

Who Can Heal Me? – January 10 2021

Introduction— many of us have seen them, at least once, on TV. Faith— healing preachers. An ABC news investigation, a few years back, though, showed some problems. Oh, they give a lot of money to see the faith healing preacher do it. The reporter said: “they see [the preacher] raising people out of their wheelchairs. He throws away their canes. He can even make a stunted leg grow, in a matter of seconds! [the preacher] says it is God who tells him which people to call out of the audience and heal. And he gives the impression that God even tells him their names & their illnesses.”

But in the investigation, it became clear to the ABC news team that it is [the preacher’s] friends & family who circulate in the audience before the service, who gather information for grant [the preacher] to use during the healing service. As for the healing itself, they found that grant uses a series of “artful deceptions & tricks.” For the stunted leg, he finds someone with average legs, has them sit in front of him on the stage, & adjusts their shoes, & then proceeds to “heal the shorter leg” by manipulating the shoes to make it appear that one leg is growing! He claimed that he made a deaf woman hear! But she said that grant healed her good ear— the other ear was still deaf! Grant claimed to make a lame man walk! He took a cane from a man, healed him, & told him to run down the aisle, to the thunderous applause of the crowd. But the ABC news team spoke with the man outside the auditorium, & found that the cane belonged to the woman seated next to him! His problem was with his arm— he had never had any trouble walking. And the people grant had lifted out of wheelchairs— they all said that they could walk all along.

What a scam!! You may think. How could people be so gullible?!? And some people think: “aren’t all these ‘faith-healers’ charlatans, who just take advantage of simple people?” that’s an interesting subject for us to consider, because one of the most impressive aspects of Jesus’ ministry during his life on earth was that of healing. But if we look at the scripture lesson for a moment this morning, I think we will see an entirely different emphasis & reason for the ministry of healing in Jesus’ life and ministry.

When we look at Jesus’ ministry, at 1<sup>st</sup> glance we see:

## I. The power of God in Jesus!!

### A. The faith of the centurion — 8: 5— 13

1. A centurion was a career military officer in the Roman army with command over a troop of 100 soldiers. Like a Capt. & Master Sgt. In U.S. army. Roman soldiers were hated by the Jewish people because of their oppression, control, & ridicule. Centurions were often men from other nations in the Roman Empire, who bought roman citizenship through their devotion to Caesar.

2. Yet this centurion acknowledged that there was a power that was greater than Rome's power— it was the power that was at Jesus' command. In asking Jesus to heal his sick servant, this centurion recognized that Jesus was like he was— with power to command & control by his very word!! “Master Jesus, I am too great a sinner & a gentile for you to trouble your-self in coming to my house. But it doesn't matter— i trust that you can heal my servant— just with your words!!!”

3. Jesus was amazed at the trust that this pagan, this gentile expressed. “my own people, the Hebrew people, who have been ‘entrusted’ with God's law, do not have such great faith!”

4. And Jesus went on to proclaim that trust in God, not the accident of birth into a certain people or race, would be the determining factor of every person's eternal destiny!!

5. Then, Jesus confirmed and rewarded the faith of the centurion— the paralyzed servant was healed! Notice: the healing didn't depend on the faith of the paralyzed servant— it was the Faith of the servant's master that moved Jesus to heal the afflicted person!

### B. The healings at Peter's house

1. No doubt— Peter was married, as were several of the disciples. In Peter's case, his wife's mother was sick— she had a fever. God healed her as soon as Jesus touched her— instantly healed.

2. When word of the healing of Peter's mother— in— law got around, people came from all over to the healing rabbi and preacher!! And Jesus healed them, cast out demons, and gave peace to the people. What does this “day of healing” tell us about Jesus?? It tells us that:

II. Jesus is king!!!

A. King of kings, Lord of lords! The messiah! The savior! Jesus can heal with a touch; he can heal with a word, just as God created the world with his word, in Genesis chapter 1.

B. Jesus has control over the causes of life & death!! Jesus has the authority to “override” the natural, normal processes of biology and biochemistry to change the outcome of a disease, illness, or physical affliction. The source of Jesus' authority was not missed by the people, either— both the centurion and all the Jewish people recognized that this power over disease could only be exercised by God— or his servant.

