Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Temporary Sign Gifts, Part 2
Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:9, 28, 30
Code: 1857

This morning we continue in our study of the spiritual gifts and we come to one that is very very important and controversial subject, the gift of healing. Now take your Bible, if you will, and look with me at I Corinthians Chapter 12, and that's the Chapter we've been studying on our series and we're stopping along the way to consider the individual gifts, but you'll notice in I Corinthians Chapter 12, beginning in verse 9 and I'll point out two other verses, the mention of the gift of healing. I Corinthians 12:9 says, "To another faith by the same Spirit, to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit." Then verse 28, "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that powers, then gifts of healings, helps, government, diversities of languages." Then verse 30, "Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with languages? Do all interpret?"

Now in those three verses there are three mentions of the gifts of healings and so it is one of the spiritual gifts catalogued here in this chapter and one that is important for us to study.

Now I want to begin our study of these particular truths relative to this gift with a couple of preliminary remarks, if I might. Number one is this: I realize that this is a very controversial subject. I realize there is an awful lot of concern about this because the number one human problem in the world is illness. There is a lot of concern about healing and I want you to know that I'm well aware of the variety of opinions and I have done my very best to read as much as I could, as widely as I could to understand the varying viewpoints. And what I'm attempting to do is to give you what I believe is the clear word of God relative to this area of ministry. And I want you to just understand that with my frailties and my humanness I'm just another in a long line of those that God used beginning with Balaam's ass, and if he could speak for God I am trusting that somewhere in that particular category I fit and all I'm going to do is do the best I can to open my mouth and share with you what I see in the word of God. And I hope you'll understand that it is that. This is not a matter of my opinion; this is a matter of what I believe the Bible is trying to say and we ought to understand it.

Secondly, what I say is not directed as an attack on anybody. It is simply directed, as it should be, dealing with truth and exposing what appears to be error. I'm not trying to attack somebody, I'm not trying to judge somebody, I'm certainly not trying to wound or grieve or injure or cause bitterness within the body of Christ, and yet I have to say that because there some who will think that the approach and it is not. But you find that when you deal truthfully with the word of God there are some folks who are going to be outside that area who are there and are going to just have to be recognized as being in error. And so we'll have to realize that, but at the same time what I say to you I want you

to understand is said in a spirit of gentleness and a spirit of love and a spirit of concern for people who have not understood the truth about the area of healing.

The third thing I wish to say in terms of preface is this: please do not assume that by what I say I do not believe God heals. I do believe God heals. God heals in answer to prayer, God heals miraculously in answer to prayer, God heals, heals miraculously in an answer to prayer in order to reveal His glory. I do not question God's healing. I do not question His miraculous healing if He so chooses in response to the prayers of saints. What I want you to understand is the difference between by God and the gift of healing. There is a great difference between God healing someone immediately and God healing someone through a human healer and that's the distinction that we wish to make.

Now we have studied the spiritual gifts and ministries in three categories. Category one, the gifted men. We saw how that in I Corinthians Paul mentioned certain gifted men. And in Ephesians 4 it's further mentioned that God has given to the church apostles, prophets, evangelists, teaching pastors and teachers. These are the gifted men to lead the church. Then among the members of the church God has given a second category of ministry, which we call the permanent edifying gifts, remember? The permanent edifying gifts, divine enablements equipping the saints to minister to each other, to build the body. And those will be around for the duration of the church. We saw there are two kinds of those: speaking gifts and serving gifts.

Now we come to category three, the gifted men, permanent edifying gifts, a third kind of ministry God gave the early church, temporary sign gifts, temporary sign gifts. Certain enablements, certain energizings given to certain believers for the purpose of authenticating or confirming the word when it was being proclaimed in the early church before the Scriptures were penned. These were temporary, their purpose was not primarily to edify, though they did that in a secondary sense, their purpose was primarily to authenticate the message of the apostolic community.

And these are the temporary sign gifts. The first one we considered was the gift of miracles, which is mentioned in verse 10 of I Corinthians 12, and we pointed out to you last week, and I feel more strongly about this now than I even did then and I felt pretty strong then, that the gift of dunomace, the gift of powers is the ability to cast out demons. That is the primary thing that the gift of powers has to do. For example, let me illustrate it by saying this: no apostle ever did what you would call a miracle of nature. For example, no apostle ever fed 5,000 people multiplying bread and fish. No apostle ever walked on water after the birth of the church. Peter did but that was a miracle of Christ. No apostle ever did any miracle connected with nature.

Well then what was the gift of miracle if it wasn't nature? Was it healing? No that was the gift of healing. The gift of miracles was casting out demons. The gift of power that is God's power in His kingdom over the kingdom of darkness.

