

Affordable Health Care 5-29-16

Lord Jesus, we humbly come before You. You know our needs. You have authority over all things. Help us to approach You in faith. You are the author and finisher of our faith, so we humbly ask that You would grant us grace to believe Your Word. Help us to hear You and You alone. Amen.

About 50 years ago, God started dealing w/me in the area of believing Him for healing. I'd heard the miracle stories in Sunday School, Bible study, & heard the gospel readings at church, but somehow I'd never realized the extent of Jesus' healing ministry. For the first time, I read the book of Matthew from beginning to end. It was amazing! Not only did Jesus work miracles specifically mentioned - like cleanse lepers, heal the centurion's servant, cast out demons, heal the paralytic, stop the 12 year hemorrhage, raise the dead girl, give sight to the blind, speech to the mute, hearing to the deaf – also, at the end of the day, they'd bring more people to Him. He would cast out spirits w/a word & heal ALL who were sick! These all-inclusive concluding sentences were impressive! ALL! ALL the SICK! EVERYONE they brought to Jesus He healed!

The big question seems to be, “Does Jesus still heal today?” We've probably all heard about people who know they were divinely healed. We probably also have prayed for people who were not healed – at least not healed in this life. It always raises questions – did we not have enough faith? Is there some sin in my life that I haven't confessed? Does God even like me? Is He angry with me?

The Gospel reading is so impressive! A centurion (a Roman commander of a 100 men) sent for Jesus, asking Him to come & heal his servant. As Jesus approached his home, the commander sent word that it wasn't necessary for Him to actually come to the home – “just say the word & my servant will be healed!” The army officer understood authority – he was under authority & he had men under him. All he had to do was tell one of his men to do something & they did it. He knew that all Jesus would have to do is tell the illness to leave & it'd have to leave. Just say the word! The centurion made the connection!

Apparently Jesus did say the word. The centurion's men returned home to find the servant healed. Jesus was astonished at the faith of the centurion! He'd not seen such faith in Israel. The officer understood – he got it! When a person has authority over someone or something, there're no questions asked. Parents have God-given authority over their children – not to be harsh, but to have them obey. Teachers have authority over students because they're backed by the administration (hopefully). Police have authority because behind them is the whole police force, right up to the U.S. Army. Jesus has authority because God is all powerful – all the hosts of heaven are behind Him. All authority has been given to Jesus. “Does Jesus still have authority today?” Of course!

There is a story in 2 Kings that took place some time between 560 to 600 years before Jesus was born. Naaman was a commander in the Syrian army – a great man, a

mighty man of valor, a victorious officer! Yet, he had leprosy. During one of their battles, the army took a little Israeli girl back to Syria. The girl became the slave of Naaman's wife. She must have been treated well, because she wished that Naaman could see a prophet in Samaria. The little girl had no doubt the prophet Elisha could cure Naaman of his leprosy. So he went to the King of Syria, & the King wrote a letter to the King of Israel & sent Naaman off to Israel with silver, gold, & festal garments.

When the King of Israel received the letter saying Naaman had been sent to him so he'd heal him of leprosy, the King of Israel was outraged! He tore his clothes! He was certain there was a plot! Whoa! That's a strong reaction! Why is the King so threatened? What's going on here? Does he think he'd be made to look foolish because he couldn't do anything about leprosy? Fortunately Elisha heard about it & asked that Naaman come to him.

Now Naaman has some pre-conceived ideas on how this healing should take place. The prophet should come out to him, call on the name of his God, wave his hands over him, & cure him. When Elisha simply sent his servant who told him to go & wash in the Jordan River 7 times, Naaman is enraged! "I could've washed in the rivers at home!" He storms off. His wise servants talk him down. He went to the river, washed, & was made clean. In a totally different spirit he goes to Elisha & proclaims

that he now knows there is no God in all the earth but the God of Israel. Whew! **He came so close to missing the blessing!**

So much that is typical of humans. We can be strong, outstanding citizens, but we can't do anything about leprosy – often symbolic of sin. Salvation is out of our hands, so is healing – we have to seek the true God. 2nd when we feel like someone is trying to make us look foolish, we are threatened beyond reason. It's our greatest fear! 3rd, when we have ideas of how things should go, we can become like spoiled children when it doesn't happen according to our plan.

