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

**Jesus: The Divine Deliverer, Part 1**
Scripture: Luke 4:38-44
Code: 42-59

Well at long last, this morning, we return to the gospel of Luke. We have been diverted for a couple of months actually from our study of Luke's gospel and I want to take you back to the end of the fourth chapter of Luke. So we encourage you to take your Bible or a Bible there in the pew and turn to Luke's gospel chapter 4. We'll be looking at verses 38 to 44, taking that final section as a unit under the title, "Messiah Jesus, the Great Deliverer."

You remember that we have just done a six-part series on deliverance that was prompted by the fact that Luke presents to us Jesus as the great Deliverer and now we return to Luke's gospel again to see another picture of the Messiah who delivers His people from their sin and from Satan and from the domain of darkness.

Now as we come to verses 38 to 44 we come to what is a series of paragraphs and if you have a Bible that is paragraphed or has the numbers in bold type, you will notice that there are at least four paragraphs in this final section. And because the editors of the Bible have decided to paragraph it in that way, it might seem to be a somewhat disconnected portion of Scripture, but in fact as we shall see, it is very connected and designed by the Spirit of God to impact us with a singular message. It is not as disjointed as it may first appear, or even as it may read.

But let me back up a little bit before we look at verses 38 to 44 and say the gospel of Luke is one of the four historical accounts of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ...Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. These four historical records present the story of Jesus comprehensively and all that we know about the life of Jesus is contained in these four accounts. And the four when put together will give the sum of all that God has revealed about Jesus. Essentially the four gospels tell us that Jesus was God in human flesh. God came into the world, born to a virgin, lived a sinless life, died as a substitute for believing sinners, and rose from the dead on the third day having conquered death for all who believe in Him. Faith in Him and His work brings the believer into full forgiveness of all sin and into the promise and hope of eternal life.

Now that gospel message concerning the history of Jesus' life and the salvation He brings is the theme of all four gospels. They are, frankly, the most monumental accounts in all of history because they give us the record of the Savior and they draw us to the reality of His provision for salvation. And since to be saved it requires that you believe in Jesus' person and work, it's therefore critical to know about His person and work which is why the four gospels are given to us. Such monumental spiritual

reality, such singular accomplishment, such glorious promises, such massive temporal and eternal implications coming from these accounts demands that we study them very carefully. These records, all four gospels, carry convincing evidence that Jesus was who He claimed to be and that He could do what He claimed He could do. They are not only records from the standpoint of history, they are records from the standpoint of evidence. It's not just history to be presented to those who are interested in history, it is evidence to be brought into the court to prove that Jesus is in fact the Messiah, the Savior, the Great Deliverer. These stories carry more eternal power and eternal potential and they matter more than all other history combined. The four writers, including Luke, carefully under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit who was superintending every word they wrote provide for us the truth about Jesus Christ and along with that truth the convincing evidence for the validity of all of Jesus' claims.

And while all four gospels are made up of details...there are details about geography, there are details about personalities, there are details about events, there are details about time and place, there are all kinds of details about conversations and so forth...while there are many details the writers, including Luke, are not primarily concerned with the details but with what the details prove and that is that Jesus is the Messiah, is the Savior, is the Redeemer God who came to save His people from their sins.

In particular, Luke is a very, very gifted and thorough historian. He is also very good at pulling together the history in order to make an extensive irrefutable case for the claims of Jesus and the claims of the Bible for Jesus as the only Savior. So what we're learning here is not just history, it is also evidence. It is not just for the sake of information that we might somehow learn something from history, it is for the sake of believing and therein is its importance as evidence. It is to bring us to the place where we are convinced that Jesus is exactly who He claimed to be and who the Bible claims He is and did exactly what Scripture claims and what He said He had come to do.

Now as we look at our verses, the verses before us, what we have here interestingly enough is a summary of some of the evidences that Jesus is who He claimed to be, a summary of certain categories in which Jesus demonstrated His authority, or demonstrated His power. Let me read these verses, follow along as I read. Verse 38, "And He arose and left the synagogue and entered Simon's home. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, they made request of Him on her behalf. Standing over her He rebuked the fever and it left her and she immediately arose and waited on them. And while the sun was setting all who had any sick with various diseases brought them to Him and laying His hands on every one of them He was healing them. And demons also were coming out of many, crying out and saying, 'You are the Son of God,' and rebuking them He would not allow them to speak because they knew Him to be the Christ. And when day came, He departed and went to a lonely place and the multitudes were searching for Him and came to Him and tried to keep Him from going away from them. But He said to them, 'I must preach the Kingdom of God to the other cities also for I was sent for this purpose.' And He kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea."

Now as I said, that may seem like an eclectic group of small, brief comments that summarize a certain period, or a certain range of activity in the life of Jesus. And certainly at an initial glance they are indeed that. But they are not nearly so disconnected as it might appear to the first reading. They're very carefully connected as we would expect from Luke and as we would expect from the Holy Spirit who is inspiring Luke. You see, it is true about the Jews that they desired a sign. In 1 Corinthians 1:22 Paul says the Jews desired a sign. They weren't about to accept just anybody as their Messiah, there were plenty would-be pretenders to the role of Messiah who wanted to come down and gain a favor of the people and be elevated to positions of power as their Messiah. They wanted to have some criteria by which to judge who was real and who was not. And so they were always looking for some sign. What is a sign? A sign is something that points or directs you somewhere and that's exactly what they were looking for, something in the life of Jesus that would give them the necessary evidence to be convinced that He was in fact the Messiah.

