



# HOW TO MINISTER GOD'S HEALING POWER

By Gerald Rowlands

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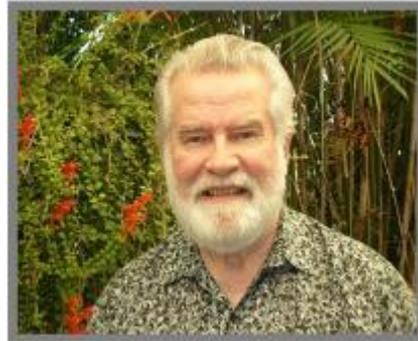
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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Reverend Gerald Rowlands of Queensland, Australia, has been a Minister of the Gospel for more than fifty years. During this time he has served in various roles such as a Pastor, Evangelist, Missionary, Christian Radio Teacher, Bible College Lecturer and Principal.



Gerald and his wife Elizabeth have traveled to some seventy nations of the world having lived for various periods of time in Africa, Asia and Israel.

Gerald is the founder and president of Church Planting International (CPI) and these notes form part of the CPI Training Course for prospective church planters. The CPI Course is being used effectively in some 23 nations around the world.

Gerald's CPI vision for training potential leaders in evangelism, church planting and pastoral ministry was birthed whilst Gerald and his wife were missionaries in Harare, Zimbabwe in 1980. During his first twelve months in Africa in 1975, Gerald had conducted numerous large crusades with many "conversions" recorded and he observed that it was relatively easy to draw a crowd and to see hundreds of people "make decisions" for Christ. The real challenge came after the crusade when those working with Gerald would seek to integrate the "converts" into the Body of Christ and walk in a truly Christian lifestyle. He had begun to realise how crucial it was to train local pastors in the principles of church growth and development. As a result, Gerald began to organise Pastors' Seminars in various parts of Africa to provide teaching and training. In 1979 when God led him to start a Bible College in what was then Rhodesia. At that time, Gerald was able to obtain an old guest house/motel and commenced a one year training course, the for-runner of the CPI Course.

During later visits to Zimbabwe, whilst conducting Church Growth seminars with national pastors, Gerald was able to introduce the CPI training program to many hundreds of ministers. As an ongoing result, the program has been adopted by some 27 denominations in Zimbabwe. All of these denominations and hundreds of graduates of Gerald's CPI Courses participated in a national decade long project called TARGET 2,000. Even now, despite many adverse circumstances within the nation, hundreds of new churches are started every year.

In 1992 Gerald received what he terms a "Macedonian Call" from Asia to place the CPI Course into some 30 new Bible Colleges in several parts of S.E. Asia. Gerald was based in Singapore at that time, and the colleges were in Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines. It took a few months to accomplish the necessary editing and printing. After this he began to organise pastor's conferences at which his strategy could be shared and the materials made available to all pastors that desired them. Zimbabwe became a missions' focussed nation, sending church planters into several surrounding nations. There are also many churches using the CPI Course in Lesotho, Botswana, Zambia, Swaziland, South Africa, Malawi, Nigeria and Namibia.

Gerald's CPI Course has also been adopted in colleges in India, China, Israel, and in many parts of the former USSR including the Ukraine, Kazakstan and Siberia and Russia itself.

In 2006, Gerald was awarded the Order of Australia Medal (OAM) by the Australian government for services rendered in the emerging world and today Gerald still ministers via a regular radio program focusing on God's plan for Israel and the Church in the end times.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The ministry of healing is a key aspect of the Gospel of the Kingdom. The great truth that God is a healing God runs like a scarlet thread of promise all through the Bible. Both Old and New Testaments give witness to God's provision for the healing of humanity.

A large portion of Christ's earthly ministry was concerned directly with ministering physical healing to the sick and afflicted. The history of the Early Church is filled with accounts of great healings and miracles, done in the Name of Jesus. It was only in the apostasy of the Middle Ages that the great healing stream became a tiny trickle.

The Reformation in the Church, about 500 years ago, began to restore lost truth. One of the great truths that the Spirit restored was that of Divine healing. All over the world Christians are discovering the reality of God's healing power.

This message does not claim to be a comprehensive treatment of this important subject. It is merely a sincere effort to help those who have not as yet witnessed God's healing power in their ministry. As you read, may the Holy Spirit increase your understanding and faith to receive God's healing power in behalf of suffering humanity. If the inspiration and instruction you receive results in the healing of even one person, it will have been worthwhile. Rise up! Claim your inheritance! Let God release His supernatural power through you to heal others.

## Chapter 1

### WHERE DID SICKNESS ORIGINATE?

In order to develop the kind of faith that can minister the healing power of God it is first necessary to understand the origin of sickness and the reasons why God is against it. We must go back to the origins of the human race, to the creation of man to understand something of what transpired there. We can then begin to understand God's attitude towards sickness and of His desire to make men whole, freed from the results of the Fall.