So what about us & healing? For me to proceed feels like I'm faced w/a big mass of yarn w/all sorts of loose ends sticking out. 1st, people who seek healing often get under guilt – if not their own guilt, they're sure to be told by someone else they don't have enough faith – as if we can conjure up enough faith! Faith is a gift. If we could manufacture it, it'd be faith in our faith! “Father grant us grace to believe Your Word!” 2nd, I've prayed & was certain the Lord was speaking words of assurance that Jason would live, However, he died at 14! I was livid! 3rd, when my nephew Jon was dying of liver cancer, I thought if I said out loud enough times that Jon would be healed that was faith & he would be. 4th, the AMA tells us what we should do. Of course, insurance companies tell us what they'll pay for. Also, there's a high percentage of people who die from medical errors -3 years ago it was the 3rd leading cause of death. 5th, people say “Prayer works!” I don't think prayer works. God, our

Father who hears our prayers, works. We don't have faith in our faith or faith in our prayers. The only faith that will stand is faith in God, faith in His Word, faith in the power of the Holy Spirit, faith in the promises of God. If we were to have faith in our prayers, what a mess that would be! I've heard of people who prayed once – ONCE! – to quit smoking. The next time they go to light up, they got so sick to their stomach they have no desire to ever smoke again. I know people who have prayed, been prayed for, many, many times – they battled cigarettes till the day they died. If prayer “works” why would it “work” for one & not the other?

In spite of all the loose ends, the questions, all the kooks, anger, frustration, & hopelessness, & after 50 yrs. of pondering divine healing, I'm more convinced than ever that Jesus heals! We make a mistake when we seek healing more than the healer. And I also believe we make a mistake when we don't go to the Lord first. We often want to be fixed so we can get on w/our lives – back to what we call normal. **Jesus wants intimacy.** There're many kinds of healing – physical, mental, spiritual, emotional, relational – He does it all, in His way. As we seek the Lord, we will know what we have to do.

If you've seen Morgan Freeman's religion program on the history channel, you saw the story of a pastor who had some sort of a lymphoma. He & the whole congregation prayed for a long time. At one point the pastor felt it was now time for chemo. After one dose, he heard “Pop! Pop! Pop! Throughout his body – the lumps

were all gone!” Interesting. Not a formula. God works in His own way in His own time. He longs for us to come to Him.

I will never stop praying for healing. James says, “Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him w/oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.” That’s God’s Word. We can trust in His Word. There are many other scriptures we can hang on to, meditate upon, chew up & digest. “Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all.” (Ps. 34:19) See, you aren’t bad just because you have something wrong – “Many are the afflictions of the righteous! That’s us! The ones who have been washed in the blood of Christ! Someway, somehow, He delivers us out of them all! Also,

Ps. 103 says, “Bless the Lord Oh my soul, and all that is w/in me bless His holy name – forget not His benefits – He forgives all my sin; He heals all of my diseases!” We know He forgives all of our sin; we aren’t so sure about all of our diseases. We can be glad that we grow in faith – that doesn’t mean we grow in any special feeling – we grow in our trust in God’s Word.

We don’t know what lies ahead. Health Care as we know it, may be off the charts. But we do know that God has always been in the healing business – and it isn’t expensive – Naaman tried to give Elisha his silver, gold, and clothes. He refused it. There never was any cost involved in Jesus’ healing. In other words, it is truly affordable health care! Jesus knows the beginning from the end. None of our suffering is in vain. We want quick fixes; **Jesus wants intimacy** – the kind we find as we cry out to Him to meet our needs – because He does meet us. He cares about every detail of your life. Let Him love you right where you are as you continue to seek Him. He won’t disappoint you. Amen.