Well, they were looking for a sign and Jesus delivered, believe me. In these brief verses Luke shows us three realms of power in which Jesus gave them a sign...three realms in which He demonstrated His divinity...three realms in which He demonstrated His messiahship...three realms in which He proved Himself to be the great Deliverer. Obviously we would agree, since we've just done a series on it, that sinners need deliverance, that God sent Jesus to be the deliverer. Here we find, and we've already looked a lot of detail in the six-week series we did, but here we find that we require deliverance essentially in three areas...body, mind and soul...body mind and soul. And we talked about those in our series so I won't go over it, but we're going to look at them in a little bit different way. We need to be delivered in body, mind and soul from our fallenness. Let me see if I can't unpack that a little bit for you.

First of all, let's talk about the body. Human beings have a problem and it is our...our bodies. All of us are constantly subject to the devastating effects of the Fall physically. What does that mean? Birth is the first step in death. Birth is the first step toward dying. Deformity, illness, weakness, injury, aging, disease, death, that is the universal biography. We need help in the physical area because we are born to die. And as soon as we are born the clock starts ticking toward death. So whoever this Savior is, whoever this Redeemer is, He should be and must be capable of overpowering the physical realm which tends toward death. He has to be able somehow to stop the destruction of the body of man. He has to be able to do something to us physically that can grant to us eternal existence. He has to be able to give us new and eternal bodies that will never age, never become weak, never become ill and never die. So as we're looking for the Messiah, we need to find somebody who has power over physical problems. The question needs to be asked then, "Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, the Bible claims that Jesus was the Messiah, the Deliverer, the Savior, the Redeemer, so let's ask the question...did Jesus have the power to conquer disease? Did He have the power to conquer decay? And did He have the power to conquer death?" That is essential for the one who is to deliver us from sin and its impact on our physical nature.

Secondly, we need a deliverer who can work with our minds. When we talk about the mind we are very much aware of the fact that all human beings are subject to the destructive impact that comes upon the mind. That's where all the temptation comes. That's where all of the lust comes from. That's where all of evil desire comes from. That's where every thought that ultimately issues in a sin is produced. That's where the fertile ground of imagination stirs up iniquity. We need someone who can deliver our minds. We are assaulted in the mind, and particularly from Satan's kingdom. We know that Satan himself is disguised as an angel of light, demons are disguised themselves as ministers of light. They go around poisoning the minds of people. They are in the business of lying. They are in the business of deceiving. That's what they do. The fallen angels, the demons assault the minds of men through the development of a corrupt world system that generates wicked thoughts and wicked impulses in the mind. We need not only new bodies, we need new minds. That is to say we need to be free from the impact of sin physically. We need to be free from the impact of sin and the influences of demons mentally.

The question then is not only is Jesus one who can deal with the problems of our bodies, but is Jesus one who can deal with the problems of the demonic assault on our minds? Thirdly, is the soul...we need a Savior who can deal with our souls. We are as souls subject to the sovereign power of Satan. He is our father. He is, as it were, is the king of the sphere in which we live. Our souls are in his control. We are headed for eternal damnation as members of his kingdom. So we ask the third question...Did Jesus have the power to rescue sinners from Satan? From the devil's dominion and transfer them to His eternal Kingdom of righteousness and joy?

Essentially what we're saying here is this, does Jesus have power over the sin that is in us? Does He have power over the demons that corrupt our minds? And does He have power over the devil himself who is the sovereign over the kingdom in which we exist? The true Messiah must demonstrate those categories of power and authority. The true Savior of sinners must have authority to deliver sinners body, mind and soul from the effects of sin...physical, mental and spiritual. He must be able to rescue us from the decay of our fallen flesh, from the demons that assault our mind and from the dominion of the devil himself so that when Jesus comes if He is to be believed as the Messiah, then He must demonstrate evidence in these categories. He must show us that He has power over bodily decay, that He has power over the mind corrupted by demons, power over Satan's dominion.

So when we...when we really truly understand this, we...we go way beyond where the Jews were. The Jews were looking for a political deliverer. They were looking for some kind of military Messiah. But doomed sinners don't need a political leader. They don't need a social reformer. They don't need an economic guru. They don't need a military leader. We need a deliverer who will deliver our bodies and our minds and our souls from those things that damn us. And so it is in those three areas particularly that Luke records the power of Jesus in this brief passage. Let's take a look at the first one, and this opens up a huge area of important study in the life of Jesus, power over the physical

realm...power over the physical realm.

He could deal with decay...power over the body, the fallenness of the body. This section helpfully is both specific and general. We will find here a specific illustration of Jesus' healing power and a general reference to the breadth of His healing ability which becomes evidence in this first category. Let's begin in verse 38 with a specific account. "And He arose and left the synagogue and entered Simon's home." Now we'll stop there for just a moment and get a little bit of background since it's been weeks since we were in the prior verse.