Now we come to the second of those four temporary sign gifts. The third and fourth are languages and the interpretation of languages and we'll deal with those later when we get to Chapter 13 and 14, but for now the gift of healing. We want to understand it carefully and I want you to stay with me on this. We're only going to cover half of it this morning and then half of it again in our next study together. This is vital. There is so much confusion in this area, there is so much question in this area that we have to get an understanding of it.

Now it's going to be a rather different introduction this morning and we're not going to get into a whole lot of actually studying the Scripture 'til just the very end, but this is all so vital that I want you to really tune in on it because it's going to help you to understand what's going on around you today.

Now we are where I think that disease is the most tragic human reality. Disease is the number one human problem, illness. It is the thing, which hits the hardest and hurts the most and especially when it culminates in death. Since the fall of man in the Garden of Eden, disease has been a reality. Death has been a reality. And since that time the search for cures to alleviate the reality of illness and the suffering that goes with it has gone on. You can go to the darkest part of an aboriginal society, and few are even left in our world today, and you will find that they have their witch doctors and they have their potions, and they have their approaches to curing disease. You go to the most sophisticated complex hospital in the world and they're doing the very same thing. You go way back into history to the time of the Egyptians and you will find the birth of what we know as medicine occurring there, and they had the wildest cures imaginable.

Baldness, for example, was cured by pouring a bottle of rattlesnake oil on your head. But there was the beginning. It was primitive, but it was a start. And through the history of western civilization you have alchemy and all kinds of other things as man continually searches for a cure for the terrible realization of disease and illness.

Just to be personal about it for a minute, I know there are a lot of people who seek certain gifts of the Spirit. There are people who tarry for the gift of languages, the gift of tongues as they call it, there are people who tarry for certain gifts of the Spirit. If I could have any gift of the Spirit, beyond the gift the Holy Spirit has given me, if I could have any one gift to receive from the Spirit, if I could seek and beg, and plead, and tarry and do whatever I needed to do for any gift you know what it would be? The gift of healing. I wish I had the gift of healing. I have stood by a mother and a father in a hospital and watch their child die of leukemia and wished I had the gift of healing. I have prayed with a deal friend while cancer was eating up his insides and watched him die and wished I had the gift of healing. I've been in intensive care units again and again and again and again and I watched people crushed by accidents, I've watched people torn up by surgery, I've watched people eaten by disease and wished that I could heal them with a word, with a touch, but I can't.

Think of it. Think of how really thrilling it would be to have the gift of healing. Think of what it would be like to go to a hospital where all the sick and the dying are and just go down the hall and just touch them and heal them. Fantastic! Think of all the effort people go through in medicine, all the years that doctors go through, all the technology. Think of the thousands, the millions of dollars and all we need is the gift of healing if we had it. Just go down the hall, be healed, be healed, be healed. Sickness and disease is heartbreaking. It's all over the world.

Imagine this: imagine that all these people have had the gift of healing, all got together and got on an airplane and we just flew them to the great pockets of disease in the world and they just went through the crowds healing everybody. Fantastic! What humanness, what sympathy that would speak for Christianity. Just imaging if we went through the world with the gift of healing and banished illness from the world.

Listen, I told you last week that it's been said that in three years banished disease from Palestine. Why don't we do it? Why is it that the people who claim to have the gift never get out of their tents? Why is it that they always have to do it in a controlled environment doing their things, staged their way, run by their operation, begins on time and ends when it's supposed to. Why aren't they in the hospital? Why aren't they out in the areas of our society in our world where people are really hurting? Why aren't they in India and other places where masses of humanity are wracked with disease? It doesn't happen. It just doesn't happen. Why? I submit because they don't have the gift, that's why. They don't have the gift of healing. Why? Because the gift of healing was a temporary sign gift for the authenticating of the Scriptures as the word of God and once that was authenticated they ceased.

And now when Jesus is leaving He doesn't say to us, "Go into all the world and banish disease." He says, "Go into all the world and what, preach the gospel. He's more concerned about the soul of a man than He is the body of a man. He didn't say, "Go and banish disease." He said, "Go and banish damnation."

Some naÃ¯ve people think that if we healed everybody that way, like Jesus did, they'd all believe the gospel. Do you believe that? If you do then you totally misunderstand the life of Christ. Jesus Christ was on earth for three years and He banished disease from Palestine and when it was all said and done the population agreed that what ought to be done with Him is they ought to kill Him. And when it was all said and done after all the multitudes and multitudes and thousands and thousands that He had healed, when they gathered in the Upper Room to wait for the birth of the church how many were there? One hundred and twenty. Listen, it doesn't work that way. Saving faith is a gift from God, according to God's sovereign will, it is given to whom He wills and it comes from hearing the gospel and mixing it with the divine gift of faith. It doesn't come by getting healed.

