

Divine Healing

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GOD made provision for His people in every area of their lives. In Hebrews 13:8 we read,

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."

When Jesus was on this earth He walked about doing good. He had power. He was concerned about people and He was very much interested in relieving their suffering. He showed great love and compassion, and He is still the same. He heals the sick and delivers the afflicted.

One of the stones in the foundation of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is divine healing. Some people think that that is outdated, but I know from personal experience and the experience of many people with whom I have had contact, that God does heal yet this very day. The devil tries to hinder, but God has more power than the devil, and it is a reality that the Lord can and does heal.

Exodus 15:25 speaks of when the Children of Israel needed water. What they found was bitter, and Moses called on God for help:

"And he cried unto the LORD; and the LORD shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them,

"And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee" (Exodus 15:25,26).

"I am the LORD that healeth thee." He said, "I am." And the tense makes a lot of difference. Some people say, "The Lord used to heal." Let us realize that the Lord still heals and that He is the same yesterday, today and forever. Psalm 34:19 says,

"Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all."

Some people have a mistaken idea that if you get saved, and especially when you get sanctified, that will be the end of all afflictions, and if you do have any problems with the body, it is a sign you have sinned. That isn't what the Bible says. God said, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous." Does that frighten you? Not if you read the rest of the verse. He adds, "But the LORD delivereth him out of them all." The God we serve is all-powerful.

Think who made the body and how intricate it is: the digestive system, the circulatory system, the nervous system. And people have the audacity to say that it all just happened! There was a Divine Designer who knew what He was doing when He created us, and He still knows His business today and is interested in us to take care of us. It is wonderful that He can be "touched with the feelings of our infirmities." He knows how we feel. And how we feel physically sometimes has an effect upon our spirituality.

When some people are afflicted they draw very near to the Lord, and it is a blessing. David said, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted." Why? He learned the power of God. He experienced the presence of God. He found that God cared and was interested.'

Psalm 68:19 is a very interesting verse:

"Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits."

When I was a young man, I used to drive a dump truck. My boss would send me to the gravel pit to load the truck and haul the gravel to a paving plant where the gravel was mixed with asphalt for paving. I would back in under the bunker and pull the lever, and down came the gravel and filled the truck.

When I read this verse, I just say, "Lord, I'm going to back up to Your bunker and You load me." And He does it. We are the ones who "pull the lever" by faith. God has the blessings and He is willing for us to have them, but it is up to us to believe, and appropriate the promises of God. He said, "According to your faith be it unto you." So when we believe, God works.

You will notice that there are often some provisos along with God's promises: "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land" (Isaiah 1:19). The Bible tells us that if our heart condemns us not, then have we confidence toward God. Go to a psychiatrist and he says the problem is that there is a guilt complex. But the psychiatrists can't forgive your sins. Jesus can. And when your sins are forgiven, it engenders faith in your life. The Bible tells us that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). God's Word is uplifting, encouraging. It is strengthening and helpful. You are happy when you obey it. The Psalmist knew what he was talking about because he had had many, many experiences.

"Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name" (Psalm 103:1).

It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord. And when you praise the Lord and thank Him for what He has done, He will do more for you.

"Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits" (Psalm 103:2).

Heart trouble is a very great malady in our land. But the worst kind of heart condition is not a failure of one's heart to pump, but a failure of one's heart to believe and repent. When we believe and repent from the heart we have a new lease on life. Old things pass away and all things become new. We have the opportunity to love and serve God. In the 3rd verse David said,

"Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases."

The Gospel is positive. The Lord makes it very clear and plain that blessings, healings, experiences, safety, security, health and strength, accrue to the account of the believer who trusts God and obeys His Word. I love to sing, "Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey."

God honors faith and obedience. He said that He "forgiveth all thine iniquities." When they are gone you feel better immediately. And "who healeth all thy diseases." There they go! You may ask me, "Have you ever had any afflictions? Have you ever really hurt? Do you know what you are talking about?" In fifty-four years of serving the Lord, God has been a very present help in my times of trouble. Husbands and wives need the healing touch, need to have faith for the healing of their children and to give them confidence to trust the Lord. Grandmothers and grandfathers need the touch. The Lord has it, and He is there to answer the cry of His people.

