

Pentecost 10 / July 28, 2024

Mark 6:55-56

“And wherever He came, in villages, cities or countryside, they laid the sick in the marketplaces and implored Him that He might touch even the fringe of His garment. And as many as touched it were made well.”

Jesus’ Power to heal and save

Healing was an important part of Jesus’ ministry. It was one of the signs of the Messiah and a sign by which He showed Himself to be the Messiah. John the Baptizer sent disciples to ask Jesus if He was indeed the Messiah. Jesus replied: “Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up.” Jesus’ healings showed Him to be the offspring of David, who would revive the kingship that fallen into ruin with the captivity in Babylon six centuries earlier. Isaiah sang, “There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.” Jesus’ healings showed He is the branch by which the kingship of David is renewed.

Most importantly, Jesus’ healings show Him the heir of the eternal kingdom God promised David through one of His descendants. King David wanted to build the Lord a house. The Lord said He would build David a house, royal line and kingdom, the holy church, that would never end. In announcing Jesus’ conception, the angel Gabriel said to Mary, “The Lord God will give to Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end.” Jesus’ power to heal shows He is the eternal king of the house of Jacob, the children of Israel, the church of the living God. He has power to heal and save those who believe, both in time and for eternity!

Jesus healed people wherever He went; among the lost sheep of the house of Israel, among Samaritans and Gentiles. People came to Jesus to be healed. In our gospel you sense the excitement and hope Jesus inspired in people wherever He went. Mark says, “Wherever He came...they laid the sick...and implored Him that they might touch even the fringe of His garment. And as many as touched it were made well.” People ran to Jesus. People walked miles to Jesus. Friends and family carried loved ones to Jesus. Four men famously lowered their friend through the ceiling tiles in front of Jesus as He taught, so He would heal him. Jesus healed him! There was no one whom Jesus refused to heal. The only person Jesus appeared to put off was the Canaanite woman, who pleaded for her daughter. Yet He only appeared to put her off in order to highlight her faith, greater than any He found in Israel. He praised her faith and healed her daughter. Jesus received everyone who came to Him. He healed all who called out to Him.

A few chapters earlier a synagogue ruler sought Jesus and implored Him to heal his daughter. She was on the verge of death. Jesus had an antagonistic relationship with synagogue rulers. He healed in their synagogues, on the Sabbath. They didn’t like that! They counted Him public enemy number one. Jesus didn’t turn the synagogue ruler away. Jesus doesn’t turn away anyone. When we come to Him, He extends His arms and opens His hands to receive us.

He went with the man and not only did He heal his daughter, He gave the greatest sign of His power to save by healing her of the greatest infirmity, death; calling her to rise to life. Jesus did these things to show Himself the Christ, the Son of the living God, our Saviour from sin and death. He did these things so that we would come to Him in faith, believe in His name and receive the healing of forgiveness from the heavenly Father, which will result in the perfect healing of resurrection to life everlasting. Jesus has power to heal and save eternally!

Healings were a double-edged sword; they both revealed Jesus and hid Him. They revealed Jesus as the Messiah to those who had ears to hear and eyes to see. They hid Jesus from those who, giving no thought to the greater healing of the soul, saw Him only as a healer of the body. Jesus brings healing, body and soul, to those who see Him as the Son of God and receive Him as their Saviour. The first thing Jesus said to the paralyzed man when his friends lowered his bed through the ceiling tiles was, “Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven.” Oh, that we would go to such great lengths to have our sins forgiven! Churches would be packed every Sunday. They went to great lengths to bring their friend to Jesus, but they hadn’t brought him to be forgiven. They came for healing. Forgiveness is what Jesus came to bring and what He gives freely to all who believe.

When we are ill or injured, we probably don't pray for forgiveness, though we should. We pray to be healed. We pray for people who are ill and injured that they may receive healing. We may say 'Thy will be done,' but we hope healing is His will. When healing is His will we rejoice, celebrate and tell our friends the good news that He has healed. We should rejoice and celebrate when the Lord heals our infirmities and brings health and well-being to those for whom we pray; our friends, families and strangers whose names and needs have come before us. This is the Lord of whom the psalmist sang, "who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good so your youth is renewed like the eagle's." We rejoice, celebrate and give thanks. But we remember that the greatest and most lasting healing is the forgiveness of the cross, through which Jesus heals us to eternal life.

Healing was part of Jesus' ministry from the beginning to its earthly close. Healing shows Him as the Son of God, so we would put our faith in Him as the Messiah. Healing shows Jesus' humanity as the Son of Man, so we would believe He cares for us in our suffering and stands with us in our sorrow. His healings reveal His divinity within His humanity, so we would know He truly is Immanuel, God with us. The author of Hebrews wrote, "since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity, so that by His death He might destroy Him who holds the power of death, that is the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death." Jesus has power to heal and to save!

Some people say they are not afraid to die, but most people would prefer to live. Some people are so ill, injured and infirm that death becomes their desire. We might be so sick we want to die. Yet if healing were offered, no one would turn down the restoration to well-being. Jesus healed from the compassion of His heart that resonates with human suffering. He knows our griefs. He shares our sufferings. He bore our sins on the cross. Healing is important in our experience of Jesus, but the greatest healing is of our souls that comes through faith in Him as our God and Saviour. Jesus has power to heal and to save those who believe in time and for eternity.

It is good to seek healing. God wants us to pray for those who are ill, injured and who endure chronic pain and suffering. God continues to heal through Jesus. But know that all the people whom God heals in time, eventually pass away in time. Good King Hezekiah wept and prayed when the prophet Isaiah told him his illness would end with his death. The Lord, in compassion, added fifteen years to his life. Hezekiah was granted more time, but He was not granted eternity in time. Those fifteen years ended twenty-seven hundred years ago. Every person whom Jesus healed by the words of His mouth and the touch of His hands, even those who were healed by touching the hem of His garment, eventually again became ill, injured or otherwise afflicted and died. Those who were fully and truly healed were those who saw Him as more than a healer of the body, but as the healer of the soul in forgiveness.

God heals us in many ways through natural processes, medical knowledge and care. He may heal us in time with remission of an illness. If He doesn't heal you, it doesn't mean He doesn't love you. He gave Jesus to share our griefs, carry our sorrows and bear our sins on the cross. He heals us eternally in the remission of sins through faith in Jesus. Jesus healed so that we would put our faith in Him as our God and Saviour. Those who believe in Him as God and receive Him as Saviour, receive healing in relationship with the heavenly Father. That healing will be made full in resurrection to life everlasting; in which sin, injury, illness, affliction and death are no more. Jesus has power to heal and save in time and eternity. In Jesus' Name. Amen