

The Healing Ministry of Jesus Begins

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Date: 16 February 2025

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[0 : 00] Well, a warm welcome to the service of worship. It's good to be with you. A beautiful Lord's Day to come together to worship the Lord. It's actually time to reflect if I've ever actually been here on a Lord's Day to feature. I'm not sure I have, so it's a privilege to come and join with you.

I think I took some preparatory services in the past, but I think this is the first time I've been here on a Lord's Day. So it's good to gather and we're going to come together to worship the Lord. And just to note, the only information, just to highlight that there'll be a congregational fellowship in the evening, so after the evening service.

And I hope to attend that and give a little, I presume a word of testimony, some kind of interview of some kind. So we'll see what kind of interview it'll be, but warmly welcome to that fellowship after the evening service.

We'll begin our time of worship now by singing to God's praise in Psalm 27. So Psalm 27.

Psalm 27. And we'll sing verse 1 down to the double verse marked 4 there.

[1 : 17] The Lord's my light and saving health. Who shall make me dismayed? My life strength is the Lord. Of whom then shall I be afraid?

When as mine enemies and foes, most wicked persons all, to eat my flesh against me rose, they stumbled and did fall. Against me, though an host in camp, my heart yet fearless is.

The war against me rise. I will be confident in this one thing I of the Lord desired and will seek to obtain that all days of my life I may within God's house remain.

This is the great desire of the psalmist and ought to be our desire as well. And what's the purpose of being in the house of the Lord, in the presence of the Lord, that I, the beauty of the Lord, behold, may, and admire.

And every time we come under the word and we hear the word of the Lord and we have Christ lifted up before us in scripture, as we have the triune God lifted up before us in the preaching of the word, our desire is to behold the wonder and beauty of who he is.

[2 : 27] So that I, the beauty of the Lord, behold, may, and admire, and that I, in his holy place, may reverently inquire. So we'll sing those verses there to the praise of God.

That you would answer your people. And that you would answer in your time. We know that very often when we come crying before you, we are demanding these answers immediately.

But you are a God who calls on your people very often to wait. To wait upon the Lord. And to do so patiently. And we confess on that, that that can be difficult.

That can be very difficult at times to wait upon the Lord. But we see throughout the history of scripture, when we read through the narratives of the Old Testament and the New Testament as well, we see lots of examples where people are asked to do just that.

To wait patiently and expectantly as well. And help us to do that. Not only to be patient in our waiting, but to be expectant.

[9 : 14] And to be waiting in an active way. To be waiting in prayer. To be coming before you. To continue to come before you in worship. To continue to be active in the work of the gospel.

And we pray that that will be the case here for the people of the congregation here. We ask, O Lord, that you would draw near them and help them to continue to press forward.

In this mission that they are a part of. And that we are a part of. Together. Especially in this time of vacancy for them. We ask, O Lord, that you would undertake for them.

We give thanks for the leaders. The elders and deacons in the congregation. And no doubt the additional duties that they will be under. And perhaps additional pressures as well at a time of vacancy.

We ask, O Lord, that you would strengthen them. That you would help them to carry out their duties. In a God-glorifying way. We ask, O Lord, that you would be with the wider congregation as well.

[10 : 15] In this time of vacancy. Perhaps a time of uncertainty for them. But we pray that it would be blessed to them. How often we've seen that. Even in our own presbytery here on the islands.

In times of vacancy. We have seen great blessing. Times when many even have come to faith in times of vacancy. So help us to remember that ministry continues.

The mission of the gospel continues. Whether there's a minister in place or not. And to that end, encourage the congregation. Pray for the young as well. All the young connected to the congregation.

We pray, O Lord, that you would draw near them. That you would speak to them. Even in their young years. We pray, O Lord, that you would open their eyes.

Their minds. To behold something of the beauty of Christ. We sang of that there. Something of the beauty of the Lord. That we seek to come to behold. As we come before you in worship.

[11 : 11] We pray that the young would see that as well. They would see something of the wonder of Christ. They would see something of the wonder of the triune God. And that that will be true for all of us.

From the youngest year to the oldest. We ask, O Lord, that you would open our eyes. And we need that. We need to have our eyes opened. We need to have the hardness of the exterior that so often covers our hearts.

We need to have that taken away. And your word is able to do that. It is uniquely able to. Like a double-edged dagger. A double-edged sword. One that is able to pierce.

One that is able to penetrate. One that is able to cut us open. And one that is able to bring healing. A healing of the soul itself.

And ultimately that is what we need. A healing on the inside. We know the way in which sin and the fall has affected us in so many ways. And we see that.

[12 : 10] We see it around us. All we need to do is turn the news on and see what happens in the world. And we see evidence of the brokenness of the world. But we confess that we don't merely have to look outside to see the reality of these things.