The passage just prior to this ending in verse 37 is the account of Jesus in the town of Capernaum in the synagogue. It was Sabbath in that major city of north Galilee, at the very north tip of the Sea of Galilee. And you remember we studied that passage in great detail. Jesus had gone down to Capernaum, verse 31, city of Galilee, He was there on the Sabbath day and He was teaching in the synagogue. He had preached the same message, I'm sure, or a very similar one that He had given in the synagogue at Nazareth back in the prior passage. You can look back at verse 18 and 19 and be reminded that when He preached in Nazareth He quoted from Isaiah 61, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor, sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who were downtrodden to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord." In other words, He was the deliverer. He had come to bring the good news of forgiveness and salvation to those who were spiritually poor. He had come to release those who were captive to sin, to give sight to those who were blinded by wickedness and to set free those who were oppressed and downtrodden. He had come to bring this great favorable year of the Lord. Jesus, of course, closed the book there in Nazareth and then He said in verse 21, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled," I am the fulfillment of that promise. So He preached the good news of deliverance. Well down in verse 31 He was in the synagogue at Capernaum this time after Nazareth, essentially doing the same thing.

And verse 32 says, "They were amazed at His teaching for His message was with authority." What marks Jesus always is this tremendous authority with which He speaks. And the authority was so great that there was a man in the crowd who had a demon living in him, verse 33, he was possessed by the spirit of an unclean demon. And the demon is so traumatized and terrified by the authority of Jesus that the demon blows his cover. Demons normally want to be hidden. They want to work subtly, they don't want to be manifest. But this demon under the pressure and the power of the teaching and preaching of Jesus, screams with a loud voice, verse 34, "Ha, what do we have to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are, the Holy One of God." This demon literally cannot restrain himself. And in an astonishing, astonishing outburst, the people in the synagogue find out that one of their own has a demon living in him. Jesus rebukes the demon, as you know, says, "Be quiet, come out of him." And when the demon had thrown him down in their midst, that was the demon's last act of defiance. He came out of him without doing him any harm and amazement came upon everybody. They began discussing with each other, 'What is this

Word? For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits and they come out?' And the report about Him was getting out into every locality in the surrounding district."

So, the word is spreading everywhere and this is another incident that causes the word to spread. This is the first miracle of Luke's gospel, the first miracle and is the miracle of delivering a man from a demon. That was an astonishing day in the Capernaum synagogue, believe me. Jesus confronted the forces of hell and He conquered them right in their midst. He was so traumatizing to that demon that the demon couldn't help but scream in terror and fear that Jesus had come for the time of his destruction.

Now let's pick up the story in verse 38. "He arose and left the synagogue." Same day, same day. Now let me tell you how synagogue went, sort of. We went into detail as to what a synagogue service was like, I'm not going to go over that. But it generally ended around noon and that tradition is still with us. I try to end around noon, that's typically when church services tend to end and that goes way, way, way back to Sabbath observance in a synagogue when the services ended sometime around noon. However, in those days, of course, it was a Sabbath, it would have been on a Saturday rather than Sunday.

Now when the service ended there's another interesting part of Jewish life, it was followed by the major meal of the day. And so typically after the synagogue service was over, the people all went home to a very, very large and significant meal of the day which they sat together as families and enjoyed the provision of food. We...we pick up the story at that point. "They arose and left the synagogue and entered Simon's home."

Now it's interesting, Peter is not yet an Apostle. He has not yet been called as a disciple of Jesus. He has not yet had his name changed from Simon to Peter. That happens later and we'll see that. He becomes a disciple in chapter 5. He gets his name changed later on and Matthew 16 records that. But there's no description of Peter because by the time Luke wrote his record, everybody knew who Simon was. Everybody knew who Peter was. So there wasn't any need to describe who he was, it was only necessary to mention Simon. And by the time Luke had finished his gospel and it was being read, everyone by then knew who Simon was. But at this time he is just a man in the synagogue. He is in the synagogue with his family. And his family is identified here. It says, "Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever and they made request of Him on her behalf." The word was getting around that Jesus could heal. As you know, He had been in Capernaum on prior occasion and had done some healing and there were healings done down in Judea in the south and the word was spreading. And so people were becoming very aware of His power. Already that very day, of course, the demoniac had been delivered from a demon, and so this was Peter's hometown. Peter, by the way, was born in Bethsaida which is just a little ways away, but he had moved to Capernaum where he was operating a fishing business right on the edge, the north edge of the Sea of Galilee. And today, by the way, there is excavation there that people believe could well be the original home of

Peter. What happened was, somebody long, long ago in the very early years of the church built a church there and there have been consistently evidences that churches were built on top of churches and that originally the first church was built on the site of Peter's original home just a little ways from the existing synagogue there, the ruins of the existing synagogue and just a little way from the shore of the Sea of Galilee. So this was Peter's home, though he was born in Bethsaida he moved there to operate his business.