### ADAM WAS CREATED SPIRITUALLY PERFECT.

Adam and Eve were created sinless, guiltless and perfect in the image and likeness of God. (**Gen 1:26**) They had a strong relationship with God and enjoyed untainted fellowship with Him. They were innocent, free from all sense of moral wrong. They enjoyed inner peace and harmony and they knew no fear. They were not plagued by inhibitions or complexes, nor were they self-conscious in any harmful or destructive sense. They were naked, but had no embarrassment, guilt or shame about it (**Gen 2:25**). All these factors contributed to their condition of perfect health.

Fresh from the hand of their Creator, they were perfect beings - spiritually, physically, mentally and emotionally. They were a splendid product of God's creative genius, created in His own image and likeness. (**Gen 1:26**).

### ADAM WAS CREATED MENTALLY AND PSYCHOLOGICALLY PERFECT

Fashioned in the image and likeness of God, Adam inherited from Him a remarkable and brilliant mind and intellect. Part of its remarkable capabilities was the ability to think in positive patterns that were wholly conducive to good health. In acknowledgement of Adam's amazing intellectual powers God delegated to Adam the task of naming all the animals of the creation (**Gen 2:19,20**). He also gave him the task of governing and exercising dominion over the earth and every living creature. The general impression conveyed is that Adam was psychologically competent to a degree that made it possible for he and God to enjoy a harmonious and mutually enjoyable relationship and fellowship together. Adam had been created "*a little lower than God Himself*" in a manner that allowed them to experience a considerable degree of compatibility. (**Psalms 8:5**)

### ADAM WAS CREATED EMOTIONALLY PERFECT.

I believe that in his original condition Adam experienced only positive emotions. He experienced only what was "good," —emotions such as love, peace and joy. It was only after his tragic disobedience that he began to experience the negative range of emotions such as fear, anxiety and panic. Powerful negative emotions that were just as detrimental and harmful as the positive ones were creative and sustaining. God had warned him of the danger of eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good **and of evil**. If Adam had not disobeyed God, he and his descendants would only ever have experienced good, but now, because of the Fall, mankind knows all the tragedy that negative emotion introduces as well as the wonderful realm of positive and enjoyable emotions.

## **ADAM WAS CREATED PHYSICALLY PERFECT**

God personally designed and created every detail of Adam's body...*"God looked upon His whole creation and declared that everything was very good"* (**Gen 1:31**). The human physique and anatomy is still the most remarkable machine that has ever been created. With all the recent advances in modern science and the amazing things that man has made, nothing begins to compare with the wondrous intricacy of the human being. King David spoke for all of us when he said that man was *"fearfully and wonderfully made"* (**Psa 139:14**). When everything is functioning properly as God intended, we know how wonderfully we have been made. However, when things go wrong we also discover how fearfully we are made.

## **PERFECTION OF THE TOTAL MAN**

God has always been committed to the total man. He created us perfect and His saving power in Jesus Christ has vital importance for the total man. The healing power of God is still vitally rooted in God's concern for the total man.

## **WHAT WENT WRONG?**

There was a moment in history when man stood on the edge of tragedy. An act of disobedience plunged the human race into a long, dark fall from the presence of God.

The original couple had access to every tree, herb and fruit in the garden. The only exception was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God said, *"Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"* (**Gen 2:16,17**).

God warned Adam and Eve that if they ever disobeyed Him, they would die spiritually. As a direct result of that spiritual death, they would ultimately die physically as well. God literally said, *"In dying thou shalt die."* Because they died spiritually, the law of death would become active within them and they would eventually die physically. Physical death was the direct result of the spiritual transgression that caused Adam and Eve to be driven from the presence of the Lord. Because they were cut off from the presence of God who was their life source, the law of sin and death began to operate within them. A process of deterioration began. This would never have come upon mankind had he remained in right relationship with God. The process of deterioration is called sickness and aging. It has afflicted man ever since the tragedy of Eden.

This single act of disobedience, introduced into the world every negative thing that curses mankind today, spiritually, psychologically and physically.

It is the source of :-

- **DIS-EASE**
- **DIS-ORDER**
- **DIS-ABILITY**
- **DIS-TRESS**
- **DIS-COMFORT**
- **DIS-ASTER**
- **DIS-CORD**
- **DIS-COURAGEMENT**
- **DIS-HARMONY**
- **DIS-INTEGRATION**

All of these negative attitudes and emotions, which are harmful to good health, stem from disobedience. They are destroyers of health. The word disease has the prefix "dis," which means "a lack of." Therefore disease is a lack of ease. A lack of being completely at peace, with God and with oneself. Disease originated through disobedience and opened the door to all the other dis-factors.