And we look in the mirror. And we look at ourselves. And we look into our own hearts. And we see the effect of the fall. We see the effect of sin.

And we see the way in which we are a broken people. And the way in which we think. The way in which so often we act. The way in which we speak as well. And our prayer is that you might open our eyes to that.

So that then we might turn to the one who is able to heal us. The one who is able to make us new. The one who is able to justify. To sanctify. To give us that adoption.

To give us that redemption. And help us to think about the wonder of the atonement of Christ. And all the benefits that flow from us. Those wonderful theological truths.

[13 : 13] The reality of becoming children of the living God. Words that can so often roll off our tongue. And thoughts that we can so often have. But help us to remember the reality of these things.

That when we put our faith and trust in you. That we are indeed sons and daughters of the Lord himself. That we are brothers and sisters in Christ. And we pray for those who are still outside of Christ.

We pray oh Lord that you would work in their hearts. Or that you would draw them to saving faith. We know that you are able. We know Lord that you are a God who saves. For many of us in here we have experienced that.

We see that in the pages of scripture as well. That you are a God who saves. And we pray oh Lord that you would continue to do so. That you would work not only here in Calanish. And the wider community.

But the whole of the island. And all of our presbytery. And all the island denominations. That are seeking to make Christ known. And seeking to preach the good news.

[14 : 11] Of the Lord Jesus and him crucified. We pray oh Lord for reviving power. You are the one who can bring revival. We ask that you would bring it to the glory. Of your most holy name.

So continue with us now. Cleanse us we pray. And we ask it all for Jesus sake. Amen. Amen. I realise there is no Sunday school on today.

But I think there is a couple of wee ones. So I will give you a wee message for the children. And I am sure you enjoy cartoons. I think every child enjoys cartoons.

One of my favourite cartoons when I was growing up was Fireman Sam. I liked Fireman Sam. And Fireman Sam amazingly it is still around today. Which is amazing really.

Because I am quite old really. Compared to you. But still around today. And Fireman Sam. And almost in every episode of Fireman Sam. What happens is. There is some kind of an emergency. So there is an emergency situation of some kind.

[15 : 14] And usually it is to do with Norman Price. You know the bad ginger haired boy. Norman Price. He usually gets in trouble. And whether it is him or somebody else. There is some kind of emergency.

And what they do is. They contact Fireman Sam. So something wrong. You get in touch with Fireman Sam. And what happens. Fireman Sam comes. And Fireman Sam saves the day.

He rescues whoever it is that was in danger. Or he fixes the fire. Or whatever it is. That is wrong. And you know. Watching Fireman Sam. I always feel sorry for him. And I feel sorry for him.

Because people only ever get in touch with him. When there is an emergency. They don't get in touch with him any other time. When there is something wrong. They get in touch with him. And I was thinking to myself.

You know. That is how a lot of people are. With God. A lot of people. They only get in touch with God. When something is wrong. When there is some kind of emergency situation.

[16:10] And you know. Maybe. Maybe. Maybe you are like that. If someone is sick. Or if something is wrong in school. Or something like that. You can maybe put up an emergency prayer. To God. And then not really speak to him.

The rest of the time. And a lot of people are like that. Sadly. And that is not right. Now it is good. To speak to God. When there is an emergency. That is a good thing. To do that.

To speak to him. When something has gone wrong. You see lots of examples. In the Psalms. And the word of God. Of people doing that. If there is something wrong. They pray to God. That is a good thing. To do.

But we don't only speak to him. When something has gone wrong. We want to speak to the Lord. At all times. Imagine if you had a friend. And your friend. Only spoke to you.

When they wanted something from you. That is not very good. Imagine if they only came and spoke to you. When they were in trouble. And they wanted some help. Again that is not very good. Because you would think to yourself.

[17:04] Well. If this person is only speaking to me. When something is going wrong. When they want something from me. That is not a real friend. That is not really. What a friend should be like. A friend should be speaking to us. All the time.

And think about how we are with God. How. When we only speak to him. When we want something. Or when there is some kind of emergency. We are being like that. So it is very important.

That we don't just. Speak to God in emergencies. When things are going wrong. But that we. Speak to him. All the time. Whenever we can. Every day. Speaking to him. Even when things are going well. And when your day is going well.

And there is no problems. Being used to coming before the Lord. And speaking to him. So. You remember that about Fireman Sam. When you ever. You ever see Fireman Sam. He only. He only gets contacted in emergencies.

But let's make sure. That we are not like that. With God. That we don't only come to him. In emergencies. But that we. Remember to come to him. At all times.

[17:57] So. Thank you very much. For your attention. We will sing again. Now. To God's praise. And we are going to sing. In Psalm 103.

Psalm 103. So the next two singings. Will be from. Psalm 103. So Psalm 103. And. We will sing.

Verse 1 to 5. Verse 1 to 5.