The record of Mark...Mark records the same account and Mark tells us Andrew was there, Peter's brother, as well as James and John. And none of them have been called as disciples yet, but they knew each other and they all went to the synagogue in Capernaum. And so they were fascinated by Jesus. Obviously they were drawn to Him and so they were the guests in the main meal of the day after the synagogue service was over.

Now we also know that Peter was married. First Corinthians 9:5 refers to Peter's wife. We know that he was married. His wife is not mentioned here, but his mother-in-law was here. So we can construct a little bit about the family. This was Peter's house. Peter was married. Tradition tells us Peter had children, though the Scripture doesn't refer to them. Tradition says he had children. And he had his mother-in-law living with him. That's a pretty common thing to do. So he...he was in a very normal kind of family structure. Well his mother-in-law had become very ill and she is suffering from what the other gospel writers who refer to this call a fever, and Luke, I guess, because he's a physician and tells...tends to be a little more technical calls a high fever, or mega fever. She had a severe fever. So these synagogue goers there in Capernaum had heard Jesus teach and they had heard about Jesus and they knew His power and they had known of His miracles and naturally they invited Him to dinner realizing, of course, that the mother-in-law was ill and wanting Jesus to do something about it. In fact, at the end of verse 38 it says, "They made request of Him on her behalf."

Now she had some kind of serious infection. There's no way to diagnose exactly what she had but we all know that a fever is indicative of the body's effort to fight infections. She had some kind of serious infection producing a high fever. And there was great concern, no doubt, by her daughter, Peter's wife, no doubt by Peter and as well, perhaps, as others in the family...Andrew, Peter's brother and even friends like James and John. And as I said, tradition says Peter had children and so they would have been concerned about their grandmother as well. A family crisis. Luke writes a little more about this. He says they made request of Him on her behalf. They were very, very concerned about getting her well. They were aware that Jesus had been healing. His healing power had spread throughout all the surrounding district. Back in chapter 4 verse 14 we read that, also verse 23 indicates that Jesus had the power to heal and had demonstrated it at Capernaum, chapter 4 verse 23 you can look that up. So they had evidence of Jesus' power to heal, so they prevailed upon Him.

Verse 39, "Standing over her..." Matthew and Mark record the same account, same incident. They tell us she was lying down and they add that He took her hand in an expression, a gesture of tenderness,

in a gesture of sympathy, showing the tenderness of Jesus as when He wept over the death of Lazarus and the sorrow of Mary and Martha in John 11, and also shows the compassion of God. But more than that, what we see here is not just compassion, anybody can be compassionate, standing over her, or leaning over her He rebuked the fever and it left her. This term "rebuke" is reserved almost exclusively for people, but here it is identified with a disease, or a fever. Uniquely He rebukes the fever. The intent of the statement is to show that He has power over what debilitates the body. He can speak to a fever and it disappears. There is no medicine here. There is no medical technique here. There is nothing other than sovereign supernatural power over an infection. Instantaneously does Jesus halt the infection and the fever goes and immediately she arose and waited on them. Remember now, this is the biggest meal of the week, generally speaking, kind of like Sunday dinner used to be. This is the Sabbath dinner, this is the big meal. And I just remark for you here, and this is very important to notice, there is no lingering weakness. Usually when someone has had a high fever over a prolonged period of time, fighting some serious infection, even if there can be some abatement of that infection through antibiotics or whatever, there is going to be a lingering malingering weakness. There is no trace of lingering weakness. There is no recovery period here. There is nothing gradual going on here. She isn't...she isn't, you know, sort of picked up in her bed and given a cup of cool water or a, you know, the ubiquitous bowl of chicken soup. Nothing happens here like that, no flush cheeks, no hot skin, no sweating, no dryness, no limpness, no shivering, no struggling to get up and walk. There are no remaining residual symptoms whatsoever and that's what the text is telling is. He rebuked the fever, it left her, she immediately rose up and waited on them. And, you know, she went in essentially to help with serving dinner to a rather large group of people. I mean it was Peter and it was Peter's wife, and it was whatever children were there and it was Andrew and it was James and it was John and it was Jesus and whoever else may have been there, adults and children making up a very busy household. She turns immediately from this high fever, this mega fever and is engaged in serving them the Sabbath meal. This is typical, mark it, of all the healings of Jesus. It is typical of all the healings of Jesus.

And at this point I would be unfaithful, I would be remiss if I didn't inject a very important perspective related to Jesus' healings because these questions come up all the time and they need to be carefully answered. There have always been and there always will be false healers, folks, we need to understand this. There have always been, there will always be false healers who prey on people who have illnesses, whether they're selling snake oil out of the back of a chuck wagon in the old west, whether they're supposed mystics and soothsayers and magicians of ancient times, whether they're modern-day tent healers or stadium healers, or whatever you want to call them, TV healers, they are always there to prey on sick people. They are always there to prey on the people who are suffering in order to get money out of those people at the expense of their well being. And, of course, contributing to them a greater and more profound pain and sorrow than they already suffer. And I remember so well, the … listening to Benny Hinn, literally hearing him with my own ears and I heard the tape of it again played to me in which he said that if...that he had heard from Jesus, that Jesus through him is going to heal dead people, or raise dead people and he told his listeners, "If you have somebody who

dies, don't bury the body, bring the body into the house, push the body up to the TV and drape the arms of the dead person over the television and leave their arms there for 24 hours and through him Jesus is going to raise the dead." And frankly I can't...I can think of a lot of things that are horrible, I can't think of anything more horrible than taking a person already at the point of ultimate grief having lost a loved one and having them manipulating a corpse to drape its arms over a television set for 24 hours under the false assumption that somehow that body is going to be raised from the dead. It's a staggering thing.