### **THE SPIRITUAL TRAGEDY OF THE FALL**

As an immediate and direct result of their disobedience Adam and Eve forfeited their glorious relationship with God and all the attendant benefits that went with that relationship. They lost their innocence and inherited guilt and condemnation. They were driven from the Divine Presence for the rest of their days. Man also lost his dominion. This true dominion depended upon his being in the image and likeness of God and on being in right relationship with God. Man was God's representative in the Creation. Ever since, man has been striving to reassert his dominion over the Creation. All Adam's descendants were to have inherited God's likeness. Instead they inherited the likeness of Adam's fallen humanity (**Gen 5:3**).

### **THE MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL TRAGEDY OF THE FALL**

Through disobedience man lost his mental and psychological perfection. Today he still strives by every possible means to regain the knowledge that will give him mastery, but truth depends upon right relationship with God, for God is the author of truth. Man lost his psychological freedom, his God-given ability to think correctly and through this he sustained the loss of his emotional wholeness too.

Adam sold himself to the devil who became the god of this world (**2 Cor 4:4**). Adam mortgaged all his God-given rights and privileges. From that time mankind has been the prey of the devil and his demonic host. Since the Fall mankind has never been free from sorrow, suffering and hardship (**Gen 3:15-19**).

### **THE PHYSICAL TRAGEDY OF THE FALL**

*"And unto Adam, he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return" (**Gen 3:17-19**).*

Mankind inherited an earth that was cursed, from which he would have to struggle by the sweat of his brow to gain a living. Thorns and briars would be prolific, adding to men's labours. He was driven from God's presence and from the tree of life. He was death doomed: *"unto dust thou shalt return."*

As for Eve, she also inherited a particular woe that she would pass on to women of all generations. This included sorrow, pain and travail in child bearing, and subjection to the rule of her husband. (**Gen 3:16**)

Man lost his health and inherited sickness. The present scourge of sickness that afflicts all humanity has its origin in the tragedy enacted in Eden. Sin entered the world then. With sin came sickness. Death is the ultimate result of unrestrained sickness. If Adam had not sinned, mankind would never have known suffering and disease. He chose to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Sickness is part of that evil. So all sickness comes indirectly from Satan. God is not the author of sickness. In Chapter Two we will discuss some of the numerous causes of sickness.

## Chapter 2

### HOW PEOPLE BECOME SICK

#### SOME OF THE CAUSES OF SICKNESS AND DISEASE

Let me summarise some of the causes of sickness and disease

##### 1. Sickness entered the world when Adam fell.

Sickness is part of the curse that came upon mankind as a direct result of disobedience. Therefore, directly or indirectly, sin is the root cause of all sickness. It is part of the "*wages of sin*" (**Rom 6:23**).

Dis-ease suggests lack of ease, lack of peace. This was the state of Adam's mind and emotions after his transgression. The weight of conviction, guilt, condemnation and shame that he inherited left him open and vulnerable to sickness.

We have good reason to believe that until the Fall, there was no infectious organisms, bacteria or germs in the world. At the conclusion of His creative work, God saw that "*everything was very good.*" He could not have said this if there were already present germs, cancer cells, and a whole host of disease-carrying bacteria. These dreadful destroyers came with the curse.

##### 2. Sin - separation from God, still causes sickness

Since sin is basically the rejection of God's rule, that isolates us from the life of God, we may see that this alienation is still the major cause of sickness. In the coming manifestation of the Kingdom of God, when all rebellion is put down, there will no longer be any pain, sorrow or death (**Rev 21:4**).

##### 3. Hereditary genetic weakness may cause sickness

Certain weaknesses that may cause sickness are sometimes passed from one generation to another. They are an aspect of the weakness and frailty of fallen humanity originally occasioned by the Fall and transmitted from one generation to the next. Certain sicknesses may occur in one generation after another and be seen to be a "family weakness." However, this destructive chain may be broken and its power nullified through the use of spiritual authority. It is important for a Christian to understand that Almighty God is now his heavenly Father and to believe that God now determines his destiny rather than the influences of human ancestry.

##### 4. Sickness is frequently caused by infectious organisms.

The reality of life around us is a constant reminder that we are living in a fallen world. At the original creation there were no viruses, infectious organisms or plagues. Everything that God created was "very good." Man's disobedience and his consequent separation from God occasioned the advent of infection and disease into this world. Since then mankind has had to contend with the ravages of sickness and disease introduced into our environment by Satan's deception. This is certainly not the world as God intended it to be. He is not the author of sickness and disease. Conversely He is moved with compassion as He witnesses the suffering of mankind

and longs to relieve and heal our diseases. It was in part to heal our diseases that Jesus suffered and died, —to provide an antidote for sin and sickness.