Not go down. Who thee with loving kindness doth. And tender. Mercy's crown. Who with abundance of good things. Doth satisfy thy mouth.

So that even as the eagle's age. Renewed. Is thy youth. So Psalm 103. Verse 1 to 5. To the praise of God. Help me.

[19:18] O thou my soul, blessed of the Lord, and all that in me is, each hand of His morning, will not give thy young bread.

O thou my soul, blessed of the Lord, and all that in me is, O thy thy liquidation, O thou my soul, blessed of the Lord, and all that in me is, O thou my soul, blessed of the Lord, and all that in me is,

We read from verse 14, so just after the narrative about the temptations of Christ. So Luke chapter 4 and in verse 14.

[22 : 46] And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all. And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and stood up for to read.

He hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, To set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable hear of the Lord.

And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?

And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country. But I tell you of a truth. Many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, When the heavens were shut up three years and six months, When great famine was throughout all the land.

And none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian. And all they in the synagogue, When they heard these things, were filled with wrath, And rose up and thrust him out of the city, And led him unto the brow of the hill, Whereon their city was built, That they might cast him down headlong.

But he, passing through the midst of them, Went his way, And came down to Capernaum,
A city of Galilee, And taught them on the Sabbath days. And they were astonished at his
doctrine. For his word was with power.

- [25 : 08] And in the synagogue there was a man, Which had a spirit of an unclean devil, And cried out with a loud voice, Saying, Let us alone, What have we to do with thee, Thou Jesus of Nazareth?
- Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee, Who thou art, The Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, Saying, Hold thy peace, And come out of him.
- And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, He came out of him, And heard him not. And they were all amazed, And spake among themselves, Saying, What a word is this?
- For with authority and power, He commanded the unclean spirits, And they come out. And the frame of him went out, Into every place of the country round about, And he arose out of the synagogue, And entered into Simon's house.
- And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever, And they besought him for her. And he stood over her, And rebuked the fever, And had left her. And immediately she arose, And ministered unto them.
- [26 : 13] Now, When the sun was setting, All that had any sick with diverse diseases, Brought them unto him, And he laid his hands on every one of them, And healed them.
- And the devils also came out of many, Crying out, And saying, Thou art Christ, The Son of God. And he rebuking them, Suffered them not to speak, For they knew that he was Christ.
- And when it was day, He departed, And went into a desert place. And the people sought him, And came unto him, And stayed him, That he should not depart from them.
- And he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also. For therefore am I sent. And he preached in the synagogues of Galilee.
- Amen. And we pray for God's blessing on that portion of his word that we read together there. But we're going to continue now in praising God through Psalm 103.
- [27 : 14] So we're going to return to Psalm 103. And we're going to sing from, This time from verse 11, Down to verse 17 there. For as the heaven in its height, The earth surmounteth far, So great to those that do in fear, Whose tender mercies are.
- And a psalm, A section that reminds us of the frailty, The fragility of human life, And the power of God, And the vastness of the mercy of God as well, There down in verse 17.
- So we'll sing from verse 11, Down to verse marked 17, To God's praise. For as the heaven in its height, In earth surmounted fire, So big to the Lord, That you will fear, To change the churches' heart, Thus far as each physician's home, Than a spiritual harmony, From the strength of Jesus Christ, all I have reached with you.
- Such pity as the Father, and to this children dear, I think he shows the Lord to such a worship in the King.
- For here in the first we are done, and he has raised the Lord.
- [29 : 44] We'll come, we'll get our life, the God of the earth in filthy rooms.
- For over is the winter's past, and Israel is gone.
- And of the place where once it was, it had no more been known.
- But unto them, our children dear, God's mercy ever ends.
- And to their children dear, their children dear, their children dear.
- [31 : 10] Well, with God's help, if you can turn to the last section there in Luke chapter 4. So from verse 38 down to the end of the chapter, really.
- I'll just read 38 again. So verse 38 in Luke chapter 4. And he arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house.

And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever. And they besought him for her. Now, nobody likes to be sick.

None of us like to be sick. Any kind of illness, any kind of disease. And that can be true for even small things, like little colds and bugs and flus and things like that.

And of course, more importantly and more seriously, when it comes to serious illness and serious disease, none of these things are good. Illness and disease in itself is a terrible thing.

[32 : 12] But the very presence of these things, so the very presence of illness, the very presence of disease, the very issues that we have with our health, they're evidence to us. Evidence to us that we live in a world that's broken.

Not that we need an awful lot of proof of that. It's clear to us. But these things are evidence. Further evidence to us of the fact that we live in a broken world and that we ourselves as well, that we are far from a perfect people.

The experience of it. When you actually experience illness, even in small things, when you experience illness and experience disease, it highlights your frailty. Highlights your fragility.

