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Healing Mission of Christ

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Healing Mission of Christ

Abstract

"Sometimes, we put our faith in the wrong places, and yet Christ heals."

Posting about Jesus' healing ministry in the Bible from *In All Things* - an online hub committed to the claim that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ has implications for the entire world.

<http://inallthings.org/the-healing-mission-of-christ/>

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The Healing Mission of Christ

 [all in allthings.org/the-healing-mission-of-christ/](http://allthings.org/the-healing-mission-of-christ/)

Darren Stoub

In March, we began a series of reflections on the [healing mission of Jesus Christ](#). According to I Corinthians 12, each of us are given spiritual gifts through the Holy Spirit and healing is one that is bestowed on many who are called into Christ's service.¹ Through this series, we seek to understand more about how we can join with Christ in his healing mission. This month, we consider the question: **what can we learn about Christ's healing mission by investigating his healing miracles?** Through discussions and readings of and about the healing miracles of Christ, four questions seem to encapsulate the relevant themes from Christ's miracles:

- Whom did Christ heal?
- Why did Christ heal this person?
- How did Christ heal?
- Was there a greater purpose to the miracle?

This week we address the question: **Whom did Christ heal?**

The son of Royalty, Peter's mother-in law, a whole bunch of various people, one and ten lepers, a Roman servant, a friend of three men, a man who was there, the only son of a widow, a bleeding and unclean woman, the daughter of a synagogue leader, a mute, an old invalid man, many people in the market places, a deaf and speech-impaired man, a blind man, a man blind from birth, a blind and mute man, a crippled woman, a swollen man, a blind beggar, a dead man, the slave of the high priest, and many that were not recorded. These are the people Christ healed. As I search for patterns in the people Christ healed, standard categorizations fail to show a pattern. Christ healed the rich, the poor, the free, the slave, the Jew, the gentile, the young, the old, male, female, the proud, the humble, the rich, the poor, the loud, the quiet, the sane, the insane, the loved, the rejected, the living, the dead, those he knew and those he didn't know. Christ did not categorize people the way we categorize patients. Christ did not use demographics or socioeconomic factors or residency or three forms of doctrine or membership in a church or the ability to pay. As far as I have been able to discover, Christ healed two types of people.

First, **Christ healed people who didn't ask**. We worship a God who is so in tune with creation, so in love with the people of this world, that God knows our needs. God heals, even when we don't ask.

But why don't we ask? Sometimes, we don't see Jesus. In Luke 13:10 – 17, the healing of the woman who "was bent over and could not straighten up at all" is told. This woman didn't ask because she didn't see Jesus. George MacDonald, in his book "[The Miracles of Our Lord](#)" described the situation as follows:

Supported by a staff, she had crept to the synagogue. There is no appearance from the story that she had come there to see Jesus, or even that when in His presence she saw Him before the word of her deliverance had gone forth. Most likely, being bowed [over], she heard Him before she saw Him. But He saw her. Going to her, I think, and saying 'Woman, you are freed from your infirmity.' 'He laid His hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight and she praised God.' What an uplifting! A type of all that God works in His human beings. The head, down bent with sin, care, sorrow, pain, is uplifted. We lift our eyes to God.²

For eighteen years, this woman was crippled, perhaps unable to look at the people around her or in front of

her. Her gaze was permanently fixed down. Perhaps, she was unable to see Jesus. Perhaps, she didn't want to see Jesus. Never-the-less, she couldn't ask because she could not see him, yet Christ healed her.

Can you see Jesus? Are you looking?

Why don't we ask? Sometimes, we put our faith in the wrong places, and yet Christ heals. John 5:1-8, describes the story of a man who placed his faith in a pool with mystical powers.

Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, “Do you want to get well?” “Sir,” the invalid replied, “I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me.” Then Jesus said to him, “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.” At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked.

There have been many discussions about the pool of Bethesda and its potential healing powers. Some early manuscripts of the Bible include John 5:4:³ “an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the waters stepped in was made whole, with whatsoever disease he was holden.”⁴ Some have suggested this was literally an angel of God that stirred the waters imbuing it with healing powers; others suggested that it was a Jewish custom to call anything of good favor the result of angels of God.⁵ Others suggest that the pool, like other similar springs in the region, had medicinal value that was enhanced by periodic outgassing of the surrounding soil.⁶ Regardless, many Jews and gentiles put their faith in the healing waters of the pool.

Regardless of the historicity or authenticity of the healing properties of the pool, the paralytic placed his faith in the wrong place. He thought the water would heal him. He thought he had to be the first in the water. He thought he had to rely on others to help into the pool. He didn't ask, because he was looking to the wrong source. Even when Christ asked him if he wanted to get well, the man still kept his faith in the pool and other people. He didn't ask, and yet Christ healed him. **Do you put your faith in the wrong things?**

Why don't we ask? Sometimes, we are simply unable to ask, and yet Christ heals. Matthew 12:11–14 recounts the story of the man with the shriveled hand. In the story, Christ visited the synagogue on the Sabbath. The man with shriveled hand was there, yet Christ's conversation was with the Pharisees. Perhaps the man was unable to ask because of his station in life. Perhaps, as is the case in other miracles, the person was mute or dead. Sometimes, we are simply unable to ask. The man with the shriveled hand didn't ask, yet Christ healed him. What is hindering you from asking Jesus?

Why don't we ask? Because we think we have done too many awful things and are, therefore, not worthy of Christ's love, attention or power. In Luke 22:49-51, we learn of the slave of the high priest who has his ear cut off as the high priest comes to arrest Jesus. Would such a person even think to ask Christ for healing? Christ did not even give him a chance. The slave did not ask, yet Christ healed him. Do you think that you have done too much to warrant the free gift of grace, to receive the healing that Christ wants to offer?