While I was in England doing a conference, Maurice Cerullo was there, another one of those healers who was at in the middle of the city of London and was holding a healing campaign and it was amazing because there was a medical doctor there who was associated with the BBC who happens to be a believer in Christ and a very wonderful man. And he decided to take the force of the medical community down to assess whether anybody was being healed in this seven- or eight-day event in downtown London. And for two hours they did a BBC special which showed the horrors of what was going on, the absolute horrifying experiences of people in wheelchairs and with all kinds of infirmities and illnesses and deformities were experiencing under the guise of healing. This same evangelist went to India, went to a city in India and had booked a stadium there to put on healing meetings. The city council over there wisely decided to find out if this was going to create some terrible problem in India because they have so many sick people to start with and so to make sure it didn't exacerbate the difficulty that's already there, they said if you're going to do this we're going to ask you to give us a demonstration of your healing power. So they came to his hotel, brought a whole string of sick people and said, "Heal these to show us you can do it." And he couldn't. They put him on a plane and shipped him out.

Two of the leaders of the Vineyard Movement, John Wimber and David Watson not only believed they could heal, but believed they could teach people to heal and both of them died of cancer. Since the Fall of man in the garden, disease has been a terrible reality. For millennia the search for cures to alleviate illness and suffering has consumed human kind. And medicine is the boon of the search to cure disease and to stall off death. Sickness and death have distressed and ultimately conquered every single person who has ever lived except Enoch and Elijah. Only two people escaped death, Enoch in Genesis 5 and Elijah in 2 Kings 2. Only Jesus conquered death and rose again in glory. Of course He was not a sinner so He did not have the fallenness that sin brings to bear on the rest of us. Aside from Jesus and from Enoch and Elijah who went to heaven in a special way, everybody has died...everybody, billions of people have died, they all die, will all die. Sickness, injury, some kind of infirmity, no one even the people who claim to have the gift of healing, no one is exempt.

May I confess something to you? As a pastor you spend a lot of time with people who are ill, a lot of time with people who are dying, people who are bereaved about death. If I could choose one spiritual gift beyond the ones God has given me, I would ask for the gift of healing were there such a gift. On innumerable occasions I have wished that I could heal. I've stood with weeping parents in a hospital

room watching a precious child die of leukemia, or have brain surgery to remove a tumor from their brain. I've prayed with a dear friend as inoperable cancer ate at his insides. I have stood by helplessly as a young person fought for life in an intense care unit after an automobile accident had mangled his internal organs. I've seen teenagers crushed in car accidents. I remember walking out of the parking lot here one day to find a little baby crushed between two cars. I've watched people lie comatose while machines keep their vital signs alive and their family grieves. I...I've watched a close friend weaken and die after an unsuccessful heart transplant down in Houston. I've been with friends in terrible pain during surgery. I know people who are permanently disabled in every imaginable way, quadriplegia being the severest, forms of paraplegia. I've seen babies born with heartbreaking deformities. I've help people learn to cope with amputations and other losses. Through all of this I have very often wished that I could heal people with a word, with a touch, with a command, but I can't. And frankly, I don't know anybody else who can. Think of how thrilling and think of how really rewarding it would be to have the gift of healing if you really had it. Think of what it would be like to go into a hospital among the sick and the dying and walk up and down the hall touching people and healing everybody. It would be wonderful to gather groups of people with the gift of healing and fly them over to India or other places in the world where there are great pockets of disease, fly them over to Africa and just heal everybody who has AIDS. Fly them over to some Third World country and heal everybody who has tuberculosis. Take them into the cancer wards and heal all the people who have cancer.

Why is it that these supposed healers of today don't do that? Why don't they all get together and go and do that? Why don't they all assemble, all these gifted healers that we hear about, why don't they go out where the worst needs are and heal those people? Why don't they come out from behind the TV screen? Why don't they come down off the stage of their contrived manipulating tent and stadium events. They could just go to the hospitals and the sanitariums in their own areas and once they had gotten everybody well in their areas, they could just start moving until they covered the four-corners of the earth. I mean, there aren't really many limits to the opportunities to heal if you can do that. But strangely, they never come out of their tents, they never come out of their tabernacles, they never come out of the television studio or off the stage. They always seem to exercise their supposed gift in a very controlled environment, staged their way, run according to their schedule and when you go back and you look at the evidence, and I did this with Kathryn Kuhlman who was one of the first major healers, and I have all that information in my book Charismatic Chaos and showing that you go back and track all the healings, you won't find one. It's been done with Benny Hinn, it's being done repeatedly with many modern-day healers. And when you track back, you can't find any legitimate healings. You can sure find some tragic people left without hope. Why aren't they in the streets of India? Why aren't they in the streets of Bangladesh? Why aren't they in the leper colonies and the AIDS hospices in Africa where masses of people are racked with these disease?