**5. Sickness is part of the process of decay and death.**

One of the symptoms of fallen humanity is inherent human weakness that will cause a break down at the weakest point if too much pressure is applied. Every fallen child of Adam inherits this weakness and the pressures of life find their weak spot whether it be physical, mental, emotional. So a great deal of sickness is the result of those pressures of life wearing away the specific area of weakness in a given person.

**6. Accidents can cause sickness.**

Accidents are another obvious cause of ill health. People may incur all manner of injuries and disabilities as a result of some form of accident. Most accidents do not have any hidden spiritual cause or reason. They happen because of certain factors which unfortunately may occur and they can happen at times to Christians as well as non-Christians.

One of the bi-products of sudden serious incapacity through accidents is emotional distress and depression. This can be even more devastating because Christians frequently tend to link everything to a supernatural cause thus attributing the accident and its results to either God or the Devil. This can lead to heavy introspection as to why God allowed it or even caused the problem. Questions may arise such as "Why has this happened to me?" "What have I done wrong?" "How have I displeased God?" "Is this a punishment from God?" Such heavy introspective searching can increase the person's dilemma immensely and plunge them into spiritual darkness and torment unnecessarily.

We need to realise that most accidents do not have any hidden underlying and sinister reasons behind them. They are the result of some natural circumstance and are not usually directly linked to the way we live our lives.

**7. Neglect of health causes sickness**

We must face the fact that our health can suffer if we neglect various basic factors of health and vitality. To stay in health, a proper diet must be maintained. There are certain nutriments and vitamins that should be included in our regular diet. Deficiencies and lack in the diet will ultimately cause a breakdown of health. Inadequate rest and sleep will also adversely affect the condition of health. Too much work and too little time for rest and relaxation will take its toll upon one's health. Epaphroditus (**Phil 2:25-30**) was one example of this. He came very close to death and the cause of his condition was that of overwork, in the service of the Lord and His people.

**8. Natural aging reduces physical strength**

When one is young there is a youthful vitality that is conducive to good health. The Bible speaks of the "*dew of youth*" (**Psa 110:3**). David also speaks of "*renewing one's youth, like the eagle*" (**Psa 103:5**). Isaiah makes it clear that this refers to renewing of our youthful strength (**Isa 40:31**).

Jeremiah tells us that *"It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth"* (**Lam 3:27**). The early part of life is the time for hard work. It is the prime of life and the peak of physical strength. Solomon describes so graphically the limitations of advancing years. He urges us, *"Remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth"* (**Eccles 12:1**). Love God and serve Him while you still have strength and vitality to do it vigorously.

It was considered remarkable that Moses, when he reached more advanced years still had good eyesight and physical strength (**Deut 34:7**). The usual thing is that strength diminishes and eyesight deteriorates once the prime of life is passed.

Does this mean that we cannot expect to have health and strength in advancing years? Does it mean that we cannot expect physical healing in later years? Certainly not! God promises *"As thy days, so shall thy strength be"* (**Deut 33:25**).

I believe this teaches that we can expect to have good health all through our life *commensurate with our age at that given time*. I have met many Christians, advanced in years, who have thought that signs of physical deterioration and diminishing strength have indicated that God is no longer interested in them. Sometimes they worry that perhaps they have committed some sin and their bodily weakness is judgement upon them. Many sincere Christians come under great condemnation in this regard, feeling they must have committed some terrible, unforgivable sin. It has helped them enormously to realise that there is a natural process of physical deterioration in advanced years, that affects Christians and non-Christians alike. The later years of one's life also have their compensations and are not to be despised.

## 9. Evil spirits may cause sickness

Evil spirits can sometimes be the direct cause of sickness and affliction.

In **Matthew 9:32,33** we read about "a dumb man possessed with a devil."

When Jesus cast out the dumb spirit, the man was immediately able to speak. His vocal chords had obviously been held in bondage by the dumb spirit. In **Mark 9:17-27** the story is told of a young man who was brought to Jesus, having a dumb spirit, which was actually causing both deafness and dumbness. Jesus cast out the deaf and dumb spirit and the young man was delivered.

In Luke **13:11-16** we have the account of a woman who *"had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years."* Her spine was curved, her face was bowed towards the ground. Modern medicine would say she had a chronic curvature of the spine. Jesus loosed her from her infirmity and immediately her spine was made straight, and she glorified God for her deliverance.

There are several occasions in the Scriptures where persons were said to be afflicted with spirits of infirmity. The only way for them to be healed was for those spirits to be overcome by the word of faith and authority. Once the spirit had been cast out, the symptoms disappeared. Such persons can never be healed through any means other than a deliverance ministry. The demons must be overcome and cast out by the authority invested in the name of Jesus that is above every name. Once this happens the victim is released from the various symptoms and able to make a full recovery. It is essential that such people surrender themselves completely to God, feeding regularly on His Word and seeking to follow and please Him in every aspect

of their life. Failure to faithfully do this may invite back the demonic spirits and their condition may be worse afterwards than it was originally.