We sang that there in Psalm 103. The way in which we are a frail people. And that is true from the moment we're conceived. It's true. We're frail all through our lives.

But I think especially in times of sickness, especially in times of illness, these truths really hit home. Just how frail we are.

[33 : 14] How fragile we are. How fragile life itself is. And when you think about these things, we can connect all of these things. In a spiritual sense, we can connect all these things back to the fall of man.

The presence of disease. The way in which our bodies are susceptible to all of these things. All of that very much links back to the fall itself.

The fact that we are fallen people. And the fact that we live in a fallen world. The fall has had a huge effect on us in terms of our health. It's affected our genetics. Even the very DNA has been affected by the fall.

Broken genetics. It's affected the way in which things on the outside affect our bodies. Our bodies are degenerating.

That's what's happening. And again, an effect of the fall. Our bodies are degenerating. What we call aging. All of that is sometimes taking place. And all of that. All of that absolutely linked to the fall of man.

[34 : 18] Here in this passage here towards the end of Luke chapter 4, from verse 38 onwards there, this is Jesus beginning his healing ministry.

Now we know Jesus heals a lot of people. And that's something that you learn here in Sunday school. All these amazing healing stories of what Jesus has done. And how Jesus heals people.

And if you go right through all the Gospels, countless times which you see the Lord healing people. But this is really the healing ministry of Jesus beginning here.

And you see him in that whole section there. It's not just Peter's mother-in-law. You've got a whole load of people really being brought to Jesus. So he's encountering lots of illness and disease.

And he's providing lots of healing to people who are suffering here. And what I want to look at first of all today, probably the thing I've spent most of the time on is the beginning of the healing ministry of Jesus.

[35 : 14] So that's what I want to think of first of all. The beginning of the healing ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. And it begins here with Simon, Peter's mother-in-law.

So this is him having come out of the synagogue. He was in the synagogue where he took a demon out of someone previously. He's left that synagogue. And he goes here to the house of Simon as it's put here.

But we know that's Peter, obviously. We're more used to referring to him as Peter. So he comes to Peter's house. And Peter's mother-in-law is sick. And she's sick with a pretty severe fever as well.

And we read there, Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever. So not just an ordinary fever. It's an intense fever, a great fever.

And they besought him for her. In other words, they asked Jesus to heal this woman. So they obviously understand. I mean, bear in mind, this is early on in the public ministry of Christ.

[36 : 14] Early on in all his miracles. But they understand this much that Jesus is able to help her. And clearly when they're approaching Jesus here, that's what they're looking for.

They're looking for some kind of healing. And what does Jesus do there in verse 39? That's exactly what he does. He heals her. And it's interesting the language that's actually used. See there in verse 39?

He rebukes the illness. It's not just worded like a healing. It's worded like a rebuke. That the illness is rebuked.

And that is interesting that that language is used there. You're used to thinking of rebuking in terms of sin. But also even the demons.

The demon possessed people. The Lord would rebuke the demons. And here this illness has been spoken of with that same kind of language. He rebukes the illness. And that's a reminder to us that illness and disease, it is not something that is natural to us.

[37 : 12] It is not something that in one sense belongs in us. It's linked to our fallenness. It's linked to the fact that we are a fallen people.

That we live in a sinful world. And that's why you have this language of rebuking. It's like it doesn't belong there. Just like the Lord cast out demons. So here it's like he casts out illness.

He casts out this virus or whatever it is that was wrong with this woman here. And our understanding of health now reiterates that point to us.

We know that illness and disease and these things, they're linked to something being in us that ought not to be in us. Whether it's things like a virus, whether it's bacteria, whether it's infection, whether it's cells that are broken and multiplying.

Whatever it is, the issue is there's something in us that needs to be removed. There's something in us that needs to be taken away from us. And here Jesus, he's casting away.

[38 : 16] He's rebuking and casting away this sickness from Peter's mother-in-law here. And he's effectively showing that he has authority over sickness.

He's the one who has authority, not just over the powers of darkness and demons. We're going to touch on that in a moment. But he's got authority and power over illness itself, disease.

And he just casts this illness. He casts this disease away from this woman here. And that opens up a lot of questions. I think these are questions that a lot of us often have when it comes to this theme of sickness and illness and healing.

And that question is, if Jesus is able to heal people, why is it that he does not heal everyone? Because we know that this is a world where there's lots of people who are sick and we see terrible suffering going on.

We experience it maybe ourselves. We've experienced it in our families as well. So why is it, if he's able to do that, the Lord is able to do that, like he does it here, like he does it in many other places. If that's the case, why does he not do that to everyone?

[39 : 23] And that really gets to the fundamental question, really, of what it is that is fundamentally wrong with us. What's at the core of this issue?

What's the root cause? The root cause of what it is that's actually wrong with us. And as I mentioned just in the introduction there, the root cause of all this is our brokenness.

