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Healings, Galilean Ministry (Part 1)



The Life and Teachings of Christ - Steve Gregg

In this talk, Steve Gregg examines the healing ministry of Jesus in Galilee. He highlights how Jesus healed the sick and cast out demons, but did not always permit the demons to speak. Gregg also discusses the use of Isaiah 53 in relation to healing, and points out that although Jesus often healed miraculously, he did not heal everyone. The talk concludes with a discussion on faith and the nature of healing.

Transcript

Would you please turn to Mark chapter 1, and we will pick up where we left off in this gospel. In the life of Christ, we're in the early part of the Galilean ministry of Christ. We will not be able, every time we begin one of these sessions, to summarize everything that's gone on before, because there will become more and more behind to summarize, and less and less time to say it.

But we are still early enough in the Galilean ministry that I might remind you that Jesus began this ministry by going to Cana, where he had already previously turned water into wine. And there, a nobleman from Capernaum had come and besought him on behalf of his son for healing. And Jesus, with a word, had healed that son.

And that took place in Capernaum, which no doubt led to some hubbub in that city, and some rumors of Christ's power going around there, although Jesus had not yet begun to minister there. Then Jesus went from Cana to Nazareth, which was his hometown, and there he met with a negative reception, where they sought to throw him off a cliff, and he got out of that one, and leaving Nazareth, we're told, that he went down to Capernaum. And there he stayed for a while.

His first ministry in the synagogue that is recorded there resulted in his casting a demon out of a man. Jesus also called the four fishermen there. One of them had a home in town, Peter, and his brother Andrew lived there.

And we know that after the synagogue service, Jesus went to the home of Peter and of Andrew, and Peter's mother now was sick, and Jesus healed her. And that's brought us pretty much up to date where we are now. At the end of our last session, we read verses

32 through 34 with very little comment because of the time restrictions that were upon us.

Let me read beginning at verse 32 again. Now at evening, when the sun had set, they brought to him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed, and the whole city was gathered together at the door. Then he healed many who were sick with various diseases and cast out many demons, and he did not allow the demons to speak because they knew him.

Now, just at the end of our last session, I mentioned that the reason this happened at evening when the sun had set was because it was the Sabbath day, and according to the rabbinic tradition, it was against the law to do healings of any sickness that was not life-threatening, and by life-threatening means if the person would not die if left untreated overnight, then a physician was not allowed to do any cures or apply any medications on the Sabbath day if he could wait until the next day to do it. And while Jesus did not care a thing about that particular tradition, and on many occasions healed on the Sabbath, including his casting a demon out of the man on that very day, most of the people were still very much under the law in their own consciences, and probably it would have been enforced against them if they had violated it, just as Jesus got himself in trouble and even killed for breaking the Sabbath in the eyes of the religious leaders. In fact, the first time that we read of the leaders conspiring to kill him was after he offended them by healing a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath day.

That doesn't come up until chapter 3 of Mark. But these people, not wishing to go head-to-head with the authorities, and seeing no reason to do so either on this matter, waited until sundown, which was the official end of the Sabbath day. Saturday at sundown, Sabbath was over.

And so when the sun set, they all came out of their places with their sick and their demon-possessed loved ones and came to Jesus, apparently at Peter's house, and the whole city, it says, was gathered at the door. I don't know if all these people had sick friends or if it was just that they were looking forward to seeing people healed, because that's fairly sensational and exciting. The description of what he did with these people is in verse 34, and it reads a little differently in Matthew and Luke.

I'd like to read you Matthew's version. We're talking about here Mark 1.34 that says, He healed many who were sick with various diseases and cast out many demons, and he did not allow the demons to speak because they knew him. In Matthew 8.16-17, it says, He cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet.

He himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses. Now, one thing I'll point out is Matthew says he healed all their sick, whereas Mark says he healed many who were sick. Now, this should not be thought to be a contradiction.

He may well have healed all that were sick, as Matthew says, and yet it would be correct to say he healed many, because if Mark had just put it like Matthew, he healed all that were sick, we don't know if that was a handful of people, three, four people, or what. Mark does not deny that Jesus healed all that were sick, but he tells us that the number who were healed were many. It was, in fact, all the sick people that were brought to Jesus.

