

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

Does God Still Heal?

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

Code: 90-60

Well as you know, we are involved in a study of the Charismatic movement, the contemporary movement, and tonight we come to a section entitled, "Does God Still Heal?" Now in the messages that I have been giving we have intersected with the thoughts about healing, and we have said some things about that in some of our prior studies and we're not going to repeat those things, but there is much more that needs to be said tonight as we evaluate a movement that advocates healing. In fact, if there is anything that would be typically Charismatic or typically characteristic of the modern Pentecostal movement, third wave movement, or Charismatic movement, it would be a major emphasis on healing, and we need to understand that.

Let me begin with some illustrations that set the scene for us. A familiar name to anybody who studies the Charismatic movement and delves into the issues of healing is the name of a man, Hobart Freeman, a very interesting man, at one time a professor of Old Testament at Grace Theological Seminary, from which our own Dick Mahue graduated, and when he was a professor there in Old Testament, he was considered to be the finest communicator, the finest teacher there. In fact, Hobart Freeman wrote a very significant book entitled, "An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophets," which in 1969, was published and printed by the Moody Bible Institute. So he was considered by everybody to be a mainline evangelical professor, one who not only understood but could adroitly teach the truth of Scripture.

Somewhere along the line he changed. Hobart Freeman believed that God had healed him from Polio. Nonetheless, one of Freeman's legs was so much shorter than the other that he had to wear corrective shoes and walked with great difficulty. Freeman became a pastor. He began his ministry as a Baptist and after he had written and taught for some years, in the mid-60's became very fascinated with faith healing, and it moved him into the Charismatic movement, and then it moved him further and further towards the fringes of that movement. He started his own church in Claypool, Indiana; it was known as Faith Assembly and it grew to more than 2,000 members. Meetings were held in a building which he called the glory barn and church services were closed to non-members.

So it was kind of a secretive and cultic association. Freeman and the Faith Assembly congregation utterly disdained all medical treatment. He believed that modern medicine was an extension of ancient witchcraft and black magic. To submit to a doctor's remedies, Freeman believed, was to expose oneself to demonic influence. Expectant mothers in Freeman's congregation were told that they must give birth at home with the help only of a church sponsored midwife rather than go to a

hospital delivery room or to be treated by a doctor. By the way, obedience to that teaching cost a number of mothers and infants their lives. In fact, over the years, at least 90 church members died as a result of ailments that would have been easily treatable. No one really knows what the actual death toll would be if nationwide figures could be compiled on all the other people who followed Hobart Freeman's teaching.

After a 15 year old girl whose parents belonged to Faith Assembly died of a medically treatable malady, the parents were convicted of negligent homicide and sentenced to ten years in prison. Freeman himself was charged with aiding and inducing reckless homicide in the case. Shortly afterward, on December 8, 1984, Freeman himself died, interestingly enough of pneumonia and heart failure complicated by a severely ulcerated leg.

Hobart Freeman's theology did not allow him to acknowledge that Polio had left one of his legs disfigured and lame. He said, "I have my healing," and that's all he would say when anyone pointed out the rather conspicuous inconsistency between his physical disabilities and his theology. Ultimately, his refusal to acknowledge his infirmities cost him his life. He had dutifully, according to his own theology, refused all medical treatment for the maladies that were killing him, and medical science could easily have prolonged his life, but in the end he was a victim of his own teaching.

Now Hobart Freeman is a very familiar name to those who are involved in faith healing, but he's not the only one. There is another one who succumbed to ailments and that is a man by the name of William Brannom, and if you study anything about the healing movement you're going to come across the name of William Brannom. He would be the father of the post World War II healing revival. He was a man reputed to have been instrumental in some of the most spectacular healings that the Pentecostals have ever seen. He died, however, in 1965 at age 56, after suffering for six days from injuries received in an automobile accident. His theology was unbiblical and heretical, and of course when applied to himself his theology of healing had no effect whatsoever, though his followers right to the end, were confident God was going to raise him up, and even after he died they believed that God would raise him from the dead.

As a boy, I was brought to become aware of another faith healer who became very, very famous, a man by the name of A.A.Allen. And A.A. Allen, about whom I read and whom I followed with curiosity, was a famed Tent Evangelist; he took his healing meeting from place to place in a tent. Interestingly enough, A.A. Allen claimed thousands upon thousands of healings, and himself died of sclerosis of the liver in 1967, having secretly been involved with alcohol for many years while supposedly being able to heal everybody else.

Perhaps a more familiar name in the healing movement would be the name of one who is elevated almost to the status of the Roman Catholic elevation of Mary, and that's a woman by the name of Kathryn Kuhlman. Kathryn Kuhlman died of heart failure in 1976, curiously enough. She had battled

heart disease for nearly 20 years, and that statement is made by Jamie Buckingham who would have been one of her disciples.