C. All of the miracles, and healing of people— are acted out parables — Jesus was showing that God is concerned about each and every one of us, our health and well— being ! ! ! ! One other thing that Jesus' words on this day teach us:

D. Your entrance into the kingdom of heaven does not depend on your heritage, or your nationality, or your skin color, or the language you speak, or your belonging to the right religious club!! Your entrance into the kingdom of heaven, the privilege of sharing in the “great banquet” with Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob before God's throne— that depends entirely— on your faith in Jesus Christ!!

1. Joining a political party does not get you into heaven, nor does joining a political party keep you out of heaven!!

2. Belonging to a white supremacist group will not get you into heaven. Belonging to such a group won't keep you out of heaven— but subscribing to the racist ideas of those groups, goes directly against Jesus' teaching “love your neighbor as yourself,” so there will be that to answer

for before the judgment seat of Christ, one day.

again —

3. Only complete & unreserved trust & dependence on Jesus Christ can assure you of everlasting life in the kingdom of heaven!!! — look at the faith of the man with leprosy: he was desperate!! Jesus was his last & only hope!! He threw himself on Jesus' mercy— & depended on Jesus for his life & future. — look at the faith of the centurion: he was a person of power & authority, & he knew who had the power & authority to heal his servant— Jesus! This roman soldier did not have some vague concept that we must “have faith in faith”. . . — he knew that we must have an object of that faith— and that object was ( & is ) — Jesus Christ!!

4. This is the testimony of the rest of the new tes.— in Romans 3, the apostle Paul wrote: “but now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known.... This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. . . . All . . . Are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. [God] did this . . . So as to be just, & the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.” (Rom. 3:21-26)— in Ephesians ch. 2, the writer says: “. . . It is by grace you have been saved, through faith (faith in Christ) — and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God— not the result of works....” (Eph. 2:8-9, NRSV).

4. The old hymn says it so well: “not the labors of my hands can fulfill thy law's demands.... Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to the cross I cling....” (toplady, 1776, rock of ages, #361, U.M. hymnal, 1989)

5. The word that Jesus has for each of us is that it is only when we stop trusting just in ourselves, in other people, in our politics, & begin to trust first and foremost in Jesus, that we will see God make a difference in our lives!! and God's promise to you is:

III. Jesus can touch you!! Jesus can heal you!!

A. Not in the phony, “melodramatic” ways of the “faith-healers,” like those on ABC's primetime live.

B. But in real, life-changing ways! As one who was once paralyzed for 4 weeks, I tell you that Jesus can still heal!!

C. But the healing of Jesus today is not always the “physical, show-stopping” healing that we see in the “faith-healing” ministries! Or as the four gospels tell us in Jesus’ ministry. Jesus can heal the attitudes of a person, can heal the heart of a person— and in a lot of ways, that is as important, perhaps more important than physical healing.

Conclusion— Red Barber was a retired radio sports commentator, was interviewed every Friday morning on national public radio's “morning edition.” One Friday, Red got to talking about Roy Campanella, the great L.A. Dodgers catcher of the 1950's. He was a great athlete: he hit 41 runs one year, was the league’s most valuable player 3 times. But his career was cut short— on January 28, 1958, “his car hit an icy patch on the road, skidded, hit a telegraph pole, and he became a quadriplegic. He has lived in a wheelchair for these 34 years.” But Red said that the important thing is Roy’s attitude & philosophy about life. In an interview some years ago, Roy Campanella said: “‘I accept this chair. I am not sorry. I don't look back. I talk good to myself. I accept this chair. I believe the good Lord has spared me, has let me live for a purpose, for a reason. I accept this chair.’ Roy goes to spring training camp with the Dodgers each year; they have a place there called ‘Campy’s Corner,’ and he sits in his wheelchair, and talks to the young ballplayers, and gives them all sorts of wonderful advice.”

Jesus can heal our attitudes, can give us a tremendous outlook on life— and that can be worth more than anything! What about you?? Do you need Jesus to heal you?? Do you need Jesus to heal you of a lack of faith in him?? Do you need healing of an attitude in your life, something that is warping your outlook on life, & interfering with your relationships with others?? Do you need to forgive someone of something— do you need Jesus to heal you of an unforgiving spirit about something done in the past?? Ask the Lord Jesus Christ to transform that part of your life, & guide you in a new direction from now on.