That's the issue. The root cause is our fallenness, is our sinfulness. Not that when we commit certain sins we get sick. I don't mean it like that at all.

That's absolutely not the case. But the very fact that we are fallen, the very fact that we are sinful people, that means that we get these things. We get all sorts of illnesses, all sorts of diseases.

That's the very reason that we get sick. Now, by healing diseases and illnesses, that in itself, that doesn't actually resolve the fundamental problem that we have.

[40 : 27] For example, if the Lord came today and the Lord, if you were unwell, if you were sick, and if the Lord would heal you of your disease and heal you of whatever sickness, serious or not, the Lord would come and heal you.

That wouldn't solve the fundamental problem that you have. Even if somebody died and the Lord brought them back to life again, that in itself still doesn't actually resolve the foundational issue that we actually have.

Because if we're healed, then that's just going to mean that we're eventually going to get sick again at another time. If we're raised from the dead, it just means that eventually we're going to die again later. I mean, you think of Simon Peter's mother-in-law here.

She's healed here, obviously. Now, presumably some point later on, she got sick again and she would have died. This hasn't fixed her foundational problem or fundamental problem. Same with Lazarus. Lazarus.

Remember, Lazarus brought back to life again. And that was a tremendous display of the power of God in that. But then what happened to Lazarus after that? Was that all his problems over with?

[41 : 29] No. Eventually he would have possibly got sick again and he certainly would have died. He would have reached that point of death again. So what we need is more than just a physical healing.

What we need is more than the Lord to address these physical problems. What we need is a spiritual healing. We need a salvation that actually gets to the very root cause of the issue that we have.

And that issue is our fallenness. And that's exactly why Christ has come. That's why he has come. To get to that root cause of the problem. To illustrate that, think of a house that's got a leaking roof.

And that leaking roof is causing all sorts of dampness. And you get all that black mold, that horrible black mold that people get in their houses. And you look at it and you think, right, I need to deal with that.

And one way of dealing with it is, right, I wipe it all away. And properly wipe it away with all the right chemicals and things like that. Get rid of it. Then paint over the wall. And then you think to yourself, well, that's it sorted.

[42 : 37] And in a sense, you're right. It's sorted for now. It might last a wee while. It might even last a winter. But then by the time the next winter comes around, that black mold will be back again.

And the reason it will be back is because the fundamental problem has not been resolved. The leak in the roof. You can keep painting and keep fixing the mold. That's not going to solve the problem. The fundamental problem is actually that leak that's in the roof.

And spiritually speaking, far too many of us are doing that sort of thing without our lives. We're focusing on the symptoms of our fallenness.

I'm making that the focus of our attention. The symptoms of our fallenness. Rather than actually addressing the root cause itself, which is our sin. That's the issue.

Now, I say all that, and I don't want to be misheard there. Don't get me wrong. Our health is important. And I'm not suggesting that we shouldn't think about our physical well-being.

[43 : 37] Absolutely, we should. And we should absolutely think about our physical well-being. Life is a gift. It's a gift that the Lord has given us. And therefore, we should obviously do everything that we can, within reason, to look after our physical well-being.

But if that is our sole focus, if that is all our focus, and we're not thinking about the eternal well-being of our souls, then there's something wrong there. There's an interesting new trend, really, of people spending a lot of attention on preventative health issues nowadays.

It's not just treating issues that arise, but preventing getting issues in the first place. And there's a lot of focus on certain diets that people have and things that they'll eat to help them physically.

Exercising all these sort of things are gaining a lot of traction and attention now as well. And all of that is good. I think all of that is good to do what you can to look after yourself. But if all the attention is going on that, and you're not actually addressing the eternal well-being of your soul, then you can see how the whole thing is just back to front.

We're addressing the symptoms, while at the same time not actually getting to the core of the issue. And all that is to say that physical healing, that physical healing, which is very often what people are looking for, that physical healing, that is not our primary need.

[45 : 02] Our primary need is that cleansing from sin, that washing from sin, that forgiveness, that forgiveness that leads to eternal life, and that forgiveness that the Lord alone can provide.

So when you're asking this question here, why did Jesus physically heal people? Why did he do this? Well, he did this to show, to show his power and authority over these things.

The physical healing is a physical sign of something that he can do spiritually. So it's like physically he's showing through these healings of a far greater healing that he provides.

There's this spiritual healing, this healing of the soul itself. So when you get back to that first question that I asked of why doesn't Jesus heal everyone who is sick? Well, the answer is, in a way, he does.

He offers healing to everyone who will ask for it, but not that necessarily that physical healing. He can give that, by the way, I'm not suggesting he can't give that.

[46 : 00] He can give that physical healing. But that's not what he promises. What he promises is, when we come to him seeking healing, he'll give it the spiritual healing. Not necessarily the healing of your physical ailment or disease, but he absolutely promises, if you come to him asking that he will bring that healing of soul, grant you that forgiveness, grant you that salvation.