In Romans 10:17 it says, "Saving faith comes by hearing," a speech about Jesus Christ. "Saving faith comes by hearing" a speech about Jesus Christ. Don't think that if we could do that everybody would get saved. They didn't in Jesus' day, did they? They didn't in the apostles' day. The apostles went around and did miracle after miracle of healing and what did they do? They threw them in jail is what they did, and in Chapter 8 a wholesale persecution broke out against them.

What do we have today? What are the claims that are being made about healing? Well, the historic claims, the oldest of all the claims come out of the Roman Catholic Church. Historically the Roman Catholic Church has led the way with healings claimed. They have claimed to heal people with the bones of John the Baptist, the bones of Peter, the relics of the cross, more relics, they've claimed to be able to heal at the shrines where Mary has appeared. They claim to be able to heal with vials of Mary's breast milk, as we saw last Sunday. Credibly they claim throughout history and you've heard about places like Lourdes where supposed healings occur all the time. They've led the way in so-called healings.

There are oriental psychic healers busy with their reported healings, those that do bloodless surgery using only their hands as scalpels even claiming to raise the dead. There are witch doctors that are using their fading fetishes on the diseases of the aboriginal few left in our world. There are occultists who use black magic operating in the power of Satan to do lying wonders as Paul says in II Thessalonians 2, "will appear in the great tribulation."

Rafael Kasson, the former spiritualist medium converted to Christ says, "There are many spiritualist today who are endowed with this remarkable gift by the power of Satan and I myself having been used in this way can testify to having witnessed miraculous healing taking place at healing meetings in spiritualism." That's from his book The Challenging Counterfeit. Mary Baker Eddy healed through telepathy. And today there are modern charismatics who claim all kinds of healing going on. You can sit down turn on your television now and they'll heal you from a distance even on a delayed tape.

I was talking to a person this week who was saying that their pastor had the gift of healing and it was marvelous because his wife got cancer and he healed her of cancer. And I said, "Well that's interesting. Tell me more. How's she doing now?" He said, "Oh she's dead." I said, "She dead? How long after the healing?" "One year." What kind of a healing is it that you get healed of cancer and one year later you die of it?

But you see she had the mentality to believe that everything that happens is a healing, so it was a healing. You can turn on the PTL Club and the 700 Club and you kind of get the idea that it's a can you top this mentality relative to miracles. Some of the craziest things I ever heard in my life on there. One man who was saved, said, "God wanted to do a special miracle for me so he poured out all over me the smell of heaven. And I smelled what heaven smells like. And now when I want to re-enjoy

the day of my salvation I go to my closet and get the tie out that I had that day and smell it." This pastor who said he had the gift of healing said, "This is how it works." He said, "In the morning services the Lord tells me what healings are available. The Lord will say, 'I've got three cancers available, I've got one back, I've got two headache healings," and he says, "I announce that to the congregation and tell them that anyone that comes that night with enough faith can claim those that are available for that evening." And this person told me, "Oh it's so exciting to see how God is working."

Do you realize there are demonic counterfeit healings done by Satan that can be used with God words? Kirk Trampler, a Munich author and lawyer who is a healer uses the names of God and Christ but denies them both, but says they work in his healings. You say, "What about people like Oral Roberts and the late Kathryn Kuhlman and the new Brant Baker? What are they doing? They've been at it, things seems to happen, they happen, things happen. They have tremendous healing claims, startling routines, all kinds of gimmicks, and behind them are a whole gob of lesser known healers plying their trade all over the place. Each has his own technique. Each operates in a controlled environment. Each operates with a set strategy. Each does it his own way. I've never yet seen any of them walk down a hall of a hospital and heal everybody. And yet they all claim that God heals and that God uses them somehow as an instrument in that.

Let me give you something to think about. All gifts of the Spirit, if they operate truly, operate only a Spirit filled life, right? If your life is not controlled by the Holy Spirit will you function in the Holy Spirit's energy? No it'll function in the flesh. If you're walking in the flesh you'll function in the flesh; if you walk in the Spirit your gift will be ministered in the Spirit. Now, somebody comes along and says, "I have the spiritual gift of healing." All right if that's true then listen to this: you will have a pure life, you will have pure doctrine, you will be characterized by humility, you will have a life of total submission and obedience to Scripture, you will have a life set about to completely exalt Jesus Christ, and you will manifest all of the fruit of the Spirit. Right? Because the gift of the Spirit must operate in the energy of the Spirit and that only happens when the Spirit controls everything.

And so when somebody says they have the gift of healing, I say do they manifest all of the fruit of the Spirit, do they manifest absolute purity of life, do they manifest purity of doctrine, do they manifest humility, do they manifest a total exaltation of Christ, an absolute obedience to His word? And I dare say as you begin to study the people who claim to have the gift you're going to find wanting areas very very obvious. Doesn't really take too long to get close enough to find that out. But you say, "John, they're being believed." I mean things do happen. People fall over. They come down and say, "I'm healed," and they jump around. What's going on? Why do people believe it?

