

Jesus the healer

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[0:00] So we're going to be in Acts chapter 9 from verse 32 to the end of the chapter. That's on page 1103. So let's hear God's word together again.

As Peter traveled about the country, he went to visit the Lord's people who lived in Lydda. There he found a man named Anais, who was paralyzed and had been bedridden for eight years.

And Anais, Peter said to him, Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and roll up your mat. Immediately, Anais got up.

All those who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord. In Joppa, there was a disciple named Tabitha. In Greek, her name is Dorcas.

She was always doing good and helping the poor. About that time, she became ill and died and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room. Lydda was near Joppa.

[1:05] So when the disciples heard that Peter was in Lydda, they sent two men to him and urged him, please come at once. Peter went with them and when he arrived, he was taken upstairs to the room.

All the widows stood around him, crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them. Peter sent them all out of the room.

Then he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning towards the dead women, he said, Tabitha, get up. She opened her eyes and seeing Peter, she sat up.

He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet. Then he called for the believers, especially the widows, and presented her to them alive.

This became known all over Joppa and many people believed in the Lord. Peter stayed in Joppa for some time with a tanner named Simon.

[2:04] Amen. So this morning, what we're thinking about, who we are thinking about, is Jesus, the healer. We can see today's story as a point of transition within the story of Acts.

Whenever we began looking at the book of Acts, we were saying the story of Acts is the story of the risen Jesus continuing his saving mission by his spirit and through his people.

Last week, we were introduced in a dramatic way to Saul, the one-time persecutor who will go on to become the great preacher and apostle to the Gentiles.

He's going to be a key leader taking the message of Jesus to the ends of the earth. But before we return back to Saul, who becomes Paul, Luke, as he writes his book, draws our attention back to Peter.

So we're back with Peter today. Peter, who is an apostle. He has been commissioned and sent by Jesus to speak and work for Jesus.

[3:15] And in both of those stories, the Saul story and the stories that we see in Peter, we recognize that Jesus is still working. He is still building his church.

He is still bringing salvation and he is still extending his kingdom. And so the big idea in this transition section is that Jesus is the healer who heals the helpless.

And what I want us to see together is that is good news for us today. As we're introduced to God's Savior King. And we're introduced to his heart.

We see his heart is still full of love for suffering people. And we recognize that Jesus from heaven, he still has power to heal and to transform.

We discover that the word of Jesus still reaches across time and space to change people's lives. And that's good news as we stand separated in space and time.

[4:22] 2,000 miles from where this action is happening. 2,000 years from when the action was happening. But Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. So we're going to see it together in a variety of different ways.

The first thing we're going to think about together is the pattern of Jesus. So I think we're familiar with the idea of patterns, of labels, of brands.

And probably we understand the power of branding and labels. So for example, if I was to speak about the brand with three stripes, otherwise known as Adidas, many of us would instantly have a picture in our head of what that design is.

So it's been around since 1949, but the design hasn't changed. Those three stripes are instantly recognizable. So if you see an Adidas shoe in 2026, it connects with the history all the way back since 1949.

Now I tell you that because as Dr. Luke is recording these stories of the apostles working, he is recording them in a specific way so that we see clearly God's design.

[5:34] That we see God's pattern hasn't changed. That he's still at work. That these present miracles of healing connect absolutely with the past healing miracles of God.

That the kingdom of God is still invading a broken and wounded world through Jesus, our Lord and Savior. Dr. Luke wrote two books or one book in two parts.

Luke, the gospel of Luke and the book of Acts. And the pattern in part one in his gospel, Jesus was healing the sick, the paralyzed, the suffering. Those who had been dead were raised to life.

And the pattern in part two in the book of Acts, Jesus is still doing those same things. But only now it's through his people on the earth by the power of the Spirit.

Before we get to our immediate text, look at verse 31. If you have your Bibles, look at chapter 9, verse 31. Here's a important summary statement which reminds us that we've had a transition.

[6:37] Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of a Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers.

So you've got this time of peace and growth within the church. And it's in that context, verse 32, that Peter travels about the country visiting the Lord's people, visiting the saints.