To address the core issue, the core problem, and by doing so, give you eternal life and glory. And that's the wonder of the good news of the gospel. If the good news of the gospel was just that there's a man going round who can heal you now and again from your physical disease, that's not good news.

I mean, it's nice to get healed, don't get me wrong, but that's not going to give you lasting hope. Like I say, it's just delaying the inevitable. Trouble will be round the corner at some point. That's not the good news of the gospel, that you get a wee bit of healing now and again.

The good news of the gospel is that the Lord offers more than a physical healing, a spiritual healing, a healing on the inside, a cleansing, a washing of sin itself, and that promise of eternal life and glory.

A place where we'll get a new body. There'll be no disease, no sickness, no suffering. All these things which we struggle with here in this life as a result of sin, all of that taken away. And all of that is promised to all those who come and put their faith and trust in Christ.

[47 : 23] And the healing that you have here of Peter's mother-in-law, that is a physical picture of the spiritual reality of what it is that the Lord can actually do for us.

It's always saying, I have come not just to bring healing to the physical body. I have come to bring healing to the soul. And that's exactly what you need today. My hope and prayer is that that be true of all of us in here.

We might not all be physically in a good place. And in fact, none of us are. Let's be honest. None of us are in a physically perfect place. But spiritually, if we come and we put our faith and trust in Christ, we can get a healing that is far better.

Far better than any physical healing you can receive in this life. That healing of the soul itself. And notice as well just how Peter's mother-in-law responds. See in verse 39 there.

We read there. And he stood over her and rebuked the fever and had left her. And immediately what happened? We read there. Immediately she arose and ministered unto them.

[48 : 32] So you see there it's a healing that leads to service. Ministering. She served. She served. So she was healed. And what does she do? She gets up and she serves.

And spiritually, that ought to be true of all of the Lord's people. When the Lord works in your life. When the Lord heals you. When the Lord brings you to that place of coming and putting your faith in him.

When you experience saving faith in the Lord. The cleansing of your sin. Your instinct ought to be to get up and to serve the Lord. What can I do for the Lord?

For all the gracious benefits that he's bestowed upon me. That ought to be a reaction. To come and to offer ourselves. That is why we are saved. We are saved in order to serve.

To serve. That's the strange thing about the freedom that we have in Christ. You don't usually think of freedom and service as being linked together.

[49 : 31] It's usually the opposite. Service is the opposite of being free. And being free is the opposite of having to serve. But in the gospel, those two things are together.

We receive a freedom that leads to us serving. Serving the Lord. And not serving because of compulsion. Or because we have to. But serving because we want to. Serving because it is our desire to serve the Lord.

Or at least it ought to be our desire to serve the Lord. All of us different. You know, different gifts and personalities. And we all work in different ways. But we're called on to serve.

And like I say, we can all do that. Sometimes we just think of serving as one particular thing. Like an elder or a deacon or a minister. You know, serving is a wide thing. And as the Lord's people, when we come to faith, that's what we're called to serve us.

That's exactly what you see here in this woman. She's healed at serving. Ministering straight away. So faith should always lead to serving. And if we say we have faith, and then there's no desire to serve the Lord in worship by coming.

[50 : 37] Even here, we're serving the Lord by coming before the Lord in worship. But if we have no desire to come before the Lord in worship. No desire to serve the Lord in our lives. Then there's something wrong.

There's something wrong. Through faith ought to lead to this response of service. Lord, what can I do? How can I serve?

So that's the first and main point. The next two are going to be much, much shorter, I promise. So that's the beginning of Christ's ministry of healing.

Secondly, I just want to touch on this one. Jesus silencing the demons here. So Jesus silencing the demons. So you see that, see in verse 41 there.

You see the devils also came out of many crying out and saying, Thou art Christ, the Son of God. And he rebuking them, suffered them not to speak.

[51 : 33] For they knew that he was Christ. So he's silencing them here, the demons. Now, why is that?

It's an interesting little detail that you're given there. Why is it that Jesus is trying to keep his identity under wraps here? Why is it that he's not wanting the demons to say who he is?

I mean, in one sense, you might think, wait a second, the demons is doing his job for him. The demons are telling everybody that he's the Christ and telling everybody the truth. Just let them do that.

But he doesn't. He silences them. Why is that? Why is there that silencing effect? And the simple answer really is that the Lord is preventing misunderstanding.

The Lord is seeking to prevent people from misinterpreting who he is and what it is that he's actually come to do. Because, see, the thing is, in this gospel age here, in the early church here, the people, they were very much thinking about the Messiah.

[52 : 42] They were wanting the Messiah, expecting the Messiah. And they had their own views as to who the Messiah was, the kind of Messiah that the Messiah was going to be. And in the eyes of many, that was a military figure, like a new King David, like someone strong physically.