Another one that comes to mind, Ruth Carter Stapleton, was the faith healing sister of former United States President Jimmy Carter, refused medical treatment for cancer because of her belief in faith healing, she died of the disease in 1983, and even John Wimber, who would be probably the most prominent modern contemporary third wave healer, struggles with chronic angina and heart problems. He begins his book on Power Healing with a personal note. This is what it says; quoting John Wimber, he says, "I had what doctors later suspected were a series of coronary attacks. When we returned home a series of medical tests confirmed my worst fears, I had a damaged heart, possibly seriously damaged. Tests indicated that my heart was not functioning properly, a condition complicated and possibly caused by high blood pressure. These problems combined with my being overweight and overworked meant that I could die at any time."

Wimber writes that he sought God and he says God told him that in the same way Abraham waited for his child, I was to wait for my healing. In the meantime, he says, "He told me to follow my doctor's orders." Wimber writes, "I wish I could write that at this time I am completely healed, that I no longer have physical problems, but if I did it would not be true." Now it seems obvious, at least a curiosity of all of us, that so many leading advocates of faith healing are sick.

Annette Capps, the daughter of faith healer Charles Capps, and herself a faith healer, raised that question in her book; her book is entitled "Reverse the Curse in Your Body and Emotions." This is what she writes, "People have stumbled over the fact that the so called, healing minister, later became ill or died, they say, I don't understand this. If the Power of God came into operation and all those people were healed, why did the evangelist get sick? Why did he or she die? The reason is because healings that take place in meetings like that are a special manifestation of the Holy Spirit. This is different from using your own faith. The Evangelist, who is being used by God in the gifts of healings, is still required to use his own faith in the Word of God to receive divine health and divine healing for his own body. Why? Because the gifts of healings are not manifested for the individual who is ministering, they are for the benefit of the people."

Now that double talk basically means that somebody could have faith for somebody else's healing but not enough faith for their own healing. So, sometimes without faith for their own healing they die, while they have enough faith for other people's healings who live. She goes on to say, "Over the years I have seen various manifestations of the gifts of healing in my own ministry, but I have always had to use my own faith in God's word for my healing. There have been times that I have been attacked with illness in my body but as I ministered many were healed even though I did not feel well. I had to receive my healing through faith and acting on God's word."

Thus, she astonishingly concludes that if a faith healer gets sick, it is because his or her personal faith is somehow deficient when applied to his or herself. Now to take that a step further, you must understand that these people go so far as to say, "That even Jesus Himself sometimes did not have the faith required for people to be healed."

Perspectives on faith healing often seem as varied as the number of faith healers around. Some say God wants to heal all sickness; others come close to conceding that God's purposes may sometimes be fulfilled in our illness and infirmity. Some equate sickness with sin, others stop short of that, but still find it hard to explain why spiritually strong people get sick. Some people just flat out blame the devil, and they think if they can tie the devil up in a knot and send him off to Tibet or something everybody'll get well.

Some claim to have the gifts of Healing, others say they have no unusual healing abilities; they simply are used of God to show people the way of faith. A lot of people used to say they had the gift of healing but the chicanery they were using has for so many years been exposed that nobody today can get away with that stuff anymore, so now they just claim they don't have the gift of Healing, and they just sort of pray and have faith and God does what He wants. Some will say they heal with a physical touch, some will say you heal through anointing with oil, others say they can speak forth a healing, that they can speak it into existence, some people say they can only pray for a healing, and so forth and so on. There are healers who just keep changing from one approach to another as the chicanery and the charlatanism of the healing movement becomes exposed and they have to change their methodology.

Always a faith healer, the well known Oral Roberts used to claim that he could heal. He claimed great powers of healing; he no longer claims that. Oral Roberts claimed God had called him, in fact, to build a massive hospital, and He said this massive hospital would blend conventional medicine with faith healing. If you visit the city of Tulsa, as I did this summer, you are absolutely astonished at this facility. It is mind boggling to see a 60 story building rising out of a weed patch outside Tulsa, Oklahoma, and next to it a 30 story building rising as well, now completely vacant and most of it unfinished on the inside. In the face of huge financial losses apparently God changed His mind and declared that the whole thing should be closed down. It is a monument to the unfulfilled promises of faith healing. Nonetheless, in spite of these bizarre claims that never come to pass, faith healing and the Charismatic movement keep growing.

Charles Fox Parham who is the father of the contemporary Pentecostal movement, came to the conviction originally, this is way back, the turn of the century when Charismatic movement was then known as Pentecostalism and just starting, he claimed that God desired all believers to have complete healing and he developed that into an entire Pentecostal system, and then it began to flow through the leaders. Amy Simple McPherson, who founded the Foursquare Church, at Angelus Temple, E.W. Kenyon, William Brannom, Kathryn Kuhlman, Oral Roberts, Kenneth Hagan, Kenneth

Copeland, Fredrick Price, Jerry Seville, Charles Capps, Norville Hayes, Robert Tilton, Benny Hinn, Larry Lee, and on and on it goes. They have all headlined their public meetings with healing.

There are even Catholic Charismatics such as Father John Bertolucci, and Francis McNutt who have followed suit seeing the Charismatic healing emphasis is a natural extension of Roman Catholic tradition, and then in the last phase of this called The Third Wave, which we talked about leaders like John Wimber and others, Paul Kane and the Kansas City Prophets, et al., have made healing a central element in their repertoire. The claims and methods of these faith healers range frankly from the eccentric to the grotesque.