It doesn't say many of those who were sick got healed, as if only a portion of them, maybe the majority, but he healed many who were. And likewise, in Luke 4, by the way, I wanted to comment on the passage that Matthew quotes from Isaiah, but in Luke 4, verses 40 through 41, we have Luke's parallel of this statement. It says, "...he laid his hands on every one of them and healed them.

And demons came out of many, crying and saying, You are the Christ, the Son of God. And he rebuking them did not allow them to speak, for they knew that he was the Christ." This is Luke's version, Luke 4, verses 40 and 41 of this same verse. So, we can see that each of the gospel writers agree that Jesus healed many sick people, and that he cast out demons, and that he did not permit the demons to speak, at least after they had begun to speak, he forbade them to and rebuked them.

He did not approve of their speaking. But each of them, Matthew and Luke, give us a little more details. For instance, both Matthew and Luke mention that Jesus healed every one of them.

Matthew says he healed all who were sick, and Luke says he laid his hands on every one of them and healed them. Now, Mark says, as we pointed out in Mark 1.34, he healed many who were sick. And that's just a way of saying that all the ones that got healed, all the sick did get healed, and there happens to have been many, not a few, in that category.

But this is an important point to bring out, because there are times when the Bible uses the word many, when it means all. And this can be confusing. For example, Jesus said that the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.

When we were talking about Calvinism, we pointed out this is one of the proofs of the so-called limited atonement. Jesus said he came to give his life a ransom for many. However, Paul told Timothy that Jesus gave his life a ransom for all.

And so, apparently, many and all are not contradictory to each other. What Jesus is saying when he says he came to give his life as a ransom for many, is simply this, that a man might give his life a ransom for another man. But Jesus didn't simply do that.

It wasn't just an exchange, one for one. It was one for many. The many happens to be all

humanity.

But he gave his life a ransom for not one, not a few, but many, which happens to be everyone. And Paul is the one who affirms that everyone was covered by the atoning work of Christ. We've talked about these verses in another setting.

We don't have time to look at them again. But I want you to become acquainted with the language of Scripture. And this comparison of Matthew and Mark and Luke is a good way to see that this same phenomenon holds true.

That when speaking about every sick person being healed, it's not impossible for the writers of Scripture to correctly say, many were healed. Many does not necessarily mean in contrast to all, but many in contrast to a few or one. And therefore, what looks like a contradiction, and some would even find fault with it, is no contradiction at all.

Furthermore, Luke gives us the detail that Jesus laid his hands on every one of them and healed them. The laying on of hands was not a means by which Jesus universally healed. Sometimes he healed without the laying on of hands, at least as the record would show in some cases.

He even healed people that he didn't set eyes on, much less hands on. But when it was possible, he did lay hands on people. Now, we don't know the nature of all the sicknesses involved here.

There could have been lepers. There certainly could have been people who had issues of blood. There's a woman with an issue of blood that Jesus on another occasion healed.

I guess what I'm saying is there could have been people, and no doubt were, some people who were ceremonially unclean. People that should not be touched, according to Jewish law. Just a little later here, in verse 40 of Mark chapter 1, we begin to read of a story where Jesus touched a leper and healed him.

This would have been verboten, to use a more correct ethnic version, unkosher. It would have been unclean to touch a leper. But Jesus laid hands on everybody when it was possible to do so.

And in this case, when they all came to him at the house, he did lay hands on them all. And it says, and he healed them and demons came out of many, crying and saying, You are the Christ, the Son of God. This is Luke's version, Luke 4, 40 and 41.

You are the Christ, the Son of God. And he rebuking them did not allow them to speak because they knew that he was the Christ. Which is interesting.

It raises the question of why Jesus didn't want the demons to say who he was. But we'll get to that in a moment. We actually touched on it a little bit in our last time.

One thing I do want to focus on is that Matthew 8, the version of this that we read a moment ago, says that he cast out spirits with a word and healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet. He himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses. Now the quotation from the prophet is from, in fact, the prophet Isaiah.