(**Matt 12:45; Luke 11:26**)

**10. Sickness is an aberration from what God desired.**

An aberration is a "deviation from the normal." Sickness was not part of the original creation as God fashioned it. Nor is it part of His plan or desire for mankind today. God is not the author of sickness. He is against sickness, disease and the suffering occasion by them. He is filled with compassion towards people who are afflicted or ill in any way. His true desire is expressed many times in the Bible, one of the clearest occasions being in **3 John 2**.

*"Beloved, I wish above all things that you may prosper and be in health even as your soul prospers."*

## Chapter 3

### GOD'S PROVISION FOR HEALING

#### THE REDEMPTIVE NAMES OF GOD

We begin to understand something of God's concern for the total man - spirit, soul and body when we consider the redemptive names, or titles, of Jehovah. Jehovah means "The Self-existent One who reveals Himself." It is used with special reference to the redemptive work of God. There are seven compound names in the Scriptures that are used in conjunction with the name Jehovah. Each one of them reveals a particular aspect of the redemption that He has provided.

**1. Jehovah Jireh (Gen 22:14): "The Lord will provide."**

Thus Jehovah announced Himself to Abraham on Mount Moriah. Faced with the awful prospect of sacrificing his only well-beloved son, Abraham heard the voice of the Lord cry, "*Lay not thine hand upon the lad.*" God had provided a sacrifice in the bush nearby. "*And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah Jireh.*" How wonderful to know that God has committed Himself to provide for us a Redeemer!

**2. Jehovah Rapha (Ex 15:26): "I am the Lord that healeth thee."**

Shortly after God had brought His people out from Egypt, He revealed Himself to them as their Healer. He had already proven Himself to them as their Saviour and Deliverer. Now He reveals Himself also as their Healer.

The Old Testament clearly shows healing as an integral part of redemption. Paul tells us that the new covenant is a "better covenant," superior in every way. If the old covenant made provision for the total man, surely the new covenant would not do less.

**3. Jehovah Nissi (Ex 17:15): "The Lord our banner or our victor."**

This revelation came immediately after God had given a great victory to Israel over the Amalekites. Moses stood with hands outstretched towards God and the Lord destroyed all their enemies before them. A great victory was won. Moses built an altar to the Lord and called the place *Jehovah Nissi*, the Lord who has spread the banner of His victory above us.

**4. Jehovah Shalom (Judges 6:23): "The Lord our peace."**

This redemptive title reveals to us the glorious privilege of knowing and possessing the peace of God through the redemption that is ours in Christ. It is a fullness of peace, that literally means, "*the possession of all things needful for one's peace.*" The Scriptures say of Christ, "*He is our peace*" (**Eph 2:14**). The word *peace* ("shalom" in Hebrew), means well-being, wholeness, everything necessary for our total well-being.

**5. Jehovah Raah (Psa 23:1): "The Lord, my shepherd."**

This Psalm of David describes the bliss and security of one under such a Shepherd as the Lord. The Lord as Shepherd emphasises His caring concern. Since we are the

sheep of God's pasture, it is wonderful to know that Christ's redemption has afforded us the protection of so thoughtful and kind a shepherd.

**6. Jehovah Tsidkenu (Jer 23:6): "The Lord, our righteousness."**

Jesus made it possible for us to become the righteousness of God in Christ. He accomplished this by becoming sin for us and bearing the penalty and judgement of God in our stead. Christ's redemption does not only save us.

It declares our righteousness before the Father. "[For Christ] *is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption*" (1 Cor 1:30).

**7. Jehovah Shammah (Ezek 48:35): "The Lord is present."**

The presence of God has been restored to our life through Jesus. Adam was driven out from God's presence, but we have been brought back into His presence through Christ. As His redeemed people, we have the blessing of His presence continually.

Each of these redemptive names reveals the various blessings God has made available to us through Christ. Healing is not the special privilege of a favoured few; it is a redemptive right of all who fulfil the covenant requirements. God was Jehovah Rapha to Israel, and He declares, "*I am the Lord, I change not*" (Mal 3:6).

## HEALING THROUGH CHRIST'S ATONEMENT

Every blessing we receive from God comes to us through Christ's victory at Calvary. This includes healing. The word *atonement* means to make AT-ONE-MENT with God. The purpose is to restore us to oneness with God and to restore to us all that man has lost as a result of the Fall. One of the things he lost was health and strength. So health is restored through the atonement. Sin and sickness are the double curse that came on mankind. Jesus provided a double cure for the double curse. Isaiah tells the story graphically. "*Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows*" (Isa 53:4).