That's not happening. Why? Because those who claim the gift of healing don't have it. The gift of healing, listen very carefully, was a temporary sign gift for Christ and those who were around Him to

authenticate Him as the Messiah and to authenticate the Apostles who were writing the Scripture. Once He was authenticated as Messiah and the Apostles were authenticated as the true preachers of the gospel and the Scripture was penned, the gift of healing ceased. And you find this if you study the New Testament. In the gospels, everybody gets healed. You go into the book of Acts and into the epistles and you begin to see people who are sick and they stay sick. And yet through history because people so desperately want to be healed, you can make a lot of money claiming to do it whether you're selling some phony cancer cure, or some phony spiritual cure.

You know, the Catholic Church, the Roman Catholic Church led the way in claiming the power to heal. They boasted of healing people with the bones of John the Baptist. They boasted healing people with the bones of Peter. They boasted the ability to heal people with the wooden fragments of the cross. They even boasted, this is bizarre, that they healed people with vials that contained Mary's breast milk. Lourdes, a Catholic shrine in France, supposedly been the site of countless miraculous healings, so in the Montreal the great cathedral there has...the walls are all covered with crutches and canes and supposed emblems of healings. Majoriam[?], Yugoslavia has drawn more than 15 million people in the last...well, under 20 years and they come in search of a miracle of healing from the apparition of the virgin Mary who supposedly appeared to some children there in 1981. And then you've got oriental psychic healers who supposedly do bloodless surgery and all they do is throw around pieces of animal parts with sleight of hand that make people think they're removing tumors.

And then to make matters worse, the Charismatic kind of healers, the sort of spiritual healers that are all over the place in Christianity, make people feel that if they don't get healed, it's due to the lack of faith, right? And so you compound your sense of guilt and shame because you just don't believe strong enough to be healed. Or it's because you keep making a negative confession. They say that if you speak negatively you negate your healing, so it's their fault not the healer's fault. But the healer seems to always leave with the money, even if the people's lives are a wreckage.

Now let me just...let me just take you to the healing of Jesus and make a comparison between what is being claimed today as healing and what the Bible tells us about Jesus that the difference is incredibly clear. Our Lord set the pattern for the gift of healing. Obviously it was the first time it had ever existed and existed in Him and He gave the power to heal to the seventy who represented Him and to the Apostles who represented Him for that period of time in which He was authenticating His messiahship and the gospel and establishing the Scripture. Medical science was crude and limited in those days, and, of course, there were more incurable diseases than we have now. Plagues could wipe out entire cities if not entire nations. Jesus came along with the power to heal and it was really an incredibly immense sign of His divinity.

Now I want to just give you six characteristics of Jesus' healing. I'm just going to fire them at you, you keep these in your mind, they're very important. First, Jesus healed with a word or a touch...with a word or a touch. And whenever you study the healings of Jesus, He spoke the healing or He touched

someone, on some occasions He did both. And you see this in the many, many healings of Jesus in the New Testament.

Secondly, He healed instantly...instantly. It never says, "Jesus healed him and he kept on getting better." There never was any progression. The centurion's servant was healed in Matthew 8 that very hour. The woman with the bleeding problem in Mark 5 was healed immediately. In Luke 17 Jesus healed ten lepers instantaneously. And He touched another man with leprosy and immediately the leprosy departed from him, Luke 5. The crippled man at the pool of Bethsaida in John 5 immediately became well, took up his bed, began to walk. The man born blind in John 9 had to go and wash his eyes. As soon as he washed his eyes was healed instantly...instantly.

People never said, "I've been healed and I know I'm going to get better." Jesus never did progressive healings. He healed instantly. He healed immediately. There were no natural processes involved. There were no natural recovery processes involved, and that's what we saw in this mother-in-law of Peter. She immediately gets up, no loss of strength, no diminished energy and she begins to wait on the people and serve the meal.

Thirdly, Jesus healed totally. There were no partial healings. I remember a lady telling me, "You know, I believe in healing." I had spoken on this subject somewhere and she said, "I...you're wrong, I believe in healing. God healed my husband of cancer."

I said, "Really, how long ago?"

She said, "Two years."

I said, "How's he doing now?"

She said, "He's dead."

That's a rather narrowed definition of healing to me. It's amazing people wanting to believe something so badly they'll believe what is obviously not the case. Jesus healed totally...totally. And that you see in the case of the healing here of Simon Peter's mother-in-law. There was a full and total restoration. No relapses, no recovery time.

Fourthly, Jesus healed everybody...everybody. Unlike healers today, Jesus didn't leave long lines of disappointed people and wrecked lives. People going back home trying to figure out why it is that they didn't have enough faith, or somewhere along the line they said a negative word and the negative word obviated the positive confession that could have produced their healing.

You notice down in verse 40 here it says, "Laying hands on every one of them, He was healing them." And that is true of the healing of Jesus. He healed everyone...everyone. There were no

disappointed people.