In one of the most famous chapters in the book of Isaiah, in fact, probably the chapter of Isaiah that's most often quoted in the New Testament, and most often quoted by Christians because it's a very graphic description of the Messiah, of his rejection, and of his death, and of his ministry in general. Isaiah 53 we're talking about. And the verse that Matthew quotes from Isaiah is verse 4. Isaiah 53, verse 4. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

Now where it says he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, those, the words grief and sorrows in Hebrew can be translated sicknesses and pains. And that's how Matthew has chosen to understand them. When he quotes it he says he himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses.

So this statement about him bearing our griefs and our sorrows has the authority of an apostle himself, Matthew, in quoting it, to be a reference to sickness and infirmities. Now look at the passage in Isaiah 53 if you're there. When it says he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, many have felt that he bore our griefs in the same sense that he bore the sins of many.

In fact, a little later on in the same chapter of Isaiah, it says in verse 6, all we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. And to say he laid it on him suggests that he bore it on him. And there's another passage a little further on down, let's see here.

Verse 12, it says in Isaiah 53, 12, Therefore I will divide with him a portion of the grape, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul into death, he was numbered as the transgressors, and he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. Now it says he bore the sin of many. We understand this to have been fulfilled through his death on the cross.

He bore our sins. In fact, there seems to be no question about that, because Peter certainly picks up that language in referring to this very chapter in Isaiah. In 1 Peter chapter 2, it says in verse 24, who himself bore our sins in his own body on the tree.

Now, Jesus bore our sins in his own body on the tree, that is on the cross, Peter says. In 1 Peter 2, 24. So, there's no question but that Isaiah 53, 12 is talking about what Jesus accomplished in the atonement.

That he bore our sins on the cross. Now, many have felt that the only consistent way to take the passages elsewhere in the chapter are to understand bore in verse 4 the same way, that he has borne our sicknesses, would suggest that he also bore our sicknesses on the cross. Just as he bore our sins on the cross, so he bore our sicknesses on the cross.

Now, of course, the result of his bearing our sins on the cross is that we are now entitled to forgiveness of sins. They've been paid for. If a ransom has been paid, then the prisoner should go free.

It's a matter of justice, in fact. It would be an injustice for God to not deliver that which has been paid for on our behalf. I'm not saying that God was required to send such a payment to be made initially, but since he has done so, this payment has been made on our behalf.

He's borne our sins. He's paid the price for our sins. Therefore, we are entitled through Christ to the forgiveness of sins and we can expect at the moment we ask by faith and confess our sins that we have this very thing.

It says that in 1 John 1.9. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Now, if it is true that he bore our sicknesses in the same sense that he bore our sins on the cross, then it would follow that we are as entitled to the healing of our sicknesses or of immunity from sicknesses as we are entitled to the forgiveness of sins. And many have felt that the Bible teaches this and would use Isaiah 53.4 to prove their point because Isaiah 53.12 says he bore our sins and in Isaiah 53.4 it says he has borne our sicknesses and carried our sorrows.

Now, the argument might sound good, it does sound good actually, if we didn't have New Testament light on the subject. If the New Testament did not quote this verse and if we did not have the entirety of the New Testament to communicate to us what Jesus did and did not accomplish with reference to sickness on the cross. For one thing, the word bore, which occurs these times in Isaiah 53, doesn't always mean the same thing.

The literal meaning in verse 4 of the word born is lifted. He lifted our sicknesses. Now, that could mean, of course, on the cross if that fit the theological outlook of the rest of the Bible, which I do not believe it does, but it can mean something else.

It can mean that he lifted them in the sense that a person bears a burden for another person or lifts a burden off of someone's back. This is apparently how Matthew understood the statement because Matthew was not talking about what Jesus accomplished on the cross. In Matthew chapter 8 and verse 17, the verse that has turned our attention this direction, Matthew chapter 8 and verse 17 says that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying he himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses.

Well, what was the fulfillment of that? One would expect, if he was talking about the atonement, to have quoted this verse at the cross and said, now this happened, Jesus died in this manner, or at the whipping post where his stripes were laid upon him, this happened, that it might be fulfilled. He bore our sicknesses and carried our griefs, or whatever. But the thing that Matthew says did fulfill that prediction of Isaiah was not what Jesus did at the cross or at the whipping post, but what he did in a house in Capernaum.