A military leader, an earthly version of a new King David, a worldly kind of militaristic kind of commander. That's really what it was that they were looking for.

And for that reason, Jesus, through his public ministry, what he's doing is, he's bit by bit, slowly revealing the reality of who he was.

And he's bit by bit, slowly revealing the nature of the true nature of the kingdom of God. He has to undo their misunderstanding before he, as it were, gives them a true understanding.

And sometimes the Lord does that with us as well. Even in our island culture, we think we've got a very good understanding of the gospel. But very often, it can be a misunderstanding of the gospel. And the Lord has to undo that first.

[53 : 45] He undoes what we think in our own minds before then revealing the true nature of the gospel of our Lord and Savior. And when he's doing that here throughout his public ministry, it's a gradual thing.

To avoid people misunderstanding, he doesn't explain everything immediately. There's a gradual nature to how he's revealing who it is that he is and what it is that he's about.

And when you realize that, you can understand then why the demons, why the forces of darkness want to just blurt it all out immediately. They want to show misunderstanding.

They want people to be confused. They want people to misunderstand what it is that Jesus is about. Who the Messiah is and all of these things.

Because that is one of the tactics of the enemy. The enemy wants us to misunderstand. The enemy loves to sow misunderstanding in the minds of people.

[54 : 41] If he can get people to misunderstand the gospel, the true nature of the gospel, then he wins. And so that's exactly what the enemy is trying to do.

And this is a massive, massive problem today. Huge problem today. And I think a problem that we're more exposed to now because of the nature of the world, the nature in which we hear and see so many views now through the media and the internet and all these things.

We're exposed to so much more. And we see, when you look at the world around us, we see the vastness of the misunderstanding of how people actually view Christ. And it is massive, the breadth of the misunderstanding.

And for some people, their main concern is, like we were talking about health earlier on. So for some people, their main concern is health. And to them, they see Jesus nearly as someone, like I was saying earlier on in the children's address, they see Jesus as someone they go to if something's wrong, like a physical health issue.

Like if it's some kind of issue, I need to go to Jesus. And Jesus can give me the healing. And then once he gives me the healing, I can go on in my life and I don't really care about Jesus after that. That's how some people view Christ. Other people, their main concern maybe is money and finance and wealth and things like that.

[56 : 01] And they go to Jesus as the one who's going to provide for them materially. And there's a lot of this in different parts of the world. The prosperity gospel, it's called.

And people, they worship the Lord, thinking that if they worship the Lord, Jesus will make them rich. Literally, if they have faith in Jesus, that the Lord will make them rich. And that's their main concern, just about money and getting finances.

For other people, it can be just success in general. It can be things like sporting success. Again, you're seeing a lot of this just now as well.

People getting ministers in to work with football teams and other sports teams. And the ministers are praying for them to win and praying for the players to do well. You're listening and watching these things thinking, what on earth is going on?

That is utter blasphemy. They're treating Jesus like some kind of a lucky charm. A complete misunderstanding of what it is that the Lord is about.

[57 : 01] And there's lots of other examples of that. I'm sure you've seen many examples of that as well, of people just completely misunderstanding what it is that the Lord is actually about.

And you can see, when you see all that misunderstanding around you, you can see the enemy's involved in that. A hundred percent the enemy's involved in that. The enemy wants people to misunderstand what Christ is about.

The enemy wants people to think that he's just about bringing physical health or making you rich or giving you success or helping your football team to win a certain match. That's what the enemy wants people to think.

But the reality is that none of these things is why the Lord has come. He has come to rescue us from our primary issue. The issue of our disease of sin to give us new life.

So be careful. Be careful that you don't fall into misunderstanding. Understanding who Christ is and what Christ is about. And I highlight that fact because of the way in which the world works now.

[57 : 58] The way in which we're exposed to so much more now than perhaps we were in generations gone by. So take care. And how do you make sure that you've got a right understanding of what Christ is about?

How do you make sure that you don't fall into the trap of some of those examples that I just gave there? Well, the answer, I think, is very simple. You take the information from the word of God.

You don't go to the world and the wisdom of the world to hear what it is that Christ is about. Certainly don't go to the internet or social media to find out what Christ is about. You turn to his word. You turn to the word of God and here he tells us.

Why he's come. Tells us what it is that he's about. So when he's here silencing the demons, he's doing that to stop the enemy, to stop the powers of darkness from sowing confusion, from sowing misunderstanding in terms of the mission of the Lord.

So you see Jesus there. He begins his healing ministry. You see him as well silencing the demons, trying to stop his misunderstanding of the gospel.

[59 : 06] And he's doing it en masse as well. It's not just one or two. It's just a lot of people coming, being healed. A lot of people coming, experiencing demon possession and a demon being cast out of them.

