

C - Jesus, the Great Physician

1. The Great Physician:

Jesus referred to himself as physician twice:

Luke 4:23: And He said to them, “No doubt you will quote this proverb to Me, ‘Physician, heal yourself!’”

Matt. 9:12-13: But when He heard this, He said, “It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what this means, I desire compassion, and not sacrifice, for I did not come to call the righteous but sinners.”

The word used for physician in Greek was *iatros*, derived from *iaomai*, which refers to spiritual as well as physical healing (similar to the concept of *shalom* or *rapha*). Jesus was undoubtedly using the word “physician” to refer both to the spiritual and physical aspects of healing that He commanded.

2. Jesus’ ministry:

A. *What did His ministry entail?*

Matt. 4:23: And Jesus was going about in Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people.

Jesus’ ministry was three-fold: He preached the gospel, the news that the kingdom of God was at hand, that He was the Messiah. He taught from the Torah, usually in the synagogues, going to the learned and leading them through scriptures to reveal God’s plan. And He healed every sort of disease.

B. *What was the ultimate purpose of His ministry?*

Matt. 8:16-17: And when evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill in order that what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, “He Himself took up our infirmities, and carried our diseases.” (*Isaiah 53:4-6*).

Jesus healed people during His earthly ministry, but it wasn’t until the cross that He actually took on our diseases as well as our sins. Jesus died for our *shalom*, not just our sins. Everything that went awry at the fall of man, both physical and spiritual, was restored at the cross. So all healing that occurs is a manifestation of God’s common grace possible only through the cross. Not only does it show His compassion, but physical illness and healing are an image or model of spiritual sin and redemption.

3. Specific instances of healing in Matthew 9:

A. *Matt. 9:1-8:* A paralytic was healed: This story parallels Mark 2:1-12 and Luke 5:17-26, in which they more clearly paint the picture that Jesus was in a home teaching to a crowd, when the paralytic’s friends brought him and lowered him on a pallet through the roof since they could not get in through the door. They were seeking his physical healing, but Jesus first forgave the man of his sins. He didn’t physically heal the man until He noticed the scribes murmuring that He was blaspheming by forgiving the paralytic. So Jesus healed the man, “in order that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins” (vs. 6).

B. *Matt. 9: 18-19, 23-26:* Jairus’ daughter was raised from the dead: Jairus, a synagogue official, came in faith to Jesus and asked Him to resurrect his daughter, certain that Jesus could perform this miracle if He wanted to. The rest of the household didn’t have faith, laughing at Him when He told them she was just asleep. Jesus then raised

her from the dead. Mark 5 showed His further concern for her when He asked someone to give her something to eat.

C. Matt. 9:20-22: Woman with the hemorrhage: This woman, who had hemorrhaged for 12 years, and according to Mark 5:26, “had endured much at the hands of many physicians, and had spent all that she had and was not helped at all, but rather had grown worse,” heard of Jesus and had faith that she would be healed even if she just touched his garment. As she touched it, she was healed, and Jesus remarked that her faith had made her well (sozo). In Mark 5:34, Jesus adds, “go in peace, and be healed (hugies) of your affliction. According to Mark, her hemorrhage stopped immediately, so her faith healed her (sozo), but also saved her, her physical healing being an outward sign of her spiritual healing. Then Jesus told her to go and be healed, or be made whole, healthy, or in good health. He was referring to an ongoing process of holistic health that started with faith.

D. Matt. 9:27-31: Jesus healed two blind men: Two blind men asked Jesus to have mercy on them, knowing who He was, as evidenced by their calling Him Son of David. He asked them if they believed that He was able to heal them, and when they agreed, He healed them, according to their faith.

E. Matt. 9:35-36: And Jesus was going about all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness And seeing the multitudes, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd.

F. Matt. 14:14-21: Feeding of the 5000. “And when He went ashore, He saw a great multitude, and felt compassion for them, and healed their sick.” He then proceeded to feed the 5000.

G. John 9: Healing the man born blind: Jesus and his disciples passed a man born blind. They asked if his blindness was caused by his own sin, or that of his parents. Jesus said that neither was true, but “that the works of God might be displayed in him.” He then proceeded to spit on the ground, making some clay, applied it to the man’s eyes, and told him to wash in the pool of Siloam. The man returned having been healed. He then began to give testimony to Jesus’ healing to the crowds and then to the Pharisees. Finally, he was spiritually healed and became a Christian in vs. 38.

4. Based on these verses, what can we learn about Jesus’ healing ministry?

A. Jesus’ healing ministry was integrally related to his spiritual ministry. The paralytic, the woman with the hemorrhage, and the man born blind all exhibited some degree of spiritual healing as well as physical healing.

B. Jesus used physical healing to exhibit His spiritual authority. He spiritually healed the paralytic first and then physically healed him to prove His power in the spiritual realm.

C. Jesus physically healed in order to glorify God. He healed the man who was born blind as a testimony to God’s power, and He used it to draw the man unto Himself and to give testimony of God’s power to the crowds as well as the Pharisees

D. Jesus healed out of compassion. Considering the hunger of Jairus’ daughter shows Jesus’ compassionate care for all of our needs. The feeding of the 5000 shows His desire to heal and feed the multitudes solely because of compassion.

E. Faith was an integral part of healing. In most cases, the person with the disease exhibited the faith. In one case, the faith was that of the father, and in one case the faith included that of two friends who brought the paralytic to Jesus. We can extrapolate from these verses that we must exhibit faith in God’s healing power to be healed.

F. Healing was not necessarily a one-time event, but a process. Jesus proclaimed that He had healed the woman with the hemorrhage. The word used connotes spiritual as well as physical healing. Her physical healing was an outward sign of the work He had done in her heart. Then He told her to go in peace and be healed of her affliction. He had begun the work in her heart, but there was much work to be done. Furthermore, a great social healing needed to still occur because the woman would have been ostracized for 12 years for being ritually unclean. This example reminds us of the holistic nature of Jesus' ministry.

5. How can we apply these lessons to our lives and our practices?

A. We must remember that physical healing is not an end unto itself. Regardless of how well we do our jobs, patients will eventually die. God may use us to exhibit some of His common grace, but its purpose is to draw them closer to Him, allowing for spiritual healing. We should regard physical healing as a way to give glory to God and to exhibit that He has power to heal spiritually as well.

B. God calls us to have compassion for our patients. This type of love can only occur through His work in us, and His love manifested through us. We are just too selfish on our own. But He desires to show compassion for the suffering by working through us. We are His hands and feet. Therefore, just as Jesus showed compassion for the sick, God calls us to do the same through His strength.

C. We must remember that shalom-type healing is a process. People just don't become whole overnight. God slowly works to break them and rebuild them when they are ready. We must realize this in our own lives as well as remembering that our ministry to our patients is a slow process, and their needs become different as they grow in the Lord.

D. We must glorify God when He uses us to heal. Never forget our commission, to glorify God in whatever we do (1 Cor. 10:31). As Jesus glorified God through healing, so should we. We must never take the credit. Whether God uses an antibiotic that we prescribed or a miracle to heal someone, He is still the healer, not us. Remember that.