When the crowds of sick were brought to him, he healed them all. He lifted the burden of sickness off of them. But this bearing of sicknesses was not a universal thing like the bearing of sins was.

It was an individualized thing. Of course, he did it to every individual there. But his action, that is considered by Matthew to be a fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah, was not something he did in the sense where he made healing available on a contractual basis.

He simply carte blanche gave us the right to denounce any sickness and to be free of it all, as he did with sin. But what Jesus did was he healed individuals. He healed every individual in this particular case that came to him.

Now, there are a few cases elsewhere in the Bible where individuals were not healed by him, or at least not immediately. We know that he went to the pool of Bethesda in John chapter 5, and there he found a great multitude of sick people, and he healed one of them. As far as we know, that's the only one he healed.

There's no record of him healing any of the others. There is the fact that there was a lame man at the gate of the Temple Beautiful in Acts chapter 3. The apostles Peter and John healed him. But Jesus had passed through that gate only a few weeks earlier, several times in one week.

Entering Jerusalem from Bethany, as he did every day of the last week of his life on earth, before his crucifixion, Jesus had passed this very point at least six times in one week. And the scripture tells us in Acts chapter 3 this man had been laid there every day for, what, forty years or something like that. So Jesus had passed by this man many times without healing him.

And yet the apostles healed him at a later time. Likewise, when Jesus' own good friend Lazarus was sick, and messages were sent to him with the implicit plea that Jesus would come and heal him, Jesus lingered where he was and waited for Lazarus to die. Now, it's true he raised him from the dead, but it shows that sometimes for a man to die and later be resurrected from the dead may be the will of God rather than for him to be healed, short of dying.

By the way, that would be applicable to any of us who happen to die sick. If you pray for your healing and you die anyway, Jesus does intend to raise you from the dead. And as in the case of Lazarus, I mean, not necessarily immediately, but at least in the end of the world, at the end of the age, he'll raise you from the dead.

And the case of Lazarus is a good indicator that Jesus will sometimes allow a person to not be healed, even though he's a friend of his, even though his sisters are asking for help, but because it's the will of God for him to die and to later resurrect instead. Well, what I'm saying is, Jesus did not heal every person in the entire Bible that he encountered, as near as we can tell. But he did heal all of the ones in Capernaum, and this was a manifest fulfillment of what Isaiah had predicted the Messiah would do, namely, to lift the burden of sickness off of individuals.

Now, what is the difference between that and the idea that healing is a matter of being in the atonement? Well, the atonement speaks of what Jesus purchased for us. Because he purchased our forgiveness of sins and bore our sins in that respect, the Bible says that it's a matter of justice for God to forgive our sins. As I said a moment ago, whatever has been paid for in your name, it'd be an injustice for it to be denied you if it happens to be yours.

And that's why it says in 1 John 1, 9, if we confess our sins, he's faithful and just to forgive us our sins. It's not a matter of mercy anymore, it's a matter of his justice honoring what Jesus has done. However, when it comes to sickness being healed, if sickness was carried on the cross in the same sense that sin was, and if healing is available on the same basis as forgiveness of sins, then we should expect that God owes us a healing as soon as we believe for it, as much as he owes a forgiveness of sins as soon as we confess our sins.

But the Bible does not treat of healing in the same way that it does a forgiveness of sins. In fact, it treats it like an act of special mercy on God's part. Look at Philippians chapter 2. Philippians chapter 2, verse 25.

Paul says, Yet I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier. But your messenger, and the one who ministered to my need, since he was longing for you, I was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. For indeed he was sick, almost to death.

But God had mercy on him, and not only on him, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. Now, notice, this guy got well. He was sick, almost died.

But God healed him. And Paul's way of describing that is God had mercy on him. Now, mercy, by definition, is something that's not owed.

If God owed a healing to everybody since the cross, who confessed it or believed in him,

if it was part of the atonement, then for God to heal him would not be an act of mercy on his part, it would be an act of keeping his word. It would be a matter of God doing the just thing, delivering on the goods that have been paid for. That's just a matter of justice, not mercy.