He's bringing the gospel to them. He's wanting to encourage them as he moves from place to place. And Luke deliberately tells us about two places that he stops and two people that Jesus heals through Peter.

So our first stop is this place called Lydda and to a man called Aeneas. So to give you your geographical setting, we're about 25 miles northwest of Jerusalem.

So we're heading towards the coast. And we meet Aeneas. In verse 33, we discover he is paralyzed, bedridden for eight years.

[7:44] And Luke records the eight years to remind us of his miserable condition, his suffering, but also to emphasize the miraculous power that Jesus is going to work through Peter.

Here's the moment of healing. In verse 34, Aeneas, Peter said to him, Jesus Christ heals you.

Get up and roll your mat. So notice this. Here is Peter the apostle, and this is a pattern. He points away from himself and to Jesus as the one who heals.

He doesn't want to take any glory to himself. He gives glory to Jesus. And so he tells him to get up. And then there's that interesting detail, roll up your mat.

And you might think, why is he talking about tidying his mat? What's that got to do with anything? Why does Luke record that? Because he wants to remind us of that earlier miracle that Jesus performed that we heard read about in Luke chapter five.

[8:47] So in that incident, Jesus was teaching in a house, and all of a sudden the roof tiles were removed, and a paralyzed man was lowered down on a mat. And Jesus looks, and he sees faith.

And first of all, he forgave the man's sin. And do you know what that reminds us of? No matter what we are going through, our greatest priority and the greatest healing we need is to have our sin dealt with so that we are right with God.

But then when he says to him, get up, take your mat, and go. It's the same pattern. So here is Jesus in heaven, and his heart hasn't changed, and his power hasn't changed, and his kingdom continues to grow.

Next stop takes us to Joppa. So we're going another 11 miles northwest. So Joppa is now a suburb of modern-day Tel Aviv.

And we meet a lady called Tabitha. In Joppa, verse 36, there was a disciple named Tabitha. She was always doing good and helping the poor.

[9:58] Now, this was an emphasis for God's people in the Old Testament. And we've already seen in the book of Acts, caring for the poor is something the New Testament church is supposed to do. The emphasis falls on the work of the deacons.

But Tabitha knows every person who follows Jesus should be about mercy and care for the people around them, and especially towards those in need. Now, let's skip down to verse 39 to notice two things.

Peter went with them. We'll come back to that. And when he arrived, here's the scene. There's some widows. They stood around him crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made.

So notice the impact of her death. There is mourning and there is grief for the church and for the wider community. Death is always an enemy.

Jesus came to conquer death. But we also see the impact of her life. Those clothes, the poor were being provided for. Hers is a wonderful testimony.

[11:03] But there's a question that I want us to ask ourselves in verse 38. Why is it that there are two men traveling these 11 miles with urgency to come to Peter, asking, urging him, please come at once?

What is it they expect Peter to do? She is dead after all. Well, let me suggest again, there is a clue in our text.

And it's easy to miss. Verse 37, we're told about this time. Tabitha became ill and died and her body was washed and placed where?

In an upstairs room. Now, that might seem like an incidental detail, but Luke records it for a purpose. Okay. So, Peter arrives and what we find in verse 40 is he goes up to the upstairs room and he clears the room.

So, he's there by himself. And then what does he do in verse 40? He gets down on his knees and he prays and then he speaks. And Tabitha gets up and then she is presented alive to the people who just recently had been mourning.

[12:20] I want us to see there is a pattern here too. And it's actually a pattern we can find all the way in the Old Testament. So, there was a prophet called Elisha. And Elisha was asked with urgency to come to see a boy who had died.

And what happens is Elisha goes upstairs. The room is empty, apart from the dead boy. And he prays over the boy. And the boy is raised to life and returned to his mother.

So, there's a pattern. And we see the pattern also in the life of Jesus. And Luke records it for us. Luke chapter 7. Here's one example of this pattern in Jesus' life.

Jesus is walking to the town of Nain. And there is a funeral procession coming out of Nain. And it's being led by a widow who has just lost her only son.

And Jesus comes to the coffin. And he stops the mourners. And he raises the boy. And he gives the boy back to his mother.