Well the first answer you might give is because there's so much evidence to support the healings. Oh? There is? Let me give you some evidence. There's an interesting book entitled Healing, A Doctor in Search of a Miracleby William Noland, who is an MD and he's not a Christian, writing from a

very objective viewpoint. And I want to share with you what he says in the section of his book on charismatic healers and he makes particular reference to Kathryn Kuhlman whom we studied in detail.

Now I want you to listen to this because I feel this gives you some really solid answers. "Finally it was over. There was still long lines of people waiting to get onto the stage and claim their cures, but at 5:o'clock with a hymn and a final blessing the show ended. Miss Kuhlman left the stage and the audience left the auditorium. Before going back to talk to Miss Kuhlman I spent a few minutes watching the wheelchair patients leave. All the desperately ill patients who had been in wheelchairs were still in wheelchairs. In fact, the man with the kidney cancer in his spine, the man whom I had helped to the auditorium and who had his borrowed wheelchair brought to the stage and shown to the audience when he had claimed a cure was back in the wheelchair his cure even if only a hysterical one had been extremely short lived. As I stood in the corridor watching the hopeless cases leave, seeing tears of the parents as they pushed their crippled children into the elevators I wished Miss Kuhlman had been with me. She had complained a couple of times during the service of the responsibility, the enormous responsibility and of how her heart aches for those who weren't cured, but I wondered how often she had really looked at them. I wondered if she sincerely felt that the joy of those cured of bursitis and arthritis compensated for those left with their withered legs, their imbecile children, and their cancers of the liver. I wondered if she really knew the damage she was doing. I couldn't believe that she did.

Here are some of the aspects of the medical healing process about which some of us know nothing and none of us know enough. To start with the body's ability to heal itself. Kathryn Kuhlman often says, "I don't heal. The Holy Spirit heals through me." I suspect there are two reasons why Miss Kuhlman continually repeats this statement. First, if the patient doesn't improve the Holy Spirit, not Kathryn Kuhlman gets the blame. Second, she hasn't the foggiest notion what healing is all about and once she puts the responsibility on the shoulders of the Holy Spirit she can answer if questioned about her healing powers I don't know the Holy Spirit does it all." Let me repeat. A charismatic individual, a healer can sometimes influence a patient and cure symptoms or a functional disease by suggestion.

Now I want to stop there and make this statement: In your mind you must make a distinction between a functional disease and an organic one. A functional disease is where a perfectly good organ does not function properly. An organic disease is where the organ is not good, but it is organically destroyed or maimed or crippled. The functional disease has only a symptom without a reality. An organic disease has a reality and a symptom. And you will find that in all cases of so-called healers the only kinds of healing they ever accomplish are functional never organic. All they're ever dealing with is the symptom.

Now he further goes on. He says, "A healer can sometimes influence a patient and cure symptoms of a functional disease by suggestion with our without laying on of hands. Physicians can do the same thing. The cures are not miraculous. They result from corrections made by the patient in the function of his autonomic system. In other words it's a matter of changing the thinking processes. We don't know yet how to control the system, but we're learning.

All healers use hypnosis to sum extent and he had a large section in the book on hypnosis. For example see your pain is going away. Isn't it wonderful? Jesus has healed you. Yeah, see, tremendous suggestion, and the atmosphere and the aura and the staging and the whole ballgame forces you into the believing of that or you wouldn't be there to start with, in the line. He goes on. Doctors use hypnosis frequently. When I give a patient a pill or a shot I make a point of saying, "This medicine should make you better in 24 or 48 hours. This medicine always works very well."

Now I know that in some cases I'm going to get better results if I suggest to the patient the medicine is going to work rather than if I said, "Well I don't know about this medicine. Sometimes it works pretty well, sometimes it's not so hot, but we'll give it a try and just hope for the best." Even if the guy gets better he's going to be sick, right? There's a tremendous power in positive thinking, particularly where functional disorders are concerned. Hypnotism is not something with which one should trifle. Relieving symptoms can be dangerous. Remember the poor woman whose back pain went away at Kathryn Kuhlman's suggestion leaving her temporarily free to frolic until her cancerous vertebrae collapsed. Symptoms, pain, nausea, dizziness may be purely psychological, but they may also be the warning signals of dangerous, possibly life threatening organic diseases. To eliminate a symptom without getting at the cause of that symptom can cause delay in treatment, which may be serious or even fatal. Let me add this: people go there the psychological power of what occurs is so great that they are relieved of the pain or of the symptom and they frolic on their way without ever dealing with the reality.