And yet, Paul considered healing a matter of mercy on God's part. It's not owed to us. And that is no doubt why Paul could talk about his own infirmities, his thorn in the flesh, whatever that may have been.

I know many people argue that it was not a sickness, but if it was not, I find it interesting that twice in 2 Corinthians 12, Paul uses the word infirmity to describe his thorn. After he talks about praying three times for God to remove the thorn in his flesh, God said, no, my grace is sufficient for you. Paul says, well, then I'll take delight in my infirmity.

I'll rejoice in my infirmity. Interesting, the word infirmity that he uses in 2 Corinthians 12 is the very same word used in Matthew 8, 17, where it says, he bore our infirmities. He bore our infirmities, and yet Paul was willing to bear his own infirmity and say, I'll take delight in my infirmities.

I'll rejoice in that. His thorn in the flesh was an infirmity, which he prayed three times would be removed, and it was not. The one in 2 Corinthians? 2 Corinthians 12, and I can find the verse number pretty quick here, I think.

Verse 5, for example, he uses the word infirmity of it, and, well, let's see further down. In fact, he does it more than twice, I think. He talks about it.

Let me give it to you. Verse 9, he also speaks about boasting in his infirmities, and then in verse 10, I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, and so forth. So three times, actually, in 2 Corinthians 12, in verse 5, in verse 9, and in verse 10, Paul refers to his thorn in the flesh as an infirmity, or as one of his infirmities.

And yet that's the very same Greek word that Matthew has used to translate Isaiah, where he says, he has carried our infirmities. Now, this would not make sense for Paul to say, I rejoice in my infirmities, if, in fact, our infirmities had been paid for at the cross, and were owed to us, and it was just as wrong for us to be sick, as it was wrong for us to remain unforgiven of our sins. If sin and sickness are on the same level with God, and both have been paid for, and both available on the same basis, namely faith, then there should be no rejoicing in infirmities, any more than I should be rejoicing in my sins, because God took both of them and put them on Jesus, so it is argued.

Now, what I'm saying to you is this. Matthew does not confirm this interpretation of Isaiah. In fact, he gives a different interpretation of Isaiah than the interpretation taken by those who feel that it talks about healing being the atonement.

I do not believe it is in the atonement. And if it were, by the way, then consider this.

Whatever is ours, the Bible makes very clear, whatever is ours through the atonement is through faith.

And through faith we have access to every advantage that Jesus purchased for us. That would include, if healing is in the atonement, physical healing of sicknesses as well as forgiveness of sins. Now, both of these benefits would be available on the same basis, namely that we have faith.

Would this not follow then, that if you were a believer, begging God for healing of a sickness, and you did not get healed, would that not suggest that you don't have adequate faith? And if that suggestion is made, then if you don't have adequate faith, what makes you think you're saved? If you don't have enough faith to get one of the benefits of the atonement, what makes you think you have enough to get the other benefit of the atonement? If sickness, that is healing of sickness, is a benefit of the atonement, and you don't have enough faith to get that, then how do you know that you have enough to get the other, forgiveness of sins? Word of faith people who teach this idea of healing being the atonement, they try to avoid this, but logic is not one of their better, stronger suits. And they always say, well this doesn't mean that if you're sick you're not saved. I mean, I hardly know any word of faith teacher who would ever want to say that a sick person is necessarily unsaved.

But you can't avoid it. We can at least put it this way. If a Christian is sick under these doctrines, at least they can have no assurance of being saved.

Because whether they're healed or not is a visible reality. Whether they're forgiven of sins or not is an invisible reality. And how can they possibly believe, have any confirmation or any assurance that they have received the invisible benefits, if they clearly have not received the visible benefits, and both are available on the basis of the same thing, faith.

If you don't have the faith for one, how in the world would you ever have any assurance that you have the right kind of faith for the other? This is scary stuff to me. Now, that's not what makes me believe the way I do. I don't reject it because it's scary, because I believe a lot of things that are scary.

I believe in hell. I believe there's going to be many, many who say, Lord, Lord, we did these things in your name, and He'll say, I never knew you. I find that scary, but I still believe it.