[13:21] Do you see the pattern? But it becomes even more clear in Luke chapter 9. So, in Luke chapter 9, there is a man who comes urgently to Jesus.

It's Jairus. Jesus, will you come and heal my daughter? She's very sick. And then we discover, actually, she's now died. Well, Jesus goes.

And what does Jesus do when he gets to the upstairs room? He clears it out. The only people that are there are Jairus and his wife. And three disciples. Peter, James, and John.

And having cleared the room. Having gone upstairs. Jesus then speaks. Just two words. In Aramaic. Talitha. Kum.

But words that Peter would never forget. As this little girl rose immediately to life. Because do you know what Peter says? As we come back to Joppa.

[14:19] Not Talitha. Kum. But Tabitha. Kum. Almost exactly the same words in Aramaic. Reminding us that Jesus is continuing this pattern of salvation.

Jesus is bringing the kingdom of God. In these powerful healing miracles. And now what I want us to do. Is to tie these healings.

And every healing that Jesus does. To the good news. Of the Christian faith. So back in Matthew chapter 8. Matthew chapter 8 is a wonderful example.

Where Jesus is doing so many different kinds of miracles. Helping and healing so many different kinds of people. And Matthew. As he writes his gospel down. He includes the comment. He goes to

Isaiah 53.

And the part that talks about Jesus taking up our diseases. And he recognizes Jesus is fulfilling Isaiah 53. Jesus is the suffering servant.

[15 : 25] Now this matters. According to the Bible. The cause of all sickness. And suffering. And ultimately death in our lives.

In some way or another. Connects back. Connects back. To the problem of sin. That entered into the world. When Adam and Eve. Rebelled against God. That all that has become broken in the world.

Is like the ripple effect of sin. That causes all. That goes wrong. And the only answer. To the problem of sin.

Is for Jesus to come and establish his kingdom. And the Bible tells us. That Jesus kingdom. One day. Will have no sickness.

Will have no death. Forever. Forever. But the only way that can happen. Is if. God somehow finds a way.

[16 : 23] To deal with sin. Once and for all. To deal with that problem. And its ripple effects. And do you know how God does that?

God does it by sending his son Jesus. And by Jesus willingly becoming. The suffering servant. Spoken about in Isaiah 53. So Jesus will go to the cross.

And he will be loaded up. With our sin. With our guilt. With our shame. And he will pay the price in full.

So that by his wounds. We can be healed. At the cross at Calvary. Jesus wins for his people. The promise of a world without sickness and death.

Forever. Forever. The ripple effect. Of God's love. Extended to us at the cross. Is. Our forgiveness. And our eternal life.

[17 : 25] If our faith. Is in Jesus. If your faith is in Jesus today. Praise him for that. And if your faith isn't in Jesus. Let me invite you to trust him for that.

For that perfect world. Of true healing. So that's the pattern of Jesus. Let's think. Now about the power. Of. Jesus.

I think for most of us. We are used to thinking about the world. In a. In a material way. Many of us. We are in school. Or university. We are studying laws of science.

Physics. Chemistry. Biology. And we can be so used to allowing the laws of science and nature to explain and govern everything. So we can have a thinking that says.

Well all that we see. Is all that there is. And we can easily lose sense of the spiritual dimension. We can lose our sense of wonder.

[18 : 26] Even the wonder of our own bodies. With their healing capacity. I was thinking about that this week. You know. We get some kind of cut. Or we get a virus. Or we break a bone.

And God has designed our bodies with the capacity to heal themselves. But all too easily. In the modern world. Our creator.

Well he's removed from the picture. You know. Either we simply act as if he does not exist. Or that he is far away. And he's on the sidelines. But in the coming of Jesus.

You and I are invited to see reality differently. Because this is the point in history. Where God the creator. Who is the creator of heaven and earth.

Including history. He enters in. And he takes human form. That the son of God becomes one of us. And he begins to establish the kingdom of God in this world.

[19 : 26] This is the time when heaven and earth collide. As he displays his power and glory. And we begin to see renewal and restoration.

We see life being transformed as the Lord God acts. And so every time in the gospels. Or every time in the book of Acts. We encounter a miracle of Jesus.

We need to understand these are both a signpost to his glorious identity as the son of God. But also telling us more about what his kingdom is like.