I'll never forget a little boy whose both legs were crippled. He went to see A. A. Allen, who is now dead, drunk himself dead, more alcohol in his veins than there was blood, finally died. But A. A. Allen healed this boy, took off his braces, and had the kid try to walk off the stage. I'll never forget it. And he stumbled a little way and the power of his mind carried him and his parents kind of helped him along and he said don't ever put the braces on again and it wasn't any time at all until gangrene had set into his legs and there was the necessity of amputating those legs; very dangerous to fool around with symptoms when you're not dealing with real organic causes.

Finally, in our attempt to understand healing we must deal with organic diseases, diseases that are caused not simply by dysfunction of an organ, but by derangement of the structure of an organ or organs: infections, heart attacks, gallstones, hernias, slipped discs, cancers of all kinds, broken bones, congenital deformities, lacerations, and multitudes of other diseases and sub-divisions of those I mentioned are included in the organic disease classification. Some organic diseases are self-

limited, that is, healed by the body itself such as the common cold and minor sprains. But to cure many organic diseases the body needs help. These are diseases that healers even the most charismatic cannot cure. When they attempt to do so, and they all fall into this trap since they know and care nothing of the difference between functional and organic disease they tread on very dangerous ground. When healers treat serious organic diseases they are responsible for untold anguish and unhappiness. This happens because they keep patients away from possibly effective and life saving help and healers become killers.

After this morning's service, the first service, a young lady came to me and she said, "You'll never know what that message meant in my life." She said, "I had fallen down some stairs and as a result injured my head and had terrible terrible headaches." And she said, "Some folks prayed for me and told me I was healed and my headache went away." And she said, "Since that time I have had terrible headaches, but I have felt guilty as if I was not accepting a healing from God and refusing to go to the doctor." And she said, "This morning you freed me to understand that I must go to the doctor." See? She was thrilled. "Search the literature, as I have," Nolan says, "And you will find no documented cures by healers of gallstones, heart disease, cancer or any other serious organic disease. Certainly you will find patients temporarily relieved of their upset stomachs, their chest pains, their breathing problems and you'll find healers and believers who will interpret this interruption of symptoms as evidence that the disease is cured, but when you track the patient down and find out what later you find the cure to have been purely symptomatic and transient and the underlying disease remains."

To give you an illustration of that Noland took 80 cases of Kathryn Kuhlman's healings, 80 of them, all 80 were ones that she suggested that he follow up. He followed up all 80. His conclusion at the end of it all not one out of the 80 was a legitimate healing, not one. Now consider Kathryn Kuhlman. In a letter sent to me by Marilyn March, Kathryn Kuhlman's secretary, Ms. March says that Miss Kuhlman conducts approximately 125 healing services in a year's time. Attendance at these services varies. Ms. March mentions there are always 7,000 in attendance at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles, in Tulsa, Oklahoma 18,000 people in Mabee Center, that's Oral Roberts University, 3,000 more on closed circuit, in Atlanta 8,000 and in Ottawa 16,000. Let's assume that Miss Kuhlman has an opportunity to treat an average of 10,000 patients per service or 1,250,000 a year. We will have to guess, but I think it would be reasonable to say that one-third of these patients are cancer victims, about 400 thousand cancer victims a year. Miss Kuhlman, therefore, may treat 4,000 times as many cancer patients as I treat in one year and I have by national standards a very busy surgical practice. It would be highly likely that in the approximately 400,000 cancer victims that come to her every year there might be one patient who would fall into the spontaneous regression category.

I know Kathryn Kuhlman, or Norbuchin or Tony Agpowwa, that's two other healers, one an oriental, the other a Philippino, will never find among the patients she treats a spontaneous cure of a cleft pallet, a hernia, gallstones, heart disease, paralyzes due to injury or any of the hundreds of other

organic ailments for which patients seek help. What I find most unusual is that there are no well documented spontaneous cancer cures reported in her books. You'd think that among the millions of cancer patients healers treat, at least one or two would demonstrate spontaneous regression."

"My point in case I haven't made it clear," he said, "Is that even if we were to find isolated cases of documented cancer cures in the files of Miss. Kuhlman or any other healer, it would prove nothing. Isolated spontaneous cures of cancer occur with or without the ministration of healers. The chances of being cured of cancer by Kathryn Kuhlman or any other healer are the same as the chances of being cured if you do nothing and go to no one at all."

And I want to interject something here, that's what happened to that pastor's wife. She wasn't healed. The cancer, as it's sometimes known to do, simply goes into a recession for a period of time, the person is well, it came back in a fatal sweep and she died. That's common in this area of disease. He further says this: "To be logical, the cancer patient should go to a healer only if the healer had a cure rate of 50% or better, 'cause that's the cure rate physicians achieve. The cancer patients who go to healers are emotionally distraught and for this reason don't act logically."