**"Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies;
"Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's" (Psalm 103:4,5).**

The Lord is able to renew our strength. Isaiah said, "They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (Isaiah 40:31). How's that for the power of God? Isn't that encouraging?

In Psalm 105:37, we are told of the miracle that God performed when Israel left Egypt. Jacob and his family numbered less than a hundred people when they moved to Egypt, but when they came out there were 600,000 men, besides women and children. If the average Jewish family at that time was five, which is very conservative, five times 600,000 is 3,000,000 people. They were of all ages from babes to seniors. But listen to what this verse says:

"He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble

person among their tribes" (Psalm 105:37).

Talk about a miracle-working God! We know Him! Consider three million people of all ages and there was not a feeble person among them! I say that is a miracle of God. He was interested in Israel, but that is only part of the story. He is interested in us this very moment. And He wants to do great and wonderful things for us.

In another place in Scripture we read that the Lord sent His Word and He healed them. Do you realize that the Word of God is a healing balm? The more we understand it, the more faith we have. He said that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." If we read more of God's Word and less of other things that we are surrounded with, we will have more faith. It is a Book that's alive. Haven't you in your morning devotions opened the Book at times and started to read, and there found the answer to the question of the day before you ever got started? Have you ever had the experience, when going through a hard trial, the enemy coming in like a flood, of God's giving you a verse of Scripture that solved your problem? He said He would lead and guide us into all truth by His Holy Spirit. Oh, we need that Guide!

God's way is the right way. It is God's Heaven we are going to. If we want to get to Heaven, we'll have to go by God's Book. It is the only Book that will save our souls. The Word of God reveals to us God's interest and care for each one of us, so let's saturate our lives with God's Holy Word.

Let us read Isaiah 53, beginning with the first verse:

**"Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?
For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry
ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no
beauty that we should desire him."**

It breaks our heart as we continue reading this:

**"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sor- rows, and acquainted with
grief. . . ."**

Who? The Lord of Glory, the co-Creator of Heaven and earth. The Savior, the One who was willing to give His life a ransom for all of us. And the very men whom He created despised and rejected Him. Isn't that a heartbreak?

When you say, "Nobody has ever been through what I've been through," look down and you'll see the footprints of Jesus going ahead of you. He's been there. He knows how to help His people. Cast all your cares on Him, for He cares for you. Why worry when you can pray? God is always only a prayer away.

**".and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed
him not.**

**"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sor- rows: yet we did esteem
him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.**

**"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities:
the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed"
(Isaiah 53:1- 5).**

That is present tense! That is important! Now remember, Isaiah may have written this something like seven hundred years before Christ ever appeared on the scene, but he said of Jesus, "with his stripes we are healed."

If you trust God in everything in your life, when a problem comes you will keep on trusting Him; and you will have the victory again. Your faith grows as you practice trusting God.

When we trust God in every facet of our lives, we are very much interested in God's will for us; we are in a position to know that God will not leave us. He'll be there to deliver us.

When David volunteered to fight Goliath, the king wanted to put his armor on David. What did David tell Saul? He said, "The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine." Saul was quivering in his boots, shaking — so was all Israel. And remember, Saul was head and shoulders above all the rest of the people, but he was scared. David took one look at that giant and said, "With the power of God we can have the victory for Israel." So he wound up that sling and God directed the stone, and down went Goliath.

God can give you the victory over every "giant" in your life if you will trust Him like David trusted Him. Trust in God is vitally important to our spiritual well-being. In fact, precious old Job said, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him" (Job 13:15). It is a wonderful thing to fall into the arms of a loving God. And when you put your trust in God, He has your problem.

We take our problems to the Lord. If someone comes to me with a problem, I tell him: "I'll help you take it to the Lord in prayer. We'll pray and God will deliver." We take our burdens to the Lord and leave them there until He answers prayer.

In Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the Temple, he said: "There hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant." Think of that for a moment. He said that not one of God's good promises has ever failed us. That means that God's promises are still in force, and they are powerful. They are effective today, and if we believe them we can get the results. In Malachi 4:2 we read:

"But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings."

Isn't it a marvel how much there is in the Bible about healing? The Word of God brings faith into our lives. It is much more important what God says than what we say. And God's Word says here that He will rise "with healing in his wings."

Have you ever pled the Blood of Jesus when you were hurting? I had been saved only a few weeks when my precious old auntie, my dad's older sister who was very much interested that I stay on the Rock, said, "Norman, do you know how to plead the Blood?" I said, "Aunt Iva, I think I do, but you tell me some more." I needed all the help I could get. "Well," she said, "just remember that when Jesus died on the Cross and shed His Blood, it was for our healing and salvation. The devil can't get through that Blood; and when you plead the Blood of Jesus against the devil in a temptation or trial, or in sickness, and that Blood of Jesus flows over your heart and soul, over your mind and body, you have the victory over the devil." I think that was good advice — it has lasted fifty-four years. And I appreciate the fact that we can plead the Blood today.

The Blood of Calvary is important; only through it do we have salvation. There is no alternative. If you do not serve God, whom do you serve? Let's be very sure that we are serving God.

"And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.

"And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases [that means various diseases] and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them" (Matthew 4:23,24).

Jesus did that when He walked the shores of Galilee some two thousand years ago. Isaiah said seven hundred years before that, "with his stripes we are healed." Here they brought all of their sick to Jesus and He healed them.

That is why the people come up on the platform at the conclusion of the service to have the ministers anoint and pray for them. They believe that the Lord is able to heal diseases and sicknesses today just like He did back there when He walked the shores of Galilee. And we have witnesses all over the place who say, "Yes, it works." The Blood of Jesus is still powerful and efficacious for all manner of sickness.

There are some diseases that people hear about and they start to shudder, dreaded diseases that most people consider to be terminal. In Jesus' day, leprosy was terminal. There was no known cure by man, but Jesus had a cure. In Matthew 8:1 and 2 we read:

**"When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him.
"And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean."**

Remember, they were supposed to stay a distance away from other people and cry, "Unclean, unclean," so nobody would touch them. It was considered to be a communicable disease at that time and there was a separation between the leper and all of society, including his family. But Jesus did not operate by man's rules. Listen to the 3rd verse:

"And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. . ."

And I like the next two words.

". . .And immediately his leprosy was cleansed" (Matthew 8:3).

In the Gospel of Mark, the 5th chapter, we read about a demoniac. When Jesus had crossed the Sea of Galilee and was come to the shore, a man from the tombs met Him. He had been bound with chains which he broke as if they were just strings. He cried and groaned and moaned in the night as he walked among the tombs and he was not even clothed. Talk about torment! He was tormented and so was everybody who heard him. He was a threat to society. But when Jesus came, he fell at His feet, and Jesus touched him. What a change He made! He just healed him, casting out a legion of devils. Those terrible devils didn't want to be isolated so they asked permission to go into a herd of swine. Two thousand of those swine dashed into the sea and were drowned. Can you imagine what one man had in him that two thousand swine couldn't stand?

The Lord came to bring deliverance and when He healed that man, he was found clothed and in his right mind, seated at the feet of Jesus, learning of Him. That's a good place for us to be today: at the feet of Jesus.

Today, sometimes a doctor will say about a person whom God has healed: "We must have given a wrong diagnosis because this couldn't have happened." Look! The Lord can heal all diseases yet today, and He is able to give perfect healing. We recognize the power of God.