Numerous reliable scholars have pointed out that the word *Kholee* that is rendered *Griefs* is most frequently translated *sickness*. It is derived from the word *Chalab* which means to be weak, sick or afflicted. Also, the word translated *sorrows* (*makob*) is generally rendered *pain*. With this in mind, we can understand Matthew's comments on **Isaiah 53:4**. "*He Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses*" (Matt 8:17). Matthew's translation is a more accurate one and it supports the fact that physical healing is through the atonement of Christ.

There are two verbs in **Isaiah 53:4** that have great significance. The first one, *borne*, is the same verb that is employed in **Isaiah 53:12**: "*He bare the sins of many.*" Since the same verb is used in both verses, we understand that Christ *bore* our sicknesses in the same manner in which He *bore* our sins. We know that He bore our sins by suffering as our substitute. This must also be true of our sicknesses. Christ suffered them for us. Because He bore my sins as my substitute, I am free from them. Because He also bore my sicknesses, I am free from them as well. Christ bore both our sins and our sicknesses in Himself, so there is forgiveness and healing for all who will accept them by faith. The second verb, *carried* (*cabal*), can mean *to bear something, as a penalty*. It is used in **Isaiah 53:11** where we read, "*For he shall bear their iniquities.*" In both instances, the same Hebrew verb is used, in respect to our sins and our sicknesses. The glorious conclusion is, if Christ bore the

penalty of my sins, I do not have to bear it. If Christ bore my sicknesses, I do not have to bear them.

## HEALING WAS PURCHASED AT CALVARY

We are clearly justified in believing that Christ's atonement on the cross provides a perfect remedy for the whole man - spirit, soul and body. Christ purchased wholeness (perfect soundness) for mankind through His death.

The Greek New Testament confirms the conclusion that our redemption in Christ includes healing as well as forgiveness. The common verb for *save* is *sozo* which conveys the idea of wholeness, perfect soundness. The word translated *saved* in **Romans 10:9**, "*Thou shalt be saved*" is the same word that is translated *whole* in **Mark 6:56**. "*As many [sick persons] as touched Him [Christ] were made whole.*" The word *sozo* is used in both cases. No Christian today would deny that Christ's sufferings still atone for our sins today. Why then should we imagine that healing is not for today?

Since He was a healing God in the Old Testament, He is still a healing God today. He is still Jehovah Rapha, The Lord our physician, for He changes not! God is consistent. His character, nature and disposition are unchanging. Therefore, His will is unchanging also.

## CHRIST'S MINISTRY OF HEALING

Jesus Himself is our best guide to the ministry of healing. The true heart and nature of God is most clearly seen in Jesus Christ. Philip asked, "*Lord show us the Father and it sufficeth.*" Jesus answered, "*Don't you know me, Philip ... Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father...Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves. I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father*" (**John 14:8-12 NIV**).

This passage teaches us that Jesus came to show us by His life and ministry what God is like in His unchanging nature. Jesus shows so clearly that He is interested in the total man. He healed when healing was needed. He fed the multitude when food was needed. He showed the Father's love for man as He had created him - spirit, soul and body. We also learn something about how Jesus valued His miracles. For Him, miracles confirmed the truth of His words. We are also encouraged to believe for Christ's healing power in our own ministry, "*for anyone who has faith in Me will do what I have been doing.*"

## WHY DID CHRIST HEAL?

### 1. Christ healed to fulfil His prophetic ministry.

When the crowd gathered after the healing of Peter's mother-in-law, Matthew tells us, "*He healed all that were sick: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet saying, 'Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses'*" (**Matt 8:16,17**).

**2. To express His compassion**

Numerous scriptures mention the compassion of Christ motivating Him to meet the needs of the people: Jesus was *"moved with compassion, and healed their sicknesses"* (**Matt 14:14, 20:34, Mark 1:40,41; 5:19; 9:22**).

**3. To convey the mercy of God**

Speaking of Epaphroditus, Paul says, *"But God had mercy on him, and on me [Paul] also, and He healed Epaphroditus"* (**Phil 2:27**).

**4. To prove that God had truly sent Him**

The miracles and healings that attended the ministry of Jesus were signs or credentials to prove that God was with Him. Peter calls Him, *"A man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you"* (**Acts 2:22**).

**5. To destroy the works of the devil**

*"For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil"* (**1 John 3:8**).

*"How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him"* (**Acts 10:38**).

*"That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil"* (**Heb 2:14**).

Sickness is a work of the devil and Jesus was manifested to destroy it.