Now I read you all that because I want you to understand that there is another way to view what's going on. Do you see that? There's another way to look at it. And so when somebody says, "You have to believe. Look at all the evidence." Where is all the evidence? Where are the organic spontaneous healings? The next time you see a healer, take a broken arm up to him and say, "Here, heal it." You say, "Well okay, I won't use that as evidence. I believe in him because they're so logically spirit-filled." I'm not sure that the kind of production and the kind of show that goes on and the kind of things that go on around the lives of those people in that position really manifest all of the fruit of the Spirit and that's something I don't want to sit in judgment on, but as I've examined the lives of people who are involved in this I've been very very distressed at what I've found.

Somebody else says, "No, the reason I believe it is because they do it biblically." Oh? I think we'll deal with that without any question as we go through the study. They don't do it biblically. Somebody else says, "Well the reason I believe it is because it's based on the sound teaching of the Bible, that by His stripes we are healed and healing is in the atonement." That is the most gross interpretation of Isaiah 53 that you can imagine. It's not talking about physical healing, it's talking about spiritual healing, salvation. You say, "Why John? That they don't go because the cures are so documented and the people are obviously controlled by the spirit and because it's biblical or because it's what the Bible teaches? Why do people go?" I'll tell you why. They go because people who are sick are desperate. Bless their hearts. We can understand that. There is a certain desperation that comes in disease. Sickness drives people, it drives them to do things that they normally wouldn't do. Originally clear-minded intelligent balanced people become irrational. Job 2:4, is a good verse on this. Job 2:4 says, "Skin for skin, yes all that a man has will he give for his life." People will do anything to live. "All that a man has will he give for his life." And all you have to do is go to your doctor and have him say

you've got a terminal illness and the panic sets in and the desire to be healed, and people will go sneak off to a healer, or they'll go down to Mexico if they have cancer to some lateral place or whatever, they'll do anything.

And so one of the reasons healers do so well is there's a fantastic market of people who are really sick and they're desperate, but they don't ever get healed, the really organically ill ones. And then there are the other people who aren't really sick at all they just have psychosomatic disorders. And then there are other people who go because they just can't believe God and they're just so doubtful that they have to run around having their doubt reinforced by all kinds of "miracles."

All you have to do to make a comparison between what goes on today and what the Bible teaches is to go back and look at Jesus. Let me take you to do that. Let's look at Jesus. How did he heal because He set the pattern for all the spiritual gifts? In Jesus' day it was a world full of disease. I mean he world was deeply in need of healing and they didn't have any medical science. They were really hurting. There wasn't any way they could get healed. Diseases were more prevalent than today. Diseases were destructive. Diseases were incurable. Plagues would wipe out cities. And the greatest single problem of man is disease in terms of the physical life. So when Jesus came into the world and when He wanted the world to know that He was God, He realized that the greatest way to point attention to Himself was to go through the world relieving disease. And He did. And then he passed that ability on to his apostles. But how did Jesus heal? I'm going to give you six points and I think they're absolutely critical, and I'm going to run them by you fast and then we'll be done.

Number one: Jesus healed with a word or a touch. Jesus healed with a word or a touch and everybody didn't necessarily fall down either. You say, what is all that when they fall down, slain in the spirit? Listen, what that is is the psychology, that's the hysteria that occurs, that's the spiritual thing to do, that's the thing you do when the spirit gets on you so if you want to be one of those whose got the spirit on you you'll fall down. It's hypnotic. There's all kinds of psychological explanations for that.

In Matthew I want to show you this first principle. Matthew 8:8, Jesus healed with a word or a touch. Matthew 8:5, "When Jesus entered into Capernaum there came to Him a centurion, beseeching him, and saying, 'Lord, my servant lies at home sick of the palsy,'" that's an organic sickness, "'grievously tormented.' Jesus said to him, 'I'll come and heal him.' The centurion answered and said, 'Lord, I'm not worthy that you should come under my roof. Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.'"

Now wait a minute. He says Jesus you don't even need to make the trip. I don't want to bother you about it. Just speak the word. You say, "How did that guy know that?" Because that was the common way in which Jesus healed. Jesus healed thousands and thousands of people in His lifetime. You know the day that he fed the 5,000 that dinner at late in the day, since the dawn He had

been spending the entire day healing all of that crowd of all of their diseases. He could have done as many as 10,000 healings in that day alone. We don't know how many, but they knew how He healed. And he said, "All you have to do is speak a word," because Jesus healed, "Be healed." That's all. No theatrics, no nothing, be healed.

And he healed with a touch, Mark 5. And there are many illustrations of this and you'll see them as we go. But Mark 5. I love this story of the woman who crawled through the crown and she heard of Jesus, verse 27, and she touched His garment and said, "If I may touch but his clothes I shall be whole and immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up and she felt in her body she was healed of the plague." A touch. And Jesus didn't push her over. She just reached up and touched, she grabbed one of His rabbinic tassels hanging on His robe. Rabbi's had four tassels on their robe, she grabbed one of those rabbinic tassels and instantly she was healed. With a word or a touch He healed all with no dramatics and no theatrics.