Now let's go back to Lydda and to Joppa. Because these are two powerful stories of hope. Because here we have through the apostle Peter.

The powerful God of glory. Getting involved and showing his care. In the lives of two very different people. One is a paralyzed man.

[20:24] One is a very active in the community woman. But they are both helpless. And Jesus steps in to help both. In verse 34. The help of Jesus is really explicit.

Peter said to Anais. Jesus Christ heals you. And in those words and in that moment there is instant healing. There is no need for him to be in bed anymore.

There is no need for rehab or physio. The healing is instant and complete. The power of Jesus operating in the story of Tabitha.

Well that's more implicit. Because what do we have in verse 40. Peter sent them out of the room. Then he got down on his knees. And he prayed.

Peter knows he will not do this in his power. And so he prays for the Lord's power to be active. And in both cases. It is the life giving power of the risen Lord.

[21:27] The Lord who stands at the center of history. Who brings his healing. Who brings this transformation. And it's the way Jesus continues to operate to this day.

And this section. Which is a wonderful section. Is part of a wider section. And this wider section that shows us the power. The transforming grace of Jesus. It can give all of us hope.

I would suggest whoever we are. However we've come in here. There is hope for us in this story.

So we met last week. Saul. Saul who didn't believe Jesus is Lord.

Saul who is living in opposition to Jesus. Jesus came in power. And healed his heart. So he's converted. Then we meet.

Aeneas. And Tabitha. And the feeling is. One of need. Or being helpless. Or being hopeless. And that might be where we find ourselves today.

[22:32] Maybe that's because of things going on physically. Maybe it's spiritually. And again there is hope from Jesus for us. There's an interesting figure in verse 43.

We could easily skip by him. Peter stayed in Joppa for some time. With a tanner. Named Simon. So he's a leather worker. And do you know if you're a leather worker. And you're Jewish.

You are religiously unclean. But here is Peter. The apostle of Jesus. And now he's spending time with this man. Sharing fellowship with him. And that speaks of God's grace.

To those who maybe feel lonely. Or isolated. Or a social outcast in some way. And then next week. We get to spend time with a man called Cornelius.

From a foreign army. From a foreign country. He has no claim on Jesus whatsoever. But he too discovers the mercy and grace of Jesus as Lord.

[23:32] In Jesus the healer. The Lord of creation and salvation. There is hope for all of us today. And in that there is an invitation today.

To come to Jesus in faith. To find this healing that he promises. But what we're going to do to us now.

Is we're going to pause for a moment. There's an important I think question. That we have to ask ourselves. What about healing today? Because we're talking about physical healing today.

And so we need to ask ourselves. About healing today. I don't know if that's something that you've thought about. Maybe you've thought about it a lot. I'm going to share just a few thoughts.

From someone I consider to be a helpful guide. So there's a pastor in the States. He's called Trip Lee. And I find him a helpful guide. Because he's suffered from a serious illness. For over 12 years. Struggling every day with serious illness.

[24:31] So when somebody speaks from a position of lived out experience. That's a useful voice for us. Some observations. First of all on the topic of healing and faith.

So he's always very honest. But sometimes it can be a real struggle. To read these kind of texts. It makes it sound so easy. Just have faith.

And healing will come. And so sometimes when the healing doesn't come. The question is. Well why not me? And why not now? If you've ever wrestled with that.

This is Trip Lee's counsel. Which I think is really helpful. He says. Present your brokenness. With open handed faith. In other words.

Come knowing that God can. And ask that God will. But recognize.

[25:31] We can't demand that God do. We can't try to bargain with God. We have to pray. Your will be done. So we pray.

What's on our heart. And we're invited to pray with faith. And we trust that God is good. But that isn't a guarantee. Here's another thing to consider.

When we think about healing today. Is to think about healing in biblical history. So in the story of the Bible. It may be somewhat surprising. To recognize. That there are limited windows. Where we see miracles. Active. Where God is active. In miracle working. So we see it around the time of Moses. And we see it around the time of Elijah.

And Elisha. And then we see it especially. With Jesus. And then with the apostles. It comes at very important times. In salvation history.