A few years ago I received - I receive everything in the mail. If they don't send it to me, somebody who wants me to see it does, and I have received bottles of healing oil and healing water and all kinds of things - but I received a miracle prayer cloth, and in it the message said, and I am quoting, "Take this special miracle prayer cloth and put it under your pillow and sleep on it tonight. Or you may want to place it on your body or on a loved one. Use it as a release point wherever you hurt. First thing in the morning send it back to me in the green envelope. Do not keep this prayer cloth, return it to me. I will take it, pray over it all night. Miracle power will flow like a river. God has something better for you, a special miracle to meet your needs."

Now these are the kinds of things that go on all the time, and of course in the green envelope you not only send the cloth but you send some green money as well. The green being a good reminder of what color they'd like to see. Interestingly enough, the sender of the prayer cloth feels he has biblical support for doing this.

While Paul was in Ephesus, you remember God performed extraordinary miracles through him, according to Acts 19, it says, "Handkerchiefs or aprons were carried from his body to the sick and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them." As we have been seeing in the series, however, Paul and the other apostles had been given unique power, and we talked about apostolic power as unique power; certainly nothing in the New Testament suggests that anybody could send out handkerchiefs and they are going to produce miracles.

Kenneth Hagan tells of one faith healer he heard of who used a method that I have never personally witnessed. Kenneth Hagen writes, "He'd always spit on them, every single one of them. He'd spit in his hand and rub it on them. That's the way he ministered. If there was something wrong with your head, he'd spit in his hand and rub it on your forehead. If you had stomach trouble, he'd spit in his hand and rub it on your clothes and on your stomach. If you had something wrong with your knee, he'd spit in his hand and rub it on your knee, and all the people would get healed," Kenneth Hagan.

Other gimmicks, not quite that uncouth, but every bit as outlandish, also can be visualized everyday as you watch your television set, some ask for seed faith money. Oral Roberts often says that if you

donate money to him that is in effect a down payment on your own personal healing.

Robert Tilton regularly devises simple ploys, pledges special healings and financial miracles to people who send him money, the larger the gift, the better the miracle. "It's in direct proportion to how much money you send," he says. Pat Robertson will peer into the camera and as if he can see into people's living rooms describe people who are being healed that very moment.

Benny Hinn recently healed fellow faith healer and talk show host Paul Crouch. He healed him on the live broadcast of the Trinity Network. After Hinn had released his anointing to a roomful of people, Crouch stepped forward to testify that he'd been miraculously cured of a persistent ringing in the ears he had been suffering from for years and on and on it goes, this list of fantastic claims, incredible stories of healings grow at a frantic pace, but real evidence of genuine miracles is conspicuously absent.

Everywhere you go people are asking questions about this, from all sides comes confusion, questions, contradictions. Now as we study the Scripture, we find there are three categories of spiritual gifts, if we want to call them that. First would be the category we could say are gifted men like apostles, prophets, evangelists, teaching pastors. These are the men themselves given as gifts from Christ to the church. Then we could say there are the permanent edifying gifts and the temporary sign gifts, the other two categories. Permanent edifying gifts would be gifts related to knowledge, and wisdom, and preaching, and teaching, and exhortation, and faith, and discernment, and showing mercy, and giving, and administration, and helps, and those things that have an ongoing ministry in the church.

Then there are those temporary sign gifts, in other words, divine enablements given by the Holy Spirit for a temporary period of time as a sign for a very special purpose. These are listed for us in Scripture; they are miracles, healings, tongues, or languages, and the interpretation or translation of those languages.

Now we have noted in our study that such sign gifts had a unique purpose. Very simple, they were to identify the authentic spokesman for God. First of all, Jesus did miracles, Jesus cast out demons. He did miracles that fall into three categories. Miracles of physical healing, miracles of demonic deliverance, and miracles of natural phenomena, like walking on water, or stilling the sea, feeding people by multiplying bread and fish, and those miracles were to demonstrate to people that Jesus was not a mere man, but that He was the Messiah of God. It should be very clear to everyone who saw Him that this was not a man, because no man could do what He did.

So Christ had unique capability to do supernatural things in order to draw attention to the fact that He was unique. In fact, you need to remember that up until the time of Jesus Christ, there was nobody who could just go around healing people. There were some healings in the Old Testament, and there

were some miracles of nature, and there were some powerful exhibitions of God's supernatural work in creation, and the flood, and many other supernatural powerful things, but as far as a miracle, which is a subcategory of the supernatural.

Sometimes people say, "Well, you people always say there are only three eras of miracles," and that would be the time of Moses, and then Elijah and Elisha, and then Christ and the Apostles, and those are the only three periods of miracles. Then they will say, "Well, that's not true, because creation was a miracle, and the flood was a miracle," and they will go right on through and, "Jacob wrestled an angel and that was a miracle, and God was always doing supernatural things." But they fail to make the clear distinction that miracle is a technical term, it is a subcategory for the supernatural.

God is always acting in a supernatural way, even today, every time someone is saved that is a supernatural work. But miracle is a technical term to describe an act of God which He does through a human agency, and they're very rare. Even when you go back into the Old Testament and you find miracles where God acts through a human instrumentation to authenticate His messenger and the message, they are rare and nothing like the healing ministry of Jesus. No one ever just roamed everywhere, healing everybody.