Second, Jesus not only healed with a word or a touch, but He healed instantaneously. Mark 5:29, we just read it, what does it say? "And immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up. She felt in her body she was healed of that plague." When? Immediately. I've heard people say, "Oh the Lord healed me and since He's healed me I've been getting progressively better." Jesus never did a progressive healing. He never did a from now on I want you to take a little of this and rest a little and you're going to be healed as you go. When He sent away the lepers they were healed as they went, but that was instantaneous on the road.

When He said to the blind man at the pool, as soon as he washed his eyes instantly he saw. Well what about the man who first saw the figures like trees walking? He was just getting focused what God had just created. Instant healing. The Scripture knows no other kind. Otherwise if Jesus healed progressively that kind of miracle would be worthless to demonstrate His deity because somebody would say it was just a natural process, right? It had to be instantly.

Look at Mark 7:31, "And again departing from the borders of Tyre and Sidon, he come to the Sea of Galilee, through the midst of the borders of Decapolis. They bring to him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech." Now very frequently, and our deaf friends can realize this, very frequently when you are deaf and always deaf it's difficult to articulate clearly what you say and so they speak with a certain impediment because they cannot hear themselves talk. We understand that. This is an organic problem. Now watch what happened. "And they beseech Him to put His hand upon him." They knew how He healed. How does He heal? By a touch. "And they took him aside from the multitude and put his fingers in his ears, spat and touched his tongue, looked up to heaven, sighed and said, 'Ephphatha, be opened,' and immediately his ears were opened and the string of his tongue was loosed and he spoke plainly." I dare say no healer today has ever done that. No. Never. All of a sudden a person who's stone deaf from birth and who talks in that, which is characteristic of one who had never heard himself speak is given the freedom to speak clearly and to

hear everything instantaneously. But that's the kind of thing Jesus did, and this was to prove that God was intervening and there was no other explanation possible, otherwise the miracle ceases to have its significance.

Third, Jesus healed with a word or a touch. Jesus healed instantaneously. And thirdly He healed totally. He healed totally. Remember last Sunday night we went through all those verse that said, "You are whole, you are whole, and He said unto you, you are whole, and she was whole, whole whole whole whole all over the place. There was a wholeness. He healed totally. Look back at Luke 4:38, just as one illustration. There's a lot of them. Luke 4:38, "And he arose and left the synagogue and entered into Simon's house," this is Peter, "And Peter's mother-in-law had a great fever." Here again is an illness. Peter's mother-in-law is very very ill. In fact the implication here is that she was dying. Peter's mother-in-law was dying. Now I want you to watch. This is so beautiful. Peter's mother-in-law was dying. "And He stood over her," Jesus did, verse 39, "And rebuked the fever and it left her and immediately she arose and served them." She got up and made dinner. Here's the woman lying on her deathbed and when Jesus healed her He healed her totally. He didn't say, "Now that you've been healed I want you to just take a little honey and hot tea and then I want you to make sure that you stay around the house and I want you to just lie and slow. She was healed of a deathly disease, got up and made dinner. Instant, total healing. It's the only kind Jesus ever did. He healed with a touch, and a word, instantaneously, totally. All right?

Fourth, Jesus healed everybody. Jesus wasn't like Kathryn Kuhlman, didn't have all the people with organic diseases leave the same way they came Oral Roberts or Brant Baker or anybody else. Listen, I love it, Luke 4:40, what a beautiful beautiful verse. "Now when the sun was setting," I can see the picture, see the scene, the city, sun was setting, "All they that had any who were sick with various diseases brought them unto Him and He laid His hands on every one of them," and a few of them got better, the ones the Holy Spirit wanted to. Is that what it said? Listen to this: "When the sun was setting all they that had any who were sick with any disease brought them to Him and He laid His hands on every one of them and healed them." He healed with a word and a touch, instantaneously, totally everybody. That's why He didn't have to do it in His own environment. He could go where they were.

Luke 9:11 adds to that, another beautiful picture of Jesus healing. "And the people, when they knew it, followed him and He received them and spoke to them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing." Anybody who had a need that was the prerequisite and He could handle it. Jesus healed with a word and a touch, instantaneously, totally everybody. You know anybody that has that ability today? I don't, but that is the way Jesus healed. And I'll footnote it, that is the way the apostles healed and I'll show you that next time, exactly the same.

Fifth, Jesus healed organic disease. Jesus healed organic disease. You can study that yourself. Go through all of them. People who were crippled from birth could walk. People who were blind could

see. People who were deaf and dumb could speak and here these are organic things. Jesus didn't go around healing low back pain and palpation of the heart and breathing problems. There's so many illustrations of that we don't even have time to begin.