Fifthly, He healed organic disease. He didn't go up and down alleviating low back pain or heart palpitation, or headache, or any kind of invisible ailment that could have been caused by some emotional stress or some momentary problem. What Jesus did was not anything short of creative...creative. He replaced crippled legs with legs that functioned fully. He replaced blind eyes with seeing eyes. He replaced deaf ears with hearing ears. He replaced paralysis with full function. His healings were creative, they literally recreated on an organic level.

And sixthly, Jesus raised the dead...He raised the dead. Luke 7, Mark 5, He raised dead people.

Now listen, Jesus did all of this and He did it all anywhere and everywhere. There wasn't any stage. There wasn't any setting. There wasn't any screening process. He did it all in public before huge crowds in various locations without any artistry involved. And listen to this, most of the people that He healed exhibited no particular faith in Him, made no confession of faith in Him, didn't believe necessarily. His miracles did not necessarily require faith. Furthermore, His miracles happened predominantly to unbelievers, almost always unbelievers who had no faith in Him, no salvation. In fact, He raised dead people and dead people don't believe anything. Dead people are dead. They couldn't have faith. They couldn't acknowledge Jesus. And they couldn't make a positive confession. His miracles were strung out throughout His entire ministry of three years not in specially controlled environments and circumstances but everywhere all the time during the normal flow of daily activity everywhere He went. In fact, to make it very simple, for all intents and purposes, in three years He banished disease from Palestine. In the three years of His ministry everywhere He went massive crowds and the people just brought all of the sick people to Him and He healed them all.

Now let's look at verse 40. "And while the sun was setting all who had any sick with various diseases brought them to Him and laying His hands on every one of them He was healing them." Do you see the comprehensiveness of that? Now we know from the account of Peter's mother-in-law how He healed. He healed with a word. He healed instantaneously. He healed without a recovery period. He healed completely and totally. And here we find He did that with everybody. These were instantaneous healings of everyone.

Now I want you to kind of understand verse 40. "While the sun was setting," that's important because what that means is Sabbath's over. This is Saturday, synagogue in the morning, lunch in the afternoon, the sun goes down, the Sabbath is over. It's a close of a very long day. Usually at the close of the Sabbath day you rest. It would have been good if the Lord could have done that. But as the sun goes down on the dusk and the dusk settles in on a Sabbath, the people now could do what they couldn't do during the Sabbath. They couldn't travel and they couldn't carry anything. So now that the sun is setting they can travel to where Jesus is and they can carry their sick and the people who are infirmed. They couldn't do it on the Sabbath, but now they can travel carrying all their sick loved ones

to the house of Simon for Jesus to heal. So here it is and the dinner is over and the day is coming to an end and dusk is coming and all of a sudden everybody who's got sick people with any kind of disease shows up at the house.

Mark says the whole town showed up...the whole town. The scope is amazing. Various diseases, not just infection, not just fever, and that's as broad as it can be. They're all aware now of His healing power. They all show up. They were aware of it even before He had healed Peter's mother-in-law. And now perhaps the word had spread rapidly about that healing in the afternoon and they all show up. And Jesus receives them all. There are no conditions of faith. There are no conditions of belief. There are no conditions of positive confession. He just puts His hands on everybody and everybody is healed. And that, folks, is the healing power of Jesus.

And that's why I said earlier, if these people had that gift of healing then they ought to go the way Jesus went, out into the places where all the sick people are and heal them all with a word and with a touch, instantaneously. And He was healing them. End of verse 40, that's...that's a continuous action verb tense. Every one was being healed. And I'll tell you something. They didn't want salvation. They didn't want salvation. It's very obvious that many of the people that Jesus healed cried for His blood and His crucifixion. They didn't want salvation.

Now I want you to understand, as you get into the three-year ministry of Jesus there are nearly 90 New Testament texts in the four gospels about His healings. He did this everywhere through His ministry. It was literally a healing explosion that essentially banished disease from Palestine. Now let me tell you something, and listen very carefully and I'll close with this, but you need to get this. Never in human history was there anything close to that, never. And these people today who say, "Well, Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever and we ought to expect Him to heal today just as the way He healed then," they don't get it. Listen, the first healing recorded in the Bible was during the time of Abraham. There are no healings recorded in the first 1600 years of biblical history up to the Flood, no healings recorded. And there were billions of people alive when the Flood hit. The first healing is recorded in the time of Abraham, that's about 2200 B.C. So for the first 2200-year history of the world there are no healings recorded. Now listen, from Abraham to Isaiah would be from 2200 B.C. to 750 B.C., okay so 1450 years, or 1500. During that period from Abraham to Isaiah, 1500 years let's say, there are recorded twenty healings, 1500 years 20 healings...five of them from Job, actually five of them...yes, from the time of Job and Abraham which would be the patriarchal time, five in Moses' day, two in Samuel's day, eight from David to Isaiah for a total of twenty. Twenty healings in 1500 years.