Second, **Christ heals people who seek the One True God.** We worship a God who longs for us to seek him. God has created us in his own image. The heavens and the earth proclaim who God is and creation draws us to God. As Paul says in Romans 1:20 “For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.” God longs for us to seek him. MacDonald states “Yet he who asks shall receive – of the very best. One promise without reserve, and only one, because it includes

all, remains: the promise of the Holy Spirit to them who ask it.”⁷ And when we seek God, God heals.

How do we seek the Creator? When we recognize Jesus’ greatness, we boldly seek him and God willingly heals us. In Mark 6:53 – 56, we read an account of the people of the region of Gennesaret:

When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret and anchored there. As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Jesus. They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. And wherever he went—into villages, towns or countryside—they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed.

The people heard of Jesus’ greatness and came to wherever he was. They asked, they begged, they believed. When the people boldly came, Christ healed them all. **Do you boldly seek Christ?**

How do we seek the Lord? When we seek God in our fear, we are healed. In Luke 8:42-48, we read the story of a woman who was shunned by society, timid and afraid; she sought the One True God who heals.

As Jesus was on his way, the crowds almost crushed him. And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years, but no one could heal her. She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped. “Who touched me?” Jesus asked. When they all denied it, Peter said, “Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you.” But Jesus said, “Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me.” Then the woman, seeing that she could not go unnoticed, came trembling and fell at his feet. In the presence of all the people, she told why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed. Then he said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace.”

When we feel invisible or hopeless, our heart cries out to God and it compels us to seek God. God hears the cries of our heart and accepts our timid seeking. God heals us. **Can you seek God even when you are trembling?**

How do we seek God? When we seek God’s face with humility and faith, Christ heals. Matthew recounts the healing of the Centurion’s servant in Matthew 8:5-13. Matthew Henry provides the following commentary on this passage:

*This centurion was a heathen, a Roman soldier. Though he was a soldier, yet he was a godly man... Observe his self-abasement. Humble souls are made more humble by Christ’s gracious dealings with them. Observe his great faith. The more diffident we are of ourselves, the stronger will be our confidence in Christ. Herein the centurion owns him to have Divine power, and a full command of all the creatures and powers of nature, as a master over his servants. Such servants we all should be to God; we must go and come, according to the directions of his word and the disposals of his providence. But when the Son of man comes he finds little faith, therefore he finds little fruit. An outward profession may cause us to be called children of the kingdom; but if we rest in that, and have nothing else to show, we shall be cast out. The servant got a cure of his disease, and the master got the approval of his faith. What was said to him, is said to all, Believe, and ye shall receive; only believe. See the power of Christ, and the power of faith. The healing of our souls is at once the effect and evidence of our interest in the blood of Christ.*⁸

A centurion, a Roman, not a follower of Christ is accredited in Matthew 8 as having a faith greater than any in Israel. Why? Because he came face to face with Jesus Christ and had a simple and humble faith. Not a doctrinally rich understanding of God, not a life full of accolades, not an arrogant showmanship, but simple faith, an interest in the power of the blood of Christ. Christ heals those who come with humility and faith. Will you seek Christ as the Centurion did?

How do we seek Christ? We know him as Lord, worship him and he heals us. In Matthew 8:2-3, we read: A man with leprosy, came and knelt before [or worshipped] him and said, 'Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.' Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. 'I am willing,' he said. 'Be clean!' Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy."

Jesus is referred to as Lord 618 times in the Bible, more than the terms Christ and Savior. What is the importance of calling Jesus Lord? Some suggest that the leper was unaware of why or perhaps he acted better than he knew when he called Jesus Lord.⁹ In fact, this was one of the earliest instances that Jesus was called Lord by any follower. Paul wrote the Colossians, "By him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy."¹⁰ Lord is the rightful title for Christ Jesus. Our recognition of title confers our act of following him. When we come to Christ as Lord, we recognize His power and authority over our lives. We recognize his creative power. We humbly kneel before him. Praise be to God that He is a servant Lord, for He calls us heir and friend. But more than that, He reaches out and touches our diseased self, takes on our uncleanness and makes us clean. Will you call Him Lord?

This week we asked the question, whom did Christ heal? Christ healed those who didn't ask and those who sought after Him. He didn't categorize people using standard classifications. He healed; He heals; and He will heal.

So how do we join with him in this mission? Whom shall we heal? What can you do this week to reach the blind, the misguided, the incapable, the broken, the confident ones, those who tremble, those who are humble, those who call Him Lord? When you minister to each of these, you join with Christ in his healing mission.

Footnotes

1. 1 Corinthians 12:9 ↩
2. MacDonald, George. *The Miracles of our Lord*. (Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1985) 37. ↩
3. Notice in the New International Version, which is quoted, verse 4 is absent. ↩
4. American Standard Version ↩
5. Barnes, Albert. *Barnes Notes on the Old and New Testament*. (Ada, MI: Baker Books, 1983). ↩
6. [The Bethesda Pool, Site of One of Jesus' Miracles](#), Accessed 16 April 2015. [The Miracle of the Healing of the Lame Man](#), Accessed 16 April 2015. ↩
7. MacDonald, 70. ↩
8. [Matthew Henry's Commentary on Matthew 8](#), Accessed 16 April 2015. ↩
9. Barker, Kenneth L. and John Kohnlenberger. *Zondervan NIV Bible Commentary, Vol. 2*(Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994) 38. ↩

10. Colossians 1:16-18 [↩](#)