Sixth, Jesus healed with a word, a touch, instantaneously, totally, everybody and He healed organic diseases and sixthly Jesus raised the dead. Jesus raised the dead. Mark 5:35, "While he yet spoke there came from the ruler of the synagogue's house a person who said, 'Your daughter's dead. Why trouble the Master any further?'" The ruler of the synagogue was asking Jesus to help his sick daughter and the guy comes and says it's too late she's dead. But Jesus was going to take care of that. Verse 41, jump down to the dialogue for time's sake. "And He took the child by the hand and said unto her, 'Talitha cumi,' which is being interpreted, little girl I say to you get up, and immediately the child arose and walked." And just to make sure you don't think she was a little teeny baby and He enabled her to walk when she was six months old, she was twelve years of age, it says. The miracle was in the resurrection. "And they were astonished with a great astonishment." He raised the dead.

Luke 7:11, I remember when I was in Bethlehem one day, we were walking along the street and here came a funeral procession, all these mourners and people walking along and they had a little casket with a little child in it, typical Jewish funeral procession in Israel, walking along holding the bier, b-i-e-r, walking along. People were singing and they were kind of chanting and it was very sad and the family was there weeping and I thought about this occasion. Look at it. "It came to pass the next day, verse 11, "He went to a city called Nain, many of his disciples went with him and many people. When he came near to the gate of the city there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and many of the people of the city was with her."

Same scene, here comes the procession, got the casket up on their shoulders. "And when the Lord saw her," this poor widow was loosing her only son and Jesus didn't need somebody to describe the situation. He knew because He was omniscient, and He knew she was going to be without anybody to help her, a poor destitute widow and that was tough, and so He was compassionate and said, "Don't cry. And he came and touched the casket and they that bore him stopped. And He said, 'Young man, I am saying to you get up.' He that was dead sat up and began to speak;" a quick way to end a funeral. "And He delivered him to his mother. And there came fear on all and they glorified God saying, 'A great prophet is raised up among us. God has visited His people.'" Isn't that exactly what Jesus wanted him to say?

Listen, I wish the people today who had the gift of healing would spend a little time in funeral parlors. They could sure make some exciting things happen. Wouldn't it be super the next time you went to a funeral and say I have the gift of healing and I came in and said, "Look, I feel badly for this situation so would you please get up and get out." Let's get it right folks. Why did Jesus do this? Why was it that he healed with a word or a touch instantaneously totally everybody with organic diseases and raised the dead? Why was it? Was it to infatuate the people? Was it just to play games with the

people? Look at John 20 and I'll show you, verse 30. John 20:30 says this: "And many other signs truly did Jesus," other than the eight miracles John had just written about, many others, but why did He do these miracles? Why did He do these signs? Verse 31, "In order that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you might have life through His name.

Listen to me. This gift was an authenticating gift. It was to confirm the statement of Jesus that He is God. You say, "Well what about when the apostles did it?" It was to confirm their proclamation and we'll go into that in detail and you'll see how clear that becomes as you study the Epistles.

Listen dispelling demons and diseases was Christ's way of confirming that He was God in flesh, the Messiah, the Savior. And as Jesus came toward the end of His ministry the miracles began to get less and less and less because He'd gotten His message across and they had no other reason to exist and they faded out. I'm not saying that God doesn't do miracles. I'm not saying that God doesn't heal, but He does do and he can do anything that He wants to. Miracles are neither impossible nor necessary. That's up to God, but I'll tell you one thing, there's no evidence biblically and there's no evidence practically that anybody today is operating the gift of healing. If God wants to heal that's His business, that's His privilege and He may do it, and He may do it through the prayers of an individual. In fact He promises that the prayer of faith shall what? Save the sick, but let's not confuse God's healing in response to prayer with the ability to go around and heal everybody at will, as Jesus could do and as the apostles could do and we'll see that next time.

Let's pray. Father we feel like we've just begun to really get to the meaty part and that is to see what the Scripture says. But Lord we know it's important for us to be able to understand the Scripture in the light of what's going on around us and so we thank you for the time we've been able to share. We just pray that this kind of study might open up our understanding, not to be unkind to people, not to be unloving, not to be judgmental, not to be superior, but simply to be helpful, to try to help them to understand because there's so many brokenhearted people who can't understand why they always go and never get healed. And there's so many people who can't just believe you, who can't just accept your word, but have to run around from sensation to sensation in order to have their doubt bolstered up. God, mature people's faith. Help them to believe that all they need is your word and your spirit and not more and more signs. And help us to be fair with the Scripture to really see what you're doing and not assign things to you, which are not yours, but are the efforts of men. God make us to be discerning so that we might truly worship you as you should be worshiped. In Christ's name. Amen.

Available online at: http://www.gty.org
COPYRIGHT (C) 2015 Grace to You

You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (http://www.gty.org/connect/copyright).