But I don't like doctrines that are made up of twisting Scripture that then put fear or grounds for fear into Christians unnecessarily. Frankly, I think that it's a misapplication of Isaiah 53.4 to try to apply it to healing in the atonement. By the way, there is another verse after that in Isaiah 53 which talks about healing.

It says in verse 5, For he was wounded for our transgressions, and he was bruised for our iniquities. And the chastisement for our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. This particular reference to healing in Isaiah 53.5 is not about physical healing.

We know that again on New Testament authority, because that verse also, like the one before it, is quoted one time in the New Testament, only once. Isaiah 53.4 is quoted, of course, by Matthew, as we pointed out, but Isaiah 53.5 is quoted by Peter. In 1 Peter chapter 2, verses 24 and 25.

1 Peter 2, 24 and 25. It says, Jesus himself bore our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness, by whose stripes you were healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls.

Now notice, Peter isn't exactly quoting, but there's a very clear reference to Isaiah 53.5, where he says, by whose stripes you were healed. Healed of what? Healed of wandering. Because the word for, in verse 25, means because.

You, by Jesus' stripes, you were healed. In what sense? Well, you were like sheep going astray. But now, you're not.

Now you're healed. Your wrong ways have been healed. Now you might say, that's an awkward way to use the word healed.

Is it not? Not if you're familiar with Old Testament passages. Look at Hosea chapter 14. Hosea 14.4 says, I will heal their backsliding.

I will love them freely. I will heal their backsliding. Backsliding is going the wrong way.

When God speaks about remedying that in his people, he uses the word heal. He will heal them of this, our wrong behavior. Then is that not exactly how Peter is using the word when he says, by whose stripes you were healed, for you were like sheep going astray, but no longer.

You now return to the shepherd and bishop of your souls. Also Jeremiah, by the way, on a number of occasions, uses the same expression. I was hoping, just by looking real quickly, to find a place where he uses it.

But in the early chapters of Jeremiah, I wonder how quickly I could locate this, if at all. Let's try chapter 3, verse 22. That might be one of them.

Yep. Jeremiah 3.22 says, Return, you backsliding children, I will heal your backsliding. It's a repeated theme.

God healing people's backsliding. In Jeremiah... Well, let's see. Let's try 10.19. I know there's another place in there.

Not that we need to confirm it beyond this point. That's not the one I'm thinking of. Well, I don't know that we have to go very much further here.

Look at Jeremiah 30, verses 13 and 14. It says, There's no one to plead your cause, that you may be bound up. You have no healing medicines.

All your lovers have forgotten you. They do not seek you. For I have wounded you with the wound of an enemy.

And then down in verse 17. For I will restore your health to you, and heal you of your wounds, says the Lord. Now notice this.

Jeremiah 30, verse 14. He says, I have wounded you with the wounds of an enemy. But he says, I will heal your wounds.

He's very clearly talking figuratively here. Likewise, Isaiah, throughout his entire book, speaks figuratively about healing and about sickness. In Isaiah 53.5 is the place where the passage by whose stripes you were healed comes from.

In Isaiah chapter 1, right at the outset, Isaiah describes the nation as sick. Not sick of organic sicknesses, but of spiritual sickness. Isaiah 1.5 and 6 says, Why should you be stricken again? You will revolt more and more.

The whole head is sick. The whole heart faints. From the sole of the foot, even to the head, there's no soundness in it.

But wounds and bruises and putrefying sores, they have not been closed up or soothed with ointment. This is the condition of the nation. They're like a man sick from head to toe.

The whole head is sick. It's full of unbound wounds and so forth. Likewise, in Isaiah, well, let's look at Isaiah 53.

We don't have time to look at all the passages in Isaiah where he uses the motif of sickness to speak of the nation's crisis, figuratively. But the passage in Isaiah 53.5 itself, even if we had no other passages to cross-reference, would prove to us that it's not talking about the healing of physical sicknesses when it says, By his stripes we are healed. In Isaiah 53.5, it says, But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement for our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.

There's the passage in question. Notice the passage. It's in Hebrew poetry.