**6. To manifest the works of God**

Jesus and His disciples one day saw a man who had been blind from birth. The disciples were curious to know the cause of this man's blindness. Was it the result of his sin, or that of his parents? Jesus, however, was interested in something else. He said *"That the works of God should be made manifest in him, I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day"* (**John 9:1-4**). He then proceeded to heal the man, showing clearly that one of the reasons He healed the sick was to make manifest the works of God.

**7. To manifest the glory of God**

The mighty works of God were performed by Jesus, that His Father might be glorified. Standing before the tomb of Lazarus, Jesus said to Martha, *"Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?"* (**John 11:40**).

In **Luke 13:10-17**, we read the story of the woman bound by a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years, and how Jesus loosed her from her infirmity. Verse 13 tells us, *"And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God."* Notice that it was after she was healed that she glorified God.

## **SOME METHODS JESUS USED TO HEAL**

Jesus did not employ only one method to heal people; He ministered to them in a variety of ways. Let us consider briefly a few of those ways.

### **1. Jesus spoke the word of authority**

The Roman officer who approached Jesus (**Matt 8:5-13**) on behalf of his servant recognised Christ's word of authority. As an army officer, he was accustomed to both giving and receiving orders. He knew that a true word of authority gained immediate response. So impressed was he with Christ's authority that he besought Him, "*Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.*" Later he discovered that his servant was actually healed at the very hour that Jesus spoke the word.

We also have authority in Jesus' name. Christ Himself said, "*Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith*" (**Mark 11:23**).

### **2. He laid hands upon the sick**

Jesus frequently laid hands upon the sick to minister healing. Because of their cultural background, people had great faith in the laying on of hands. Jairus besought Jesus that He would come and lay hands on his daughter, who lay at the point of death (**Mark 5:21-23**).

When Jesus came to Nazareth, His home town, He "laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them."

### **3. He rebuked sickness**

Jesus actually verbally addressed sickness at times, rebuking it and commanding it to leave. Luke records two interesting incidents in the fourth chapter of his gospel. The first concerns a man in the synagogue who had an unclean spirit. Jesus rebuked the spirit, commanding it to "*hold your peace, and come out of him.*" The spirit obeyed immediately and left the man (**Luke 4:33-37**).

Jesus and some of the disciples went straight from the synagogue to Peter's house, where his mother-in-law lay sick with a fever. Luke tells us that Jesus rebuked the fever; and it left her, and immediately she arose and ministered unto them. The interesting thing is that the word for *rebuke* is the same in both instances. Jesus treated the fever just as he had treated the spirit. He rebuked them both verbally, commanding them to leave, and they did so.

### **4. He touched people**

*"And Jesus put forth his hand and touched him saying, I will, be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed"* (**Matt 8:3**).

*"Then touched he their eyes saying, According to your faith be it unto you"* (**Matt 9:29**).

When Peter smote the servant of the High Priest and cut off his ear, we read, "*And he touched his ear, and healed him*" (**Luke 22:51**).

There are many other instances where Jesus touched people and healed them.

#### **5. People touched Christ**

*"And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto him all that were diseased; and besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment: and as many as touched him were made perfectly whole"* (**Matt 14:35,36**).

*"And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years...came in the press behind, and touched his garment. For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole. And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague"* (**Mark 5:25-29**).

## **Chapter 4**

### **CHANNELS OF HEALING**

#### **SOME OF GOD'S WAYS OF HEALING**

God has many ways to make His healing power available to us today. He can work in any way He chooses. Do not make the mistake of trying to dictate to Him which way He is to heal. He knows best. Let Him do it His way. Let us look at some of the means through which he may choose to work.

#### **NATURAL HEALING**

One of the reasons why I personally believe that God is a healing God is the natural law of healing and recuperation that He has built into the human system. The body has amazing resistance to sickness and powers of recovery. Given adequate opportunity it will often restore itself to health.

Think for a moment of a wonderful substance God has placed in the blood. Fibrin is a protein in the bloodstream. It is soluble and travels around the circulatory system continually without causing any problems. However, if a person is wounded and the blood begins to pour from the wound, the fibrin begins to stick together and form a clot. This fibrin, which is like a white thread, on contact with the outside atmosphere, begins to form a mesh of white fibres and a clot is formed. This stops the flow of the blood from the wound.

White blood cells are also part of the body's wonderful defence mechanism. They are the defence force of the body. When infectious organisms enter the body, the brain immediately sends a signal to the white corpuscles. They quickly rally to the point at which the bacteria have entered and begin the attack by devouring the foreign organisms. As they overcome the invading army, the dead bodies of the enemy begin to pile up. This is essentially what a boil is, the building up of bacteria which the white blood cells have defeated. Eventually the boil bursts and the body casts off the remains of the enemy that unsuccessfully tried to infect the system.

