

“Divine Healing Glorifies Jesus,”
Or: “There’s Power in the Name”
Pastor Sam Richards
Sermon for 20 November 2022
Texts: Acts 3

The gift of healing is one of the most beautiful manifestation of the Spirit.” Divine healing glorifies Jesus.¹ Therefore it is very apt that the healing in Acts 3 takes place at the Gate named Susan, the Beautiful Gate. Indeed, worked in Corinthian brass, the large, decorative doors must have been most strikingly gorgeous. Anyway the fact that healing glorifies Jesus aligns this gift with divine will. When the Son is glorified, the Father is also glorified; it’s reciprocal in a most marvelous and astonish-ing manner! Little wonder then at the reaction of the lame beggar, who was some forty years old; and still less little wonder at the **astonished and amazed** reaction of the surrounding crowd. It was miraculous in an irrefutably and undeniable fashion. Who would dare dispute the factuality of it? It was not something reported by the followers of Jesus to an unbelieving crowd! **In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.** (3:6) And the cripple who had never walked, the man who had never gotten anywhere that he was not carried (such as to the temple gate by friends so that he could beg for alms there). That particular man, whose presence was like a landmark in his day, whom everyone had seen and some had pitied, that man stood up, and, **his feet and ankle bones strengthened** (medical terminology not used elsewhere in Scripture!), **walked to the praise of God and the glory of Jesus.** So notorious, or well-known was *the man and his predicament* that no one had to call home and check his identity; everyone knew who *this lame man walking was!* It was three o’clock in the afternoon, and Peter and John, two disciples who were friends, partners in the fishing business, were headed into the temple for prayer. It was mid-afternoon, or I would say, what a splendid, beautiful way it was for the lame man and

¹ A brief note on the inspirations for this message. On vacation I was able to read a few good books. I read J Donald Butler’s Four Philosophies, Harper and Row, revised edition, 1957) It was humbling because it reminded me that while I think that I have been careful thoughtful, I may not have refreshed my thinking for a long season and I needed some brushing up philosophically. Frankly, I did not think I would like this book *it was in the educational philosophy section* which typically has meant dull and insipid. It was neither. I also read Philip Howard’s Common Sense [How Law Is Suffocating America], Random House, 1994. This book taught me a lot about law, litigation, regulation and how we got into the tangle we presently find ourselves in. For instance, I learned that the “rights” we have as Americans were negative prohibitions on the intrusion of governmental power and influence. Then I was challenged to read Andrew Murray’s Absolute Surrender but, at the time, I couldn’t lay my hands on my copy. But I did find his book, Divine Healing, Whitaker House, 1982, updated version (first published 1900). Murray writes during the revival of religion that accompanied the rise of Pentecostalism which reintroduced the Holy Spirit to the wider church. I was strongly reminded of Dr. Norman Goodall, a spiritual mentor and preacher friend from the 1970’s—deep wisdom about life, sickness, aging, health and death. And, as God would have it, I picked up a copy of Chase Replogle’s The 5 Masculine Instincts [A Guide to Becoming a Better Man], Moody, 2022. I am always open to improvement in that department; but nothing quite prepared me for Chapter 3, “Sarcasm: The humor of our age.” Replogle reminded me to keep my focus! From the springs of these four books and the Scriptures I have been drawing spiritual refreshment and I am so grateful—I haven’t gotten to Absolute Surrender yet!

the two apostles who befriended him to start their day. Those who questioned the man born blind and healed by Jesus were much more perverse. (See John 9.)

This faith healing would not have happened except for faith: the confidence that the apostles had in the power of the name of Jesus to heal, and the reciprocating *faith* of the lame man who was able to receive the grace of healing that afternoon. ***He proceeded into the temple, praising God!*** (Twice in vv. 8-9) He walked presumably for the rest of his life and he did so spontaneously for no one taught him how to walk—there was no physical therapy involved, no rehabilitation . . . no corrective surgery, no medicine. Frankly, in his congenitally tangled limbs, there was *nothing to be rehabilitated*; only atrophied muscles, weak bones and enfeebled tendons and ligaments! That was the extent of the reconstructive, or generative miracle: he had *never* walked, and now he was walking. It was all by faith in the powerful name of Jesus! **Praise the Lord.**

Faith is the confident attitude of a beloved child which honors the Father and counts on His continuing love. Yes, that God is faithful to keep His promises and that the Holy Spirit will communicate new strength to serve as we move forward.

Sin entered the world through the disobedience of Adam and Eve. Sin brought company with it; namely, evil, suffering, death and divine retribution. The power of God versus a congenital lameness! And what power exactly is meant by *the power of God*? The power it took to create everything in the first place, the power it takes to keep the entire universe running—constantly renewing and upholding all things. The power it takes to raise the Lord Jesus from the dead. The power it takes to exchange a new heart for the old. The power it takes to rescue an entire nation from oppression, harsh enslavement and bondage. The power it takes to send God's son to redeem the world and all who choose to believe. It is creation power, sustaining power, rescuing power, redeeming power . . . all of that power was brought to bear on a lame man's dead limbs. The same power it takes to convert any lost sinner. The power that God used to save even you.