So what you have in the case of Jesus you have never seen before. Nothing like this has ever happened before in the history of the world, so this is a very unique thing, and to assume that it never happened before, to know that by Old Testament revelation, and it happened at the time of Christ, uniquely, and then it faded out in the end of the New Testament era, and now for some strange reason it's all come back at the same level as once it did and we're supposed to have this massive kind of healing going on as it did in the day of Christ, is to demonstrate an imbalance and an unsound perspective of the purpose of the miracle ministry of Jesus. It was to authenticate His Messiahship, and it is therefore irreproducible and unrepeatable.

So Jesus did unique things which were unique to His own ministry. Now it is true that Jesus passed on to the Apostles power in two of the three categories. Remember now, He healed diseases, He had power over demons, and He did miracles of nature, natural phenomenon. The first two he gave the Apostles, they never did any miracles of nature, they never did any. But "Peter," you say, "Walked on water." Yes, but that was a miracle Christ was performing and that occurred only in His presence. They never did anything like, "Feed the 5,000" or "Walk on water" after that or "Still a storm" or anything like that. The only two things they were given power to do were cast out demons and heal the sick, including raising the dead.

But in their case, again, these were to point to them, to point to them as the messengers of God. There was no printed New Testament and it was very essential that among all of the people who were saying they spoke for God somebody be able to tell who was real, and you could tell because they had power over demons and power over disease, so they were given that ability to do those

things, and the Apostles could do them, and those closely associated with the Apostles could do them.

Go back into Matthew 10:1, "Having summoned His twelve disciples, He gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out," and that by the way is the gift of miracles. Miracle is *dunamis* power, power over the forces of demons, "and He gave them the power to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness," and that was granted to the Twelve. Later on you find out that that group was expanded and it included the 70. Remember when He sent the 70, two by two and gave them the same power? So it was a very small group. "These were the signs," says Paul, of a true Apostle. "Signs and wonders and miracles," 2 Corinthians 12:12. They were limited in scope, only casting out demons and healing diseases, and they were limited in terms of who received them, only the Apostles and the 70 commissioned directly by Jesus, those who worked alongside the Apostles. It never went beyond that.

It never became common for anybody and everybody in the church to do this. There's no indication that the Evangelists, that the prophets, with a few exceptions, Barnabas, Philip, Stephen, those very early men, never an indication that teaching pastors could do this, and certainly no indication that members of the church, the Body of Christ, could do this. These were unique apostolic gifts. When you study the epistles of Paul, and Paul is very clear about the fact that if you have problems with Satan and demons you don't find somebody who can chase them away, you put on your armor, right? "We have spiritual weapons to battle against those forces," he said.

Now if false teachers want credibility it's very obvious that they can sure draw a crowd and gain credibility if they can heal, and so that's always a kind of ploy that is used by false teachers. It has been so in history, whether you're talking about tribal witch doctors in Shamanism, in Animism, and in Paganism, or whether you are talking about occultic kinds of healing, or New Age kind of mind healings, or whether you're talking about the charlatans and the frauds who parade themselves even as Christian healers. It's a great way to draw a crowd, why? Because the number one human anxiety is illness and death.

Since the fall of man in the Garden of Eden disease has been a terrible reality, and for millennia the search for cures to alleviate illness and suffering has consumed mankind. I'll tell you that if I could choose one gift, if God would give me one gift that I don't have and I could ask Him for it and get it, I'd ask Him for the gift of healing. I mean, if it was available to me. Can you imagine what you could accomplish with it?

There are many occasions when I have wished I could heal. I've stood in a room in a hospital watching a precious child die of Leukemia while the parents wept. I 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 intensive care unit, the result of a motorcycle or an automobile accident. I've seen teenagers crushed

through those kinds of things. I've watched their parents in agony.

I've seen people in the hospital on the edge of death with a gunshot wound. I've watched people lie comatose while machines try to keep their vital signs alive, at least on a screen, if not in reality. I watched a close friend weaken and die after an unsuccessful heart transplant. I've seen friends in terrible pain from surgery. I know people who are permanently disabled with sickness and injury. I see babies born with heart breaking deformities. I've helped people learn to cope with amputations and other tragic losses. I've been there when a mother was holding to her arms, in the bedroom, a dead baby who had died of crib death.

If I could wish for anything, I could certainly wish that I could do that, heal all those people. Think how thrilling it would be. Think how rewarding it would be to have that gift. Think of what it would be like to go into a hospital among the sick and the dying, walk up and down the hall, touch people and heal them like Jesus did. Wouldn't it be wonderful to go into the cancer ward and the heart disease ward and the Aids ward, and all the other places and just heal everybody? Somewhere along the line you want to ask these Charismatic healers why they don't assemble all of themselves and go down to that place and let's see if they have the power to heal. Opportunities to heal the sick are unlimited, and if, as Charismatic's claim, such miracles are signs and wonders, listen carefully, they say this, if they are signs and wonders designed to convince unbelievers that the Gospel is true, then wouldn't that be the way to really convince them?