Hebrew poetry, as you well know by now, has this feature, that it repeats the same thing often twice or more times. In this case, there's two couplets. Two ideas stated twice each.

The first idea is, He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities. Are those not identical thoughts? Wounded for transgressions, bruised for iniquities. The parallel is obvious.

Wounds and bruises, transgressions and iniquities. Parallel. The second part of the verse also has a couplet where the same thing is said twice.

The chastisement for our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed. Chastisement is usually whipping. It's parallel to stripes, in the next line.

But what is healed parallel to? Our peace with God. The chastisement for our peace with God was upon him, and therefore with his stripes, that is the chastisement he received, we are healed. That is our relationship with God is healed.

We're healed from our backsliding. The passage itself has nothing about physical healings implied. Every one of those four lines, at least the first three, clearly are about our sins.

And in all likelihood, judging from the structure of the sentence, from the way Isaiah uses this metaphor throughout his book and the rest of the prophets as well, Jeremiah and Hosea notably, and the way it's quoted in the New Testament by Peter, when he says, by whose stripes you were healed because you were like sheep going astray, but now you've returned. You're not backsliding anymore. Your relationship is healed.

You've got peace with God now. You weren't that way before. You've been healed.

Obviously, the passage in Isaiah 53, 5, all things considered, or even any of those things considered, would prove to us it's not talking about the healing of physical sicknesses. Now, I don't make this point as strongly as I'm attempting to. In order to lessen our faith in physical healing, I believe in physical healing.

I've been healed myself, and I've been healed many times, and I've seen many wonderful healings, and I believe that even the most incurable and the most unpromising situations where people are sick can be healed and have been healed in modern times by God. I want to make that clear. The difference is simply this.

If healing is in the atonement, as some say, then we have access to something that some have called healing on demand. But if it is not in the atonement, then we must look to God for His individual and personal mercy when we're sick, and accept from Him no for an answer, as Paul had to do, if necessary. That is to say, since Jesus has paid the price for our sins, God, in a sense, owes it to Jesus to forgive our sins, because of what Jesus has paid for them.

But if it can be said that God, in the same sense, owes it to Jesus to heal us of our sicknesses, then God has left several unpaid debts in church history, including at the

present time, because He has not healed everybody. He didn't heal everybody even in the New Testament times. As far as we know, Timothy was never healed of his frequent infirmities and his stomach problems, and therefore Paul told him to take a little wine with the water.

Interestingly, though, his often infirmities is the same word in the Greek that Matthew uses to say that Jesus bore our infirmities. And yet, Timothy bore one of his own in his stomach. Paul bore infirmities, which he called a thorn in the flesh.

Epaphroditus was healed, but it was touch and go for a while, and Paul, even at one point, felt like he was maybe going to lose him. But when he was healed, it was an act of God's mercy. God had mercy on him.

And then there was Trophimus, who according to, I think, 2 Timothy 4, Paul says, I had to leave Trophimus sick in Miletum. We don't know why, when Paul on other occasions was able to send out handkerchiefs and aprons from his body, and sick people who weren't even present were healed by receiving them. And yet Trophimus, an accompanying servant, a helper with Paul in ministry, Paul couldn't get him healed.

And Paul doesn't seem like he has to give any kind of, you know, explanation of this extraordinary phenomenon. I couldn't get this guy healed. Apparently it wasn't that extraordinary.

If Paul believed the way the Word of Faith's teachers did about this, he'd feel a little awkward saying I left him sick. For one thing, he shouldn't say he was sick. He should confess that he was well, even though he had symptoms.

He shouldn't use the word sick because that's not faith talking. You don't use the word sick in the Word of Faith. You use the word healed.

I am well, even if you got every symptom of a sick man. And even if you die with those symptoms, you go down saying, I'm healed, I'm healed, I'm healed. It's like the Christian scientist who, after he dies, he says, I'm not here and it's not hot.

Because they don't believe in pain, sickness, or health, or judgment. That's a tenet of Christian science. It's a very similar thing to the Word of Faith.

Well, anyway, I bring this up because Matthew does. And it's in the very context we're studying. I don't just go off onto these tirades unprompted.