We know that this healing and deliverance is God's will; ***that we should glorify Jesus*** and this glorification is also what redemption works in us!

Heal the body? Marvelous. Thank you, living Lord. Heal the soul? Marvelous, yes, even astounding. Thank you, living Lord.

Healing leads to sanctification. We are made holy—transformed into a holy people, God's peculiar possession, His chosen, His servants and members of God's household—and that is, in essence, of the messianic mission that the Son of God was sent from heaven to accomplish. All to the glory of God!

Another way to phrase this “mission is in kingdom terms”: Christ came to bring God’s kingdom to fruition on earth through us. Where Jesus reigns, the kingdom is.

Here’s the whole process: healing of sickness is *redemptive*, and that on the way to *sanctification*. Then Christ brings about *conversion* (a return, or a turning to God) and that produces *saving belief* as well as a *confirmation of faith*. So this redemption, sanctification, conversion and confirmation process transforms the believer from defiant sinner to compliant saint. Salvation, constraining one to remove sin and to pursue righteousness and, in the process, to *consecrate* oneself to divine service—the worship and praise for which we were created.

Ultimately, God wants us well/healthy so that we are able to serve Him effectually.

Think about Peter’s sick mother-in-law, sick with a high fever. Jesus heals her so that she can serve them which is both why she is there and what she longs most to do (purpose):

So Jesus arose from the synagogue (v. 38) . . . So He stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. And immediately she arose (like the walking lame beggar!) and served them. Luke 4:39

Some very interesting, and impressive things here.

- First Jesus **rebukes the fever**, not the sick woman.
- So the fever acts as if it is sentient, self-aware; as if it can be addressed, rebuked, commanded.
- Jesus acts authoritatively—in His name as it were—and according to the word that authority has been conveyed us: **there is power in His name**.

This “fever” is like *the wind and the waves* which Jesus rebuked and they (supposedly inanimate) responded to his command. **It left her**. We are not told where it went, nor are we told where it went.

This healing also has all the marks of a deliverance. It is an example of Jesus’ going about **doing good**. Particularly **Delivering those who were oppressed by the devil** like Peter’s mother-in-law. Here are the verses which follow the woman’s healing:

40 While the sun was setting, all those who had any *who were sick with various diseases* brought them to Him; and laying His hands on each one of them, He was healing them. 41 Demons also were coming out of many, shouting, “You are the Son of God!” **But rebuking them, He would not allow them to speak, because they knew Him to be [a]the Christ. 42 When day came, Jesus left and went to a secluded place; and the crowds were searching for Him, and came to Him and tried to keep Him from going away from**

them. 43 But He said to them, “I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose.” 44 So He kept on preaching in the synagogues of [b]Judea.

Footnotes

- a. Luke 4:41 I.e. **the Messiah**
- b. Luke 4:44 I.e. **the country of the Jews** (including Galilee)

The whole passage Luke 4:38-44 could be filed under “Synagogue Ministry” and it would include preaching the kingdom of God, the healing of the sick, deliverance ministry. The clear testimony of Scripture is that healing and deliverance are part of the life of faith. (See Mark 5:34) Healing and deliverance bring wholeness, bring health—through them Christ completes us, equips us, assists us. God uses both to attract hearts to His Son and to Himself; they demonstrate that Jesus lives, is alive and is powerful to save. Jesus is impressive. He makes all the difference—and critically so at certain times.

Also we note, in passing, that the opposition was demonically present all along; they were unhelpfully—testifying **You are the Christ, the Son of God.** *This testimony was worthless, given the source(!) and Jesus kept rebuking them to silence.*

And yet, there are even more “interesting bits” here. For instance, Jesus is present here **exercising authority**—over things we commonly hold to be “natural.” Things like fevers . . . as well as other supernatural stuff like demons.

It is possible that we have become too worldly, that we have slid into unbelief by our tacit acceptance of the naturalistic, materialistic worldview *to the exclusion of the supernatural.*

We act as if we believe in science (some do) especially when we rely solely on medicine and “best practices,” technologies and earthbound remedies. *We don’t reckon on divine presence, or on the difference it would make if we did!* What does this say about our belief in the expanding kingdom, the growth of Christ’s intervention as Savior and Healer? Is prayer essential, or merely supplemental, an option in a world from which God has been excluded?

To be very clear, there was nothing but Christ for the lame beggar, for the man born blind *and that was sufficient—what if it still is?* Sufficient, I mean.

What if healing glorifies the Name today as yesterday?

What if, in Christ, we have greater and greater access to more and more blessing, and power and influence? What if we are a generator and not merely a functional, household appliance?

Yes, and what if direct and increasing blessedness is communicated to us by the Holy Spirit in an ongoing fashion? **What about all these things, established on the promises of God, built on God's faithfulness and only faith activates them?** We think we can do without them, but why would we even if we could? Why not take up all the prerogatives of our standing in Christ? Are we beloved children? Are we heirs with Christ? Or not? Unbelief, I say, is something to be confronted. It is to be confessed and repented of! We should be asking God in faith to deliver us from its tyranny so that we can enjoy more and more what our great and powerful God can do . . . for us, in us, and through us!! Are crumbs sufficient when we have place at the banquet table?!

Amen.