But strangely, the healers rarely, if ever, come out of their tents, rarely ever come out of their buildings; rarely ever come out of their television studios. I have never seen them in a hospital. I have never seen them walking down a ward with a camera following them. They always seem to exercise their gift in an environment which they totally control, staged their way, run according to their schedule. Why don't we see them moving out?

Paul Kane, with whom I met recently, personally, who is sort of the main prophet in this new movement, has prophetically seen this, and I quote one writing about him, Kane describes his vision "Of an army of children that will parade down the streets healing whole hospital wards. He foresees news broadcasts where the anchors report no bad news because everyone is in sports arenas hearing the Gospel. Over a billion will be saved, the dead will be raised, limbs will be restored, those with handicaps will jump from their wheelchairs and crutches will be cast aside, and those in the stadiums will go for days without food or water and never notice."

Now I don't know what kind of a world that is or how they're going to make it happen but I think it is time to start if they have that ability. Is this happening? No, because those who claim to have the gift of healing and the power of healing, and claim to be able to tap into that power really don't have it. The gift of healing was a temporary sign gift for the authenticating of those who wrote the Scripture and those who preached the message in that first century. Once the Scripture was completed and that authenticity was established, the gift of healing ceased, it is not anything new to claim it. The

original claimants were the Roman Catholics.

If you read some of Roman Catholic history you will be amazed probably. They boasted of healing people with the bones of John the Baptist, healing people with the bones of Peter, healing people with pieces of the cross, and somebody said, there's enough pieces of the cross around to build a two story building. They have said that they, "Have healed people with the vials of Mary's breast milk." There is a place that you know about in France called Lourdes, a Catholic shrine that has supposedly been the sight of countless miraculous healings. I have been to the largest Catholic cathedral in the Western Hemisphere in Montreal, San Josef, where people climb 450 stairs on their knees and they go in and they kiss a little box that has the heart of a little friar in it, and all along the walls and everywhere are crutches, all over the place.

Supposedly countless tens of thousands have been healed there, and now in Mejugorje in Yugoslavia, you have been reading about it more than 15,000,000 million people have gone in less than a decade. Why? They're in search of a miracle from the Virgin Mary who appeared in 1981 to six little children. If you read carefully about that it is bizarre.

It is very much like the occultic kind of healings you hear about in pagan parts of the world. You have the oriental psychic healers who say they can do bloodless surgery. They wave their hands over afflicted organs and say incantations and claim people are cured; witch doctors, Shamans, claim to raise the dead, occultist use black magic and lying wonders to do their thing.

Mary Baker Eddy, remember, founded Christian Science, claimed to have healed people through telepathy, and she had buried with her in her casket a telephone because she was going to come to life and call somebody and tell them to come and get her. You see Satan has always captivated people's hearts through the promise of healing. Even today the people who promised that health, wealth, prosperity gospel are hooking people on this tremendous human desire for physical healing and the fear of disease and death.

This goes on and on and on. One pastor on a popular Charismatic television show explained that his gift of healing works this way, "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 bad back, I've got two headache healings," this is a quote, "I announce that to the congregation and tell them that anyone who comes at night, with faith, can claim those that are available for that evening."

Now if you take a closer look at these healings you find some very interesting things. The only documented cases that you can find, the only actually documented cases you can find, are cases of people who didn't get healed. The cases of supposed people who do get healed, you can't find any documentation.

One of the most telling studies of this was done by a medical doctor by the name of William Nolan who decided that he would look into the healing ministry of really the prototype of all of it. Kathryn Kuhlman when she was still going strong before her death, and he wrote a book after studying her, called "Healing, a Doctor in Search of a Miracle," and he went beyond Kathryn Kuhlman, but the major section of interest to me was the section on Kathryn Kuhlman. He made the point in his book that Ms. Kuhlman did not understand psychogenic disease, that she did not understand, that is, disease related to the mind. In simple terms a functional disease might be a sore arm, an organic disease would be a withered arm or no arm at all.

Now Katherine would heal a sore arm but not give somebody one who didn't have one. A psychogenic disease would be thinking your arm was sore and Kathryn could make you think your arm wasn't sore. Nolan wrote, "Search the literature as I have and you will find no documented cures by healers of gallstones, heart disease, cancer, or any other serious organic disease. Certainly you'll find patients temporarily relieved of their upset stomach, their chest pain, their breathing problems. 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 happened later you will always find the cure to have been purely symptomatic and transient. The underlying disease remains."

I remember one of A.A. Allen's cures; a man threw away his crutches and a horrible result came from it, and he was sued by a family for the severe injury that occurred to that man, when under the emotion of the moment, he was able to sort of prop himself momentarily and brought great harm to himself. When faith healers try to treat serious organic diseases they're very often responsible for very serious anguish and unhappiness, and sometimes even life threatening things.

Dr. Nolan had Ms. Kuhlman herself send him a list of the cancer victims she had seen cured, and this is what the doctor discovered, "I wrote to all the cancer victims on her list and the only one who offered cooperation was a man who claimed he had been cured of cancer by Ms. Kuhlman. He sent me a complete report of his case. He had prostatic cancer which is frequently responsive to hormone therapy; if it spreads it is also highly responsive to radiation therapy. This man had had that and he had also had extensive treatment with surgery, radiation, and hormones. He had also dealt with Kathryn Kuhlman.