[26 : 29] Here is this moment. Where the kingdom of God is breaking in. Because Jesus the king has come. And so there are lots of healing signs. That validate the messenger.

And that demonstrate the mission. And that's just to help us recognize. That it's not the normal pattern. In biblical history. So we shouldn't necessarily expect.

It to be the normal pattern. In all of history. Another important thing. To consider. When we come to the topic of healing. Is to think about healing. Within Jesus' own mission.

Luke chapter 4. Is really important on this. Luke chapter 4. Records the beginning of Jesus' ministry. And the crucial emphasis for Jesus. Jesus. Why did you come? He would say.

I came to preach. The good news of the kingdom of God. So there's a town. And Jesus has healed everyone in the town. And they're desperate. That Jesus stick around.

[27 : 25] But he won't stick around. To be their faith healer. It is more important to go other places. To preach good news. It's not enough.

To come to Jesus for healing. It's not enough. To come to Jesus for any of his gifts. We need to come to him. As Lord.

As king of kings. And to understand him on his own terms. He came to be a savior. For sinners. To save us primarily.

From the problem of sin. Another thing that we see in Jesus' ministry. Is that healing. Is not a guarantee. That faith will follow.

Maybe you've had these thoughts. Or had this kind of conversation. Well if only Jesus would. Would show up. And do some more miracles in our day. Then loads of people would become Christians. If you read the gospels.

[28 : 26] That logic doesn't add up. When Jesus did miracles. And he did all the miracles. With a perfect pure loving heart. He was rejected. And hated by the masses.

When Jesus went. And raised his friend Lazarus. Publicly. Everybody knew he did it. People conspired. To kill him. And to kill Lazarus.

So healing is not. Going to be a guarantee of faith. I think it's also. Important for us to understand. That healing. Is broader and deeper than we think.

Now what do I mean by that? I mean it's important for us to think about. Spiritual healing. If you and I are here today. And we have been forgiven. And washed clean of our sin.

And given a new heart. You have been healed. So that even if. Physical healing that you might long for. Does not come.

[29 : 27] We can still hold on with faith. We can still hold on with faith. To the reality of that. Deep healing. That Jesus has worked. And here's the last thing.

That I need for us to hear. It's a promise really. That healing. Will be complete. One day.

When we ask for healing. As a child of God. Recognize this. Jesus never says no.

To his child. But he may say. Not yet. Let me remind you of the gospel. The gospel tells us.

That by the wounds of Jesus. We are healed. That Jesus did. Purchase true. And ultimate.

[30 : 25] And eternal healing. For his people. On the cross. At Calvary. And when Jesus returns. We will have glorified bodies.

Free of sickness. And pain. And suffering. And tears. And death. And death. For all eternity. Time without end. So that while.

We battle. With suffering. And sickness. There is a battle. For faith. That we turn. To Christ. On the cross.

That we trust. To Jesus. Who bore the scars. For our salvation. To understand. That he is the son of God. Who cares deeply. And that he has entered.

Into creation. To begin. A work of renewal. And healing. And he will return. To complete it. And because we know.

[31 : 25] He loves us. We can find comfort. And rest in him. And look to the future. With hope. It's the power of Jesus.

And let's think finally. About the salvation. Of Jesus. And again. It's very much. Interconnected. So as we said. At the beginning. Key to the story. Of the book of Acts.

Is that the risen Jesus. From heaven. Continues his mission. By his spirit. And by his church. He's giving you life. People are hearing. And people are believing.

And what Luke chooses to do. Is to record the words. Of Peter for us. And the words of Peter. Remind us.

Of resurrection. When Peter says to Aeneas. In verse 34. Get up. Or when he says to Tabitha. In verse 40. Get up.

[32 : 22] It's the same word. That's used to speak of God. Raising Jesus. Jesus. From the dead. Jesus.

The healer. Is providing. These signs. For us. To understand. That new life. Comes. Through the resurrection.

Power of the Lord Jesus. And there's clues. Within this story. Of the power. Of the risen Jesus. So again.

Like a stone. Dropped into. Upon. There is this. Ripple effect. Of salvation. Power. So verse. 34. Aeneas is healed. Verse 35.