But it's in the parallel passage to that which we're looking at in Mark, it's in Matthew's parallel, that he quotes this Isaianic verse and gives us its meaning. The meaning is that Jesus healed individuals. That was a fulfillment of Isaiah's promise.

He still does that. You can still go to Jesus when you're sick and ask Him to heal you, and

maybe He'll do it. He didn't heal everyone that asked Him in the Bible, but He healed most of them.

And I think that you can, for the most part, say, I come to Jesus Christ with full faith that He will heal me if that's the most merciful thing He can do for me. If there's something more merciful He can do for me, like not heal me, and there may be times when that's exactly the most merciful thing, then I still trust Him to do the most merciful thing. To heal or not is His business.

Yes, Matt. How do you explain how He... Lifted. He lifted our sicknesses, but relieved us of them, is what I understand it to mean.

The word bor, means lifted in Hebrew, the literal meaning is. So, to say He lifted our sicknesses means He relieved us of that burden that we were carrying, of sickness. Yes.

I think... I think it does not necessarily have to mean all of us. Right. But we do all have our sicknesses lifted eventually.

You know, when you die, you're not sick anymore. And eventually we are relieved. There is relief.

Now, not... Unbelievers don't always get... There's no promise of relief for unbelievers, because when they die, that's no relief even. Things just get from bad to worse for the unbeliever. The Christian has the promise of eventual relief.

And whether that's immediate, whether that's day after tomorrow, whether it's a month from now, or whether it's 50 years from now when I die, God has not put any time limits on how long He's entitled to let us suffer as long as He sees it to be good for us and merciful to us. And it is a very carnal attitude that... in the church that sees sickness as something that God could never want us to have to tolerate. After all, we're His favorites.

After all, we're King's kids. God certainly couldn't want us to suffer sickness. Ironically, the same people will usually say that it's okay to suffer persecution.

That God may want you to suffer persecution patiently because that can glorify Him, but He doesn't want you to suffer sickness patiently because that would be cruelty on His part to use sickness in our lives. I've never been able to figure out the reasoning behind that. It seems to me like some sicknesses, like a headache, for instance, would be a lot more... I'd rather bear a headache than to have my skin peeled off.

You know? I'd rather have a toothache than to have bamboo shoots driven under my fingernails. And yet, according to these people, all forms of torture and persecution, you know, I'm not exempt from that, but God's too merciful to let me have such a thing as a toothache or a headache because that's sickness. See? It's just strange thinking.

You know, basically the Word of Faith doctrine is based on very poor exegesis of a few proof texts and a very consistent failure to apply logic and reasoning and consistency to the whole counsel of God on these things or even to human experience as far as that goes. But see, the Word of Faith makes no apologies about ignoring human experience because they say human experience, that's sense knowledge. And you're not supposed to believe your experience.

You're not supposed to believe sense knowledge. And therefore, even though you feel like you're sick, even though you've got a fever of 110, even though you've been vomiting four times an hour and you haven't got enough strength to lift yourself off the bed, yet that's just your sense knowledge talking to you, saying you're sick. Revelation knowledge tells you you're healed and that's what you need to confess.

And that's what the Word of Faith says. So, in other words, you have to deny truth. It calls on people not to have faith but to have lies, to tell lies.

Because if you talk to a Word of Faith person who's sick and you say, how are you feeling? They say, oh, I'm feeling wonderful in the Lord. I'm healed by His stripes. They're lying.

They don't think they're lying but they're not telling the truth. And any doctrine that makes people obliged to tell falsehoods can't be very agreeable with Him who is the truth. Okay, let's go on.

Verse 35, Mark 1, 35. Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, he went out and departed to a solitary place and there he prayed. And Simon and those who were with him, remembering he'd been staying in Simon's house probably the night, searched for him.

Then they found him. When they found him, they said to him, everyone's looking for you. But he said to them, let us go to the next town so that I may preach there also because for this purpose I've come forth.

Now even though Jesus no doubt had a long and exhausting night because after sundown, everybody in town brought their sick people and their demon-possessed, and it was a fair-sized town, no doubt there was a good amount of ministry to be done. And by the way, anyone who's done any kind of ministry