He chose to attribute his cure or remission, as the case may be, to Ms. Kuhlman. But anyone who read his report, layman or doctor, would see immediately that it is impossible to tell which kind of treatment had actually done most to prolong his life. If Ms. Kuhlman had to rely on this case to prove the Holy Spirit cured cancer through her, she would be in very desperate straits. Dr. Nolan did further work on 82 cases of Kathryn Kuhlman's healings using names that she herself supplied. His conclusion at the end of the entire investigation was that not one of the so called healings was

legitimate, not one.

More recently, a very interesting man by the name of JamesRandy, have you heard that? He's called the amazing Randy, he gave himself that name, he is a professional magician. As a professional magician he has written a book in which he examines the claims of faith healers, why? Because he knows all the gimmicks. He is the man who exposed television Evangelist Peter Popoff's fakery in 1986 on the Tonight Show. You remember that Peter Popoff was one of the healers claimed to get words of knowledge. He would stand there and he would say, "Jesus is telling me this about you," and the truth was he had a little earphone and his wife was giving him all this information because everybody who came to the meeting had to fill out a card.

I don't know if you know about how that works but healers throughout the years have always had the pre-service meeting, when everybody who wants to be cured and get in the healing line fills out a very full card. There is a very simple way, by staggering the cards, that the guy can be holding up a card to his head and telling you all you need to know about yourself, to convince you that this man speaks for God. In the case of PeterPopoff he was repeating information his wife was putting in his ear, from the crib sheets assembled in the pre-meeting.

Now the amazing Randy is really not so amazing, he's just a magician, but he is openly antagonistic to Christianity. His antagonism is fed, I think, continually by what he finds out. But nevertheless, he seems to have done his investigation thoroughly. He asks scores of faith healers to supply him with direct, examinable evidence of true healings. He said, "I've been willing to accept just one case of a miracle cure, so that I might say in this book that at least on one occasion a miracle occurred." But not one faith healer anywhere has given him a single case of medically confirmed healing that couldn't be explained as natural convalescence, psychosomatic improvement or outright fakery.

What is Randy's conclusion? I quote, "Reduced to its basics, faith healing today, as it always has been, is simply magic. Though the preachers vehemently deny any connection with the practice, their activities meet all the requirements for the definition; all of the elements are present and the intent is identical," he said.

Well, I don't want to just be ungracious, that's not my intention, but it is very important that you know the truth and that you be warned. If the Apostle John would even speak the name of *Diotrephes* just because he loved to have the preeminence in the church, and that posed a threat, then how important it is for us to identify these people who pose an even more severe threat, as they say they represent the very voice of God and can prove it by the fact they can do miracles.

I had a meeting with a man who is a very bright, a very intelligent, a very academically trained, a very intellectual man who understands the Bible, and he said to me, "The reason that I am in this movement is because one of these prophets stood up in a meeting and looked at me and told me the

name of my mother, my mother's maiden name. Not only that he was able to tell me my father's real name, and my father goes by a nickname and I knew that he could only know that by direct revelation."

Now how utterly gullible can a man be? If I could find a full fledged, bona fide theologian, first ranked, teaching in one of the most respected seminaries of the world, and if I could convince him of my being a prophet of God by just finding out the name of his mother and his father's real name, that wouldn't be too tough if that's all it took, especially if I had been plying that kind of trade for years. It's amazing how gullible people are. We hear about these healings, but there's never any evidence.

Not one of today's self styled healers has produced irrefutable proof of the miracles they claimed to have wrought. Many of them are transparently fraudulent, and the healings in many cases aren't healings at all. Many things can occur by the power of suggestion, like people falling over backwards and so forth, but that can do the opposite of healing you as we noted a few weeks ago when we reminded you that one lady fell over in a Benny Hinn meeting and killed the lady she fell on, and now he's being sued.

Now we all know that desperation accompanies disease. Sickness drives people to do frantic, extreme things they normally wouldn't do. People who are clear minded and balanced become irrational. Remember, Satan knows this, that's why he said in Job 2:4, "Skin for skin, yes, all that a man has will he give for his life." The most desperate, heartbreaking cases involve people, who are incurably organically ill, others aren't really sick at all. You know, if I may be very personal, one of the real joys of our church is the dear precious people that come here every Sunday in wheelchairs. I can't tell you how many of those people have told me that people have said to them, "If you had enough faith, or if you went to another church, other than Grace Church, you could get out of that wheelchair."

Somebody asked me recently if we get a lot of people here coming out of healing churches? I say, "Yes, we get the people who go and don't get healed, no question about it." What a tragic thing; multitudes go away shattered, disconsolate, feeling either they have failed God or God has failed them. Now let me say this, people are going to say, "Well, are you saying God doesn't heal?" No, I'm not saying that, if God wants to heal, He can heal. That's completely, obviously within His power, and if it's in his purpose He can heal. He may heal as a result of prayer. He may heal through simple processes, through medical assistance, or he may heal in a way that we can't explain medically. God may speed up the recovery mechanism and restore a person to health in a way that medicine can't even explain. Sometimes He may overrule a medical prognosis and allow someone to recover from a normally debilitating disease.