All those who lived. In Lydda. And shared. And saw him. And turned. To the Lord. Verse 41.

Tabitha. Is helped. To her feet. Raised from the dead. Verse 42.

[33 : 18] This became known. All over Joppa. And many people. Believed. In the Lord. The power. The power. And love. Of Jesus. Is experienced. By two individuals. That transformation.

That God. Has clearly worked. Through his son. The Lord Jesus. It has a wider effect. And others. Come to be drawn. Into. The salvation. Of the king.

That's a great pattern. Within God's kingdom. Think about our own. Witness. Whether we're thinking. Individually. Or as a church. As we worship. As we. Bear witness. To what Jesus has done. The difference.

That Jesus makes. To our life. God is pleased. To use. Our witness. To extend. The saving power. Of Jesus. To others.

Get up. Get up. Simple words. But so powerful. Take you back. As we close.

[34 : 15] To Easter Sunday. The Lord Jesus. Having died. On Good Friday. Having been buried. In the tomb. On that first. Easter Sunday.

Morning. He hears those words. From his father. Get up. And he is raised. From the dead. By the power of God. And Jesus too. Tidies up.

His mat. In the tomb. He has no more need of it. And he walks out. In glory. And victory. To continue. His mission. Of salvation. This.

Jesus. The risen Jesus. He is the one. Who can heal us. He can heal us. Ultimately.

From our. Spiritual paralysis. Left to ourselves. When we are helpless. To please God. When we are unworthy.

[35 : 09] To know God. Crippled by our guilt. And our shame. Jesus. Can heal. And forgive. And this Jesus.

Can raise you. From spiritual death. Life. Lifeless. Separated from God. Under his.

Just judgment. And heading for eternal death. Jesus can give you new life. And he does it. By God's grace. In the true healing.

Found. Through his cross. And resurrection. So again. If you trust Jesus today. I invite you to worship. With joy. And if you don't.

Trust him yet. Will you ask Jesus. Even today. To be your healer. Let's pray together. Lord.

[36 : 03] Our God. We thank you. For being able to. Consider your words. And to see that. Jesus from heaven. It continues. To display. His power.

And love. In the lives. Of people. And we pray. For each one of us. That we might experience this. Powerfully. And personally. The saving work.

Of God. In our lives. As we would come. To trust. In Jesus. We thank you. For his death. And resurrection. We thank you.

That in his being raised up. We too. Can be raised up. To new life. With our God. Give us faith. To believe. Lord. We give you thanks.

This morning. For the good news. For our church family. Of the safe arrival. Of baby Finley. And we do pray. For him. That you would continue. To grant to him.

[36:57] Health. We give thanks. With Kellen and Sarah. And with their families. We pray. That you would give them. Great joy. In these early days. Of family life. And we pray.

For Finley. That he would grow up. To know. To love. To trust you. To experience. His saving power. In his life. To experience.

Your saving power. In his life. That there would never be a day. When he wouldn't know Jesus. As Lord. And as Savior. Lord. We also want to give you thanks. For the provision.

Of a church lunch. And we thank you. That we can share friendship. And food. Because there are those. Who are using their gifts. To serve us. So generously. And sacrificially. And we pray.

That you would bless. Our time together. And we pray. That we would be. A church where. Friendship can be established. That it would feel. Like a church family. For whoever comes.

[37:52] For however long. And we've been here. Whether that's decades. Or days. Lord. We pray today too. For those. Who feel. And their sense. Of being helpless.

And hopeless. Those who feel. The need. Of your healing. Lord. We pray. That you would extend mercy. We pray. That you would draw near.

We pray. That you would grant comfort. And we pray. That you would be glorified. In people's lives. As they would come. To lean on you. To call out to you.

And to rest. In your love. For them. Lord. We also want to pray. For our world. We pray. Especially for. The continent. Of Africa. As we've been asked to.

By. African. Christian. Church. Leaders. Lord. We pray. For healing. From violence. And extremism. From all the attacks.

[38:46] On Christians. And churches. And we pray. That you would be pleased. To grant healing. In lives. And communities. And in society. As people would turn.

From darkness. To the light. Of Jesus. And it's in his name. We pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.