to his servant, "Go up now, look toward the sea." So he went up and looked, and said, "There is nothing." And seven times he said, "Go again."

So there's still nothing, not a cloud, no lightning, no thunder, and no sign of rain. Verses 44–45,

⁴⁴ Then it came to pass the seventh time, that he said, "There is a cloud, as small as a man's hand, rising out of the sea!" So he said, "Go up, say to Ahab, 'Prepare your chariot, and go down before the rain stops you.'" ⁴⁵ Now it happened in the meantime that the sky became black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy rain. So Ahab rode away and went to Jezreel.

That's where the summer palace was. Now, what a story. Elijah prays the prayer of faith; it's the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. "I hear the sound of the

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abundance of rain.” He tells his servant, “Go back and look. I don’t care if there’s nothing out there. I’ve prayed. God made a promise. Go look because it is going to happen.” Then there’s this cloud the size of a man’s hand, this tiny cloud in the sky. He says, “Go tell Ahab he better leave now. Otherwise, he’s not going to outrun the rain.”

The prayer of faith deals with unseen things. It’s that kind of a prayer that brings healing. When I received Christ as my Lord and Savior, I believe He washed me clean, and that He made me new. From that point on, I have not gone by my feelings. I might feel like God is a million miles away and that I’m not saved, but if I went by my feelings, I’d say, “Man, God has abandoned me.” But He hasn’t because He’s promised He will never leave me, and He will never forsake me. I am forgiven. I am washed in the blood of Jesus. Heaven is my home. I am going to rejoice in Him, though I see Him not and though I feel Him not.

I’m doing it by faith. I’m going to live like His eye is upon me because the just shall live by faith. I know His eye is upon me. I know that there is going to be a day when I stand before the judgment seat of Christ and give an account of my life. The place where rewards are passed out. I’m going to live my life by faith when it comes to my salvation experience and forgiveness. I’m going to live by faith the same way when it comes to healing. It’s the prayer of faith, the prayer of the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.

The question asked in James, “Is there anyone sick among you?” Here’s what you do. You call for the elders. The elders come and anoint you with oil. Pray the prayer of faith. We talked about that. The prayer of faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. I hope you have gotten something from this today. We’re just not done. We’ve got a whole lot more to look at when it comes to questions in connection with healing in the Scriptures. We’ll see you again.

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