Healings like that may come, He may do them; He may do them in response to prayer, He may do them just because He wants to do them. But the gift of healing, and the ability to heal, and special

anointings for healing, and healings that can be claimed and therefore realized, and all the typical faith healing technique billed on the idea that God wants everybody well all the time, has no Biblical sanction whatsoever in the post-apostolic era.

Now backing off a minute, if we just said, "Let's look at Jesus, and if anybody is healing today, and if Jesus' healings is the pattern, and if the Apostles is the pattern, how did they heal?" I'll simply remind you of it. We'll make a comparison and see if today it works like that. First, Jesus healed with a word or a touch. That's all it took. He Touched, He spoke, they were healed.

Secondly, Jesus healed instantaneously. Never in all His healings does the Bible say He healed somebody and they started getting better. No, there was never a process, because if there was a process the point wasn't made. Right? Because if there was a process then it could be explained another way, it was instantaneous. "The Centurion's servant was healed," I love it, Matthew 8:13, "That very hour." The woman with the bleeding problem, it went away immediately. Jesus healed ten lepers instantaneously. The crippled man at the Pool of Bethesda immediately became well.

Thirdly, Jesus healed totally, totally. When someone was healed they were totally and completely healed. The only kind of healing Jesus ever did, He didn't partially heal, He healed totally.

Fourthly, he healed anybody, he healed anybody. He didn't have to have a long line of people filling out cards, and He certainly didn't have a whole group of people who came into the meeting in wheelchairs and left in wheelchairs, if they had wheelchairs, or crutches, or whatever. Luke 4:40 says, "While the Sun was setting, all who had any sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and laying His hands on everyone of them, He was healing them." It's an incredible thing, He healed everybody, He healed everybody instantaneously. He healed everybody totally and He healed everybody with a word. There wasn't some falderal it's just a word.

Fifthly, he healed organic disease. He didn't just go around Palestine healing lower back pain, heart palpitations, headaches, and other things like that. He healed the most obvious organic disease; crippled bent legs, withered hands, blind eyes, paralysis.

Sixthly, He raised the dead, He raised the dead. He came upon a funeral and he raised the dead. You remember that? Here comes the funeral procession; the widow is going to bury her son and Jesus stops the procession, touches the casket and says, "Young man, arise!" and the dead man sat up and began to speak.

Now I'll tell you something, people who tout the gift of healing today don't spend a lot of time in funeral processions; the reason is obvious. You need to note, by the way, that Jesus did virtually all His healings and raising the dead in public before vast crowds of people. Why? Because the gift of healing was real and it was an authenticating gift. He used it to confirm the claim that He was the Son of God in a way that displayed His power and compassion.

Then we ask the question, how did the disciples or apostles heal? How did they heal? How did the Twelve, and the 70, and others who worked with them, like Barnabas, and Philip, and Stephen? Those are the only ones; it didn't just run rampant through everybody in the church, but those people who had that gift, how did they heal? How did they do it? Well, same way they healed with a word or a touch. We see that in the Book of Acts, they healed instantaneously, immediately.

Remember the temple gate with Peter and John? The man immediately went to his feet, started leaping, walking, praising God, they healed totally, not partial, total. They healed everybody. In fact, people who got under Peter's shadow got healed. They healed organic disease, not just functional, psychosomatic, symptomatic problems, and the Apostles even raised the dead. Now nobody is exhibiting those six traits in a healing ministry today, so if this is supposed to be the recapturing of the apostolic era it is really out of sync with that.

A final note; according to Scripture, those who possess those abilities to heal could use their gift at will. That's not true of the contemporary healers because they don't have that gift. They play games with people's minds, the power of suggestion. They prey upon people making them believe things that aren't really true and they use deception. Look at the Apostle Paul; in Philippians 2 he mentions his good friend Epaphroditus was very sick. Now Paul had previously displayed the ability to heal, but he doesn't heal Epaphroditus. It's fair to say maybe that gift was passing out operation, but it's sure fair to say that the gift of healing was never, listen carefully, was never intended to keep Christians happy and healthy.

In fact, you look through the New Testament; find out how many healings occurred to believers, absolutely rare. Peter's wife's mother, Dorcas, masses of unbelievers, masses of people who may or may not have believed anything about Christ or the Apostles; but it surely wasn't given to keep everybody in the church healthy and yet today it's being portrayed as something that's supposed to be done for believers to keep them healthy, to show them that in the atonement is their healing, totally foreign to Scripture.

2 Timothy 4:20, Paul mentioned that he left Trophimus sick at Miletus; why leave a good friend sick? Why did he leave his Christian friend sick? Why didn't he heal him? Well, maybe he didn't have that ability as the time passed on out of the apostolic era, but for sure he recognized that healing was not something you run around doing for your Christian friends. It was never intended as a permanent way to keep the church healthy, yet today Charismatics teach that God wants every Christian well all the time. If that's true, then why did He let them get sick to start with? It seems a basic question. God didn't give you an HMO in your salvation, a sort of supernatural HMO that works automatically. God heals when He wants and when He wishes, but that's up to Him.