Now listen to this. From 750, Isaiah, to Christ, 750 years guess how many healings are recorded in the Bible? Zero...there aren't any...none. This is not something God did willy-nilly all the time. During all that time from Isaiah to Christ there was sickness, there was disease and there was death and everybody died. But there were no healings. That is why...listen...when Jesus began to heal in

Matthew 9:13...Matthew 9:33, the people said, "Nothing like this was ever done in Israel." They knew there had never been anything like this, never...never. Even the people of God, the people of Israel had absolutely no expectation of this. They had no experience of this. They had never seen anything like it. Mark 2:12, "We have never seen anything like this." Never. In Luke 10:23, "Turning to His disciples...Jesus had been healing...He said to them, 'Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see. I say to you, many prophets and kings wish to see the things you see and didn't see them.'" Nobody had ever seen this, never been done. In the gospel of John in the ninth chapter when the blind man was healed, this was absolutely incredible and remarkable. "Since the beginning of time...John 9:32...it had never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind." How about that? Since the beginning of time nobody ever heard of a blind person healed, nobody. This idea somehow that you have all through the Bible healings, and healings, and healings, and healings just flooding the world and somehow that should be the way it is today. Just not true...just not true.

But Jesus comes and how is God going to vindicate His claims? And how is God going to prove that Jesus is the Messiah? By granting Him the privilege to do what His power commanded that He could do, and that is to create. And to manifest that creative power in healings. And so when Jesus came into the world there was an explosion of healing that banished illness from Palestine. Jesus gave to the seventy that He sent out and to the twelve Apostles the power to do that kind of healing as well because they were preaching Him. They were preaching His gospel and establishing the Scripture. And at the explosive time in human history when the Messiah came and the scriptures were penned that are the New Testament, healing came to attest to the divinity of Jesus and the divine character of the gospel and the Scripture. But as you go past that time, what happens? Paul is ill and he doesn't get well. Trophimus is ill later in the New Testament. Timothy is ill. And Epaphroditus is ill. And you come in to 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus, the epistles for the church, no mention of healing ministry...no promise of healing.

The healing explosion had a purpose and John tells us the purpose. John 20:31, "These have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and believing you might have life in His name."

Now let me close with this. If everybody and anybody can do healing, then what was intended to point to Jesus Christ as the Messiah and the Apostles as the ministers of the gospel and the writers of Scripture is confused. That was a special power for a very special period in redemptive history. You can see in the New Testament it begins to fade away and certainly we can't expect that today. God may choose to answer your prayers in a wonderful and providential way and heal someone, but that's not the pattern and you can't expect that. You can know that if we pray and God chooses to hear and answer that prayer, He may choose that a person should get well. It's unlikely that He's going to use some miraculous means to do it. He may providentially allow that person to recover under medical care. He may aid that in wonderful ways. But I don't know anybody who has ever seen under any effort of prayer a quadriplegic get up out of a wheelchair and walk away. That's not what God does

today. I have never seen such a miracle, I don't know anybody who has. So we know that this is not the norm, but that's okay.

We know this, we know that Jesus has the power over the physical, doesn't He? How do we know that? Because He demonstrated it, right? I don't frankly need to be fully healed in this life. I just want to know that in the life to come I'm not going to have to deal with this body, right? That's the issue. And Jesus proves to us that He can overpower the fallenness of our body. Philippians 3:20, "Our citizenship is in heaven from which we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." Listen to verse 21, "Who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory." Isn't that what we want? Don't we want an eternal body that can praise God? Don't we want an eternal voice that can praise God? Don't we want eternal limbs that can serve God? Don't we want an eternal mind that can worship God? Isn't that what we want? So look for a Messiah who can do that and that's Jesus and He showed that He could do it by His healing miracles.

People always say, "Well isn't there healing in the atonement?" Sure. Matthew 8 and when Jesus had come to Peter's home, here's Matthew's account. "He saw his mother-in-law lying sick in bed with a fever. He touched her hand and the fever left her. She arose and waited on Him. And when evening was come they brought in many who were demon possessed and He cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were ill in order that what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled saying, 'He Himself took our infirmities and carried away our diseases.'" What a statement. He fulfilled that day in the house of Simon the prophecy of Isaiah that the Messiah when He comes will be able to show that He will remove infirmity and disease. It doesn't mean that you're guaranteed a temporal healing through salvation but it does mean that you are guaranteed an eternal healing.

He will take away all our illness, won't He? He will take away all our disease ultimately. Frankly, that's all I need to know. I don't really care about here. I don't particularly want to live forever here, do you? But I do want to be all that God can make me to be, perfect in the resurrected image of Jesus Christ. There is healing in the atonement. He did display the power to take away our infirmities and carry away all our diseases and conquer death for us by the amazing power of His miracles.

So when you're looking for who is the Savior and who is the Messiah, find somebody who can overpower the tremendously debilitating, decaying, diseasing and deadly power of sin. And Jesus showed that He and He alone had the power to do that. And that's why we believe He is the Redeemer, the Savior, the Messiah, the great Deliverer. The rest next time. Let's pray.

Father, thank You again this morning for the time of worship and praise and we thank You that the glory of Christ is unequalled. We see in the majesty of His healing power and now bless us, send us on our way with gratitude that some day we all will be healed and given a body like unto the body of His eternal glory. We pray in His great name. Amen.

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