In Mark 5:25, we read about a woman who had an issue of blood for twelve years. If you think you hurt bad for a day or two, just multiply 12 times 365 and see how long this dear lady hurt. But she said, "If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole" (Mark 5:28). When this woman pressed through the crowd (and it was a big crowd) she touched Him and immediately virtue flowed from Jesus through that precious woman and she was healed. And Jesus turned around and said, "Who touched me?" Then the disciples, with their natural minds, said, "Well, Lord, look at this crowd and You're asking, 'Who touched Me?' " He said, "This is a different touch. Virtue flowed out of Me." And about that time the woman came forward and confessed to Jesus that she was the one who had touched Him. After twelve years, she was made every whit whole. He said, "Thy faith hath made thee whole."

Faith! Remember, that is part of the title of our church. Apostolic Faith. "Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3); faith in God's Word. And it is not exclusively one denomination. When the Bible is obeyed and practiced, faith is built up in our hearts.

In Mark 9:17-22 we have a very pitiful case:

"And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit;

"And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not.

"He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me.

"And they brought him unto him• and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming.

"And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And Ike said, Of a child.

"And oft times it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us."

"But if thou canst do any thing." Never question whether the Lord can do anything. With God all things are possible. The question is posed in Scripture in several places, "Is anything too hard for God?" Man has his limitations, but not our God. The man said, "If You can do anything for us, help us."

"Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth" (Mark 9:23).

Did you get that? "All things are possible to him that believeth." Brother Barney testified that he was run over by

a car that was traveling at the rate of about forty-five miles an hour. He was almost a basket case. He was taken to the hospital, and was given no hope whatsoever. The doctors inferred that what they should do was just try to make him comfortable because he wouldn't be here long. If I remember the story correctly, Brother Bush was called, and when he came into the hospital room where several of the folks were — family and visitors — he said, "Now all of you who believe that God can heal Brother Barney, stay in here and we will pray. All of you that wonder whether God will heal him or not, just go out into the hall."

The Lord came down when they began to pray. They were believing against hope in the natural, but they knew the power of God. And when they prayed, God began to work. He was all hooked up with tubes to help him breathe, etc., but soon the nurses began to take them off. They said, "You don't need this, you don't need that." One of the nurses looked at him and said, "What kind of a man are you?" I don't think Brother Barney would have said, "I am a man of God." But he probably would have said, "I believe in God and so do those people who prayed for me." He began to get better. He walked up here onto the platform this camp meeting. He is a witness to what the power of God can do when we believe.

Jesus said to the man who came for healing for his son:

**"If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.
"And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief" (Mark 9:23,24).**

"Lord, I really do believe. If there's a shadow of a doubt anywhere, You move that out so I can believe wholeheartedly." Somebody said, "That's a leap in the dark." No, it is a leap into the arms of the Lord. He does not rob His children. He takes care of them. He heals them. He makes them happy.

In the Gospel of John we have the case of a blind man. I try to relate to people who can't see, because I have sight. Of late I've seen more beauties of God's creation and nature, and I've seen more beautiful young people who love and serve God. I'm glad I can see them as well as hear them. The loss of sight would be a dreadful thing.

We had a precious brother in a city where we served for a number of years who had been blind for thirteen years. When I went to read the Bible to him, and pray with him, we had the blessing of the Lord in that room. He could get hold of the Lord. What he didn't see with his physical eyes, his spiritual eyes reached out and took hold of. Oh, what blessings there were when we prayed!

But here was a blind man to whom Jesus said: "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (John 9:7). The Lord had made a potion of spittle and clay and anointed the blind man's eyes. Washing does not ordinarily cure blindness. Think of the excuses people make today for the lack of trusting God. If we understand correctly, the Pool of Siloam goes down a series of steps, way down to the bottom. The blind man could have said, "Lord, You don't expect me to go down that treacherous stairway, do You, when I'm blind?" It doesn't give any indication here that he made a single excuse. He just got up and began to do what the Lord said. And when he got down to the Pool of Siloam and washed that clay off his eyes, the Bible says very tersely that he "came seeing."

Now shall we turn to James, the 5th chapter. We have been talking about things that happened in the time of the patriarchs, in the time of Isaiah, in the time of Christ. I believe that James 5 brings us up to date.