Has God promised to heal everybody who has faith? He doesn't promise He'll always heal, but I think the Christian can look to heaven for healing. Now I want to turn the table a little bit as I close in the next couple of minutes. I think that we can go to the Lord for healing. I think we can pray to Him for deliverance from disease, and I do believe there are times when God touches us. Sometimes He heals through medicine, sometimes He heals through surgery, sometimes He heals through natural process working in the body. The body is an amazing self-healing thing, sometimes He may just heal supernaturally because it's His will, and we can look to heaven for that. We can cry out to God in our sickness and ask for His healing, and I would suggest that there are three reasons why we could expect that God might heal.

One, He might heal because of His person. You remember his Old Testament name? That wonderful name, it's really Yahweh Rapaecca, the Lord that Heals, God heals because of His person. "I the Lord am your healer," He told the Israelites. The very fact that when Jesus came into the world He could have done a lot of different miracles. I mean if He wanted to convince people about His Messiahship He could have just flown around, and He could have said, "See, I can do this, and who else can do this?" Or He could have jumped a building at a single bound, or flown faster than a speeding bullet, or He could have put on a Superman show and everybody would have been in awe of that. But why did he choose to heal people? Because He was demonstrating His compassion, and a compassionate God has a heart to heal, and I think we've experienced that at times in our life; God raises up someone from sickness.

Secondly, I think God heals because of His promise. He says, "Whatever we ask in His name, believing and according to His will, He will do it," and there must be times when He'll do that. There certainly is a description in James 5 of a broken, shattered, devastated person, who goes in for prayer. The elders gather around that individual and while the pain of that situation is spiritual and has tremendous physical ramifications, and through prayer that person is restored. The effectual fervent prayer avails much. If in God's will He has designed that He'll do that because of His promise.

Thirdly, God heals because that's His pattern. It is true that in the atonement God bore our diseases, Matthew 8 says it. Matthew 8 says, "He Himself took our infirmities, and carried away our diseases." Now we've already discussed 1 Peter 2:24 and I won't do it again; it doesn't mean that healing for every sickness is in the atonement for now, but healing for every sickness is in the atonement for some day, isn't it? Someday He'll remove all of those diseases. Ultimately, eternally, we'll be delivered from sickness and infirmity. It may just be that He would chose because of that pattern of providing a salvation that ultimately delivers us from bodily infirmity when we get a glorified body, that maybe He'll give us a taste of Glory Divine.

God may heal. That poses the final question, should a Christian go to the doctor? We come all the way back to HobartFreeman again. We would never advocate such idiocy. You say, "Well does the Bible say anything about this?" Sure, read Isaiah 38, not now. I knew you'd do that; your heads just

go right down, that's good, Pavlov's dogs, just instant response. That's not derogatory by the way, that's trained response. But anyway, in Isaiah 38, King Hezekiah was deathly ill, and you remember the king was crying, and he was crying tears, and then he was crying to the Lord, and God answered his request and He says this, "Let them take a cake of figs and apply it to the boil, that he may recover." Isn't that good? That's what we used to call a poultice. Right? Now God is saying, "Do the medical thing." In Matthew 9:12, Jesus confirmed the same idea when He said this, "It's not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick." So the Lord has given us that instruction also.

Now in closing, I simply say, I want to reiterate that I believe God can heal, God can do anything He wants to do. I do not believe the gift of healing is for today because it was to authenticate the Biblical message and messenger. That is in place; it needs no more authentication than the authentication given to it by the Spirit of God to the heart of the reader, but I do believe that God may in His grace chose to heal, and we have every right to pray for that, at the same time seek the finest medical help that we can because the Lord desires us to do that as well.

Let's pray. Father, thank you for letting us cover all of this tonight, our minds are full of these considerations. Lord, we would not at all be ungracious to the many people who are victims of these kinds of things, and even Lord, there may be some in these movements who are well meaning and well intentioned, who for some reason or other believe that these things really are happening. Lord, we would pray for those who have a true and a pure intention, and who are genuinely believing that this is true, that You would show them the truth of Your word and help them to see the light. Then Lord, for those who are just playing with the hearts and minds and the wallets of people that You would cause them to be struck with the truth of what they're doing, to be literally stopped in their tracks by the fear of God, as they would misrepresent You.

We pray for Your church to be discerning, clear minded, and then Lord, even as we close tonight, we would remember to pray for those in our congregation who have physical illness, disability, physical pain and suffering, some with even the diagnosis of a fatal disease, that Lord, You would be gracious to them. We know that You are going to heal them someday, and if it would suit Your glorious purpose and bring honor to the name of Jesus Christ, we would ask that You heal them now; that You might receive glory for that, but if not, that You might give them the grace to acknowledge Your perfect will. Help us to know Lord that it is not through these kinds of miraculous things that people are going to believe the truth. It is through hearing about Jesus Christ and reading the Scripture and having it presented to them, not only on the page but through the work of the Holy Spirit in their hearts, that they shall come to the truth, so may we faithfully proclaim this word, which can authenticate itself by the Holy Spirit to the heart of one who hears.

Thank You again Father for the clear word that You do care and that there is a day of healing coming for us all. We rejoice in anticipation of it, in Christ's name, Amen.

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