And now, it's at the end of the passage there in verse 42. You notice after all of that, after that hard work, the Lord then takes himself to a quiet place.

And we read there in verse 42. And this is the last thing I want to touch on today. When it was day, he departed and went into a desert place.

He went into a desert place. Now, as I mentioned there, that has been a very busy time for Jesus. A busy time of him. A busy time of casting out demons.

A busy time of teaching and all these things. And you have to remember that Jesus is human. He's 100% God, 100% man.

[60 : 07] When he comes into this world, the incarnation, he becomes man. So, there's that aspect of him that is 100% human. And that means that he got tired.

He got drained. We know what that's like. Getting tired, getting drained. And this ministry that he's been engaged in here, it's burdensome. It's tiring. It's physically so. It's tiring.

It's tiring emotionally. Tiring spiritually. Tiring physically as well. And he needs that rest. There are times in the Lord he just needs to come aside. He needs to get some rest.

Time alone. And it's not just time alone. It's specifically time with his father. It doesn't mention it specifically there in this passage in Luke. But we know from the other gospel accounts that when he came aside.

It wasn't just aside for a bit of feet up and rest there in isolation. No, it was time in prayer. Time with the father. Away from other people.

[61 : 05] But time with his father. And if our Lord needs that. If Christ himself needs that. How much more we need that.

And I think that is so important for us to remember. The need for rest. Spiritual rest. I don't just mean putting our feet up. Spiritual rest involves resting.

Yes, but also coming before the Lord. Rest is absolutely an essential part of our lives as the Lord's people. Yes, we want to serve. I mentioned earlier on Peter's mother-in-law.

She's healed and she wants to serve. And that's absolutely we should be like that. We should want to serve. We should want to act. We should want to do things for the Lord. And be practically engaged in the work of the kingdom.

Be active in that. But at the same time, we have to know when to be able to rest. The Lord's day is of course a perfect provision of that. A day where we're enabled to rest.

[62 : 04] But we need that rest. We need to come aside. It's quiet time. Quiet time. Not just with ourselves. That quiet time with our father in heaven.

Quiet time with the Lord himself. That is so important. And that's not always easy to get that. In fact, very rarely is it easy to get that. Even in Christ's own example here.

Even he's struggling to get that. He's got these crowds of people following him. It's hard. We can't imagine the crowds of people following us. But you can imagine it being hard for him to get time alone. You know when all these people are constantly vying for his attention.

It was an effort for him even to get alone. To get somewhere where he was isolated in some way. So that he was able to speak to his father. Communicate with his father. And that can be hard for us as well.

Not because we've got crowds of people following us. But it can be hard for us because of some of the pressures that we have in our day. You know, the incessant nature of the way in which technology now is always on top of us.

[63 : 04] It's hard just to switch off from the world. But we have to be able to do that. We have to learn. And put effort into it. It's not something that just naturally happens.

You have to put effort into taking that time to come apart. To come away. And to spend some time. Not only in rest. But to spend some time with the Lord.

In fellowship with the Lord. Rest. Recover. Spiritually speaking. And then we press on with the work. That's always the pattern.

You come aside. You rest. Your body. Your soul as well. In fellowship with the Lord. But then you do so. Not just to be a monk. And to be away isolated forever. That's not the call from the Lord at all.

It's rest. Then get back to the work of the Lord. And that's exactly what you see Jesus doing here. See after the period of isolation and prayer. Then he says there. I need to go now. I need to preach.

[64 : 04] I need to go and share the good news of the kingdom of God in other places. And the mission goes on. So he rests. He recovers. And then he labors for the Lord. And that is our example. It's a very simple example and pattern.

But that is our pattern. To learn that. The importance of the activity for the Lord. And the resting in the Lord. Those two things. Side by side.

Coming together. Both important. Both hugely important. And this mission that he's speaking about there. We're part of that today. And my prayer is.

That we would learn from the pattern that the Lord has given us here. That we would know that healing. That healing inside. That healing by coming and putting our faith and trust in Christ.

Primarily that we would experience that. And then that we would respond like Peter's mother-in-law. That we would get up and not just sit on our faith as it were. But to stand up and to act for the Lord.

[65 : 03] To serve the Lord. And to say to the Lord. Lord use me. Use me. You've saved me. You've cleansed me from my sin. Now use me. Help me to serve.

In whatever way that you want me to serve. But also remembering that importance of rest. That importance of coming aside. That importance of being with the Father. Being strengthened through fellowship with the Father.

And then being enabled to carry on. And to engage in the mission. The wonderful mission. Of the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And my prayer is that the Lord will work in the hearts of every single one of us here.


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For John as present shall in fear not to earth's boast end.

We'll stand for the benediction. Now may the grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, the fellowship and communion of the Holy Spirit continue with you all now and forevermore. Amen.