"Is any among you afflicted? let him pray."

I was a little amused the other day when Brother Taylor told of having gone to the fellows aboard the aircraft carrier Enterprise when he was aboard, and saying, "I want you to pray for me"; and they had looked at him and said, "You're young and healthy; pray for yourself." And James tells us we are supposed to pray for ourselves.

"Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms."

Singing the praises of the Lord does something for us. So James said,

". . . Is any merry? let him sing psalms.

"Is any sick among you? 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."

Notice the "shalls" in this next verse. There are no "maybes" or "perhaps." It says "shall."

"And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:13-16).

Every now and then one of the brothers will say, "Do you have your medical kit with you?" I surely do. There it is a bottle of plain olive oil that has been prayed over and dedicated to God's service. No magic in the oil any more than there was magic in the lump of figs that was put on Hezekiah's boil. Obedience is the real key. But this medical kit allows us to do it just like the Lord said. And you'll notice that the ministers pick up the little bottle of oil, anoint the candidate on the forehead with the oil, in the Name of the Lord. Then they pray the prayer of faith and God heals them. Do you believe that?

Our little daughter was only a few months old when she had a high fever. My wife was concerned, and so was I, but I didn't say anything to her about it. One night when I came home from work she said, "Do you realize how sick she is?" I said, "Yes." She said, "You didn't say anything." I said, "I didn't want to worry you." She said, "What are we going to do?" I said, "The same thing we always do. We're going to trust God." She said, "Then you'd better call the ministers." I said, "You're right." We called the ministers, they came and anointed the little child, and prayed. The next morning she was on the floor playing, perfectly healed. It works! No maybes involved in that.

Somebody says, "Does everybody get healed?" If we got healed every time we would probably live forever on earth. But do you think God might have a plan for us? I want God's plan, don't you? We do not want to be here a day longer than the Lord wants us to be and we do not want to leave a day earlier. The Bible says that our times are in His hands, and remember that we are going to trust God because it works.

In the 19th chapter of Acts, verses 11 and 12:

**"And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul:
"So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them."**

We want a Biblical authority for everything we do. We want to do it like the Book says. You have probably seen people come up on the platform and hand the minister a handkerchief. He will anoint that handkerchief with oil and lay it on an open Bible, and with another minister will pray, "O Lord, we're coming to You in behalf of the one who is represented by this handkerchief. He trusts You and believes You, and we want You to heal him according to Your Word." And the one who brings the handkerchief takes it home to put it on the body of the one who is sick. We have heard testimonies that people had received an anointed handkerchief and God had healed them.

God still heals. One time I was in such pain that tears were running down my face. I was really hurting. My wife called for the ministers and they came and prayed for me. I had a gathering in my head in the mastoid area, just like a stiletto going up and down the back of my head at every breath, every heartbeat. Oh, talk about pain! (And I can stand a lot of pain ordinarily. But that was too much.) When the ministers came I was on my hands and knees by the sofa praying and hurting. They anointed me and prayed for me and God took away the terrible pain. The next morning that thing broke and my whole system cleared and I was well. That's the power of God!

There is a brother — we were young men together — who had a very serious affliction caused by an auto accident. There were times when he would be almost paralyzed. In the middle of the night his wife would call and we'd go over and pray and the Lord would undertake for him. At such times he couldn't even speak. He had to roll his eyes in the right direction to tell his wife if he heard her or if he did not. He had cramps in his legs. Can you imagine being cramped up in your legs and paralyzed at the same time and you could not reach down to rub out the cramps? Night after night this happened, but we would pray and the Lord would deliver. But one day in a young people's meeting that brother came to the altar just like he was seeking salvation. He said, "Lord, I have to have help." When he got up from that altar he was every whit whole because the Lord had healed him. God is the same yesterday, and today, and forever.

So let's keep this stone in the foundation and say, "Lord, I want my foundation to be built upon the Lord Jesus Christ because it is with His stripes we are healed." Let us all believe Him!