There are many other wonders within the human body that together constitute the marvellous system of resistance to disease. They seek to protect the body at all times from enemy invasions and preserve the condition of health that God has ordained for it. Remember that sickness is abnormal. Good health is God's normal condition for His wonderful creation.

#### **DIETARY AND GENERAL CARE OF THE BODY**

Inadequate care of the body can lead to a condition of ill health, in which case the body not only requires a physical healing, but changes to take place which will provide adequate care and attention in the future.

I am not suggesting that we Gentiles should follow the Jewish laws to the letter. I am saying that we should learn from them the necessity of giving consideration to the matter of diet and hygiene. When a person is suffering from malnutrition (the consequence of an inadequate diet), there is really only one cure, a definite improvement in the diet. One needs to ensure, to the best of one's ability, that the diet is balanced and the food

nutritious, containing the proteins and vitamins which the body requires to maintain good health. In some countries this is not always easy. Serious food shortages make it difficult and sometimes impossible to obtain proper supplies of necessary food supplements. However, even in countries where this is not so, people often fail to recognise the importance of nutrition. Some even feel that they cannot afford to eat properly but eventually have to pay out money for medical attention. It is much better to spend money on food than on hospital bills.

At the other extreme there are people who damage their health through overeating, or eating too much of the wrong foods. They eat too many fatty foods and too much starch. This creates fat tissue instead of energy. Such people become overweight and their health suffers as a result. It has been said that many people today are 'digging their graves with their teeth'. Their eating habits are causing ill health and even premature death. There is a need for discipline in such matters. Our bodies are no longer our own. They have been bought with a price. They now belong to God and we are to glorify God through the proper care of them (**1 Cor 6:20**).

## **MEDICAL CARE AND ATTENTION**

In cases where the body's health has deteriorated through inadequate attention to the natural laws of health, it is frequently necessary to have medical advice and care. No doctor can heal. Only God can heal. Medical science co-operates with the laws of God in order to help the patient recover. A famous French physician once said, "I tend, but God heals." That is a true statement. Since God is essentially against sickness and disease, doctors are therefore co-operating with God towards the fulfilment of His purposes. Hospitals are 'houses of mercy' helping to combat the great plague that is in the world because of sin.

## **PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALING**

### **1. Correct attitudes and thoughts**

One of the important developments in medical science recently has been in diagnosing and treating "psychosomatic" sickness. By this we mean physical sicknesses that start in the mind of the patient. These are not imaginary sicknesses. The person is actually physically ill. However, the illness has been produced originally by the patient's mind.

Solomon touched on this principle when he said "*As he thinketh in his heart, so is he*" (**Prov 23:7**). Whatever a man allows his mind to dwell upon, he will become! If a person is afraid of sickness, and always morbidly contemplates the possibility of becoming ill, those very thoughts can produce the actual ailment of which he is afraid.

Job was also very much aware of this principle. It seems that even though he was healthy and extremely prosperous, he harboured negative thoughts that one day he would lose everything. Perhaps he would think to himself, "this is too good to last. Things are going too well for me, I cannot expect this to last forever." Whatever his specific thoughts were, they were quite obviously negative and pessimistic. When tragedy did overtake him and he became so ill he wished he had never been born, he said "*For the thing which I greatly feared has come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me*" (**Job 3:25**). Job realised that the fears which he had allowed to captivate his thoughts had attracted into his life the very things he had feared. Fear has

torment, the Bible says (**1 John 4:18**). Fear is a destroyer. It is destructive of both mental and physical health. This is one reason why Jesus admonished, "*Fear not, believe only*" (**Luke 8:50**). We are made for faith, not fear. Faith strengthens and fortifies us. Fear demoralises and destroys.

## 2. **Controlled emotion**

Negative emotions that are not brought under control are also destructive to health. Many Christians allow themselves to be controlled by their emotions instead of ensuring that they control their emotions. They depend too much upon "how they feel." If they are a little depressed, they allow that depression to rule them. Every small disappointment, upset or reversal plunges them deeper into despondency. Such emotional indiscipline ultimately undermines the health and can cause serious sickness. Christians were never intended to be ruled by their emotions. Rather, they were meant to rule over their emotions, imaginations, moods and feelings by faith in the Word of God. God's Word is reliable, our emotions are unreliable. If we feed regularly on the Word, it will stabilise our emotions. The Word-filled believer is no longer tossed to and fro. He becomes as steady as the Word is. The Word adds qualities of strength, purpose and fortitude to the mind and heart.

Certain reliable medical authorities have said that more than 30% of all physical sickness originates initially in the mind or emotions. Such mental and emotional attitudes as worry, fear, anxiety, insecurity, morbid introspection, nervous tension, jealousy, frustration, anger and pessimism are powerful and destructive forces. If left unchecked, they will tear in pieces the fabric of one's health. They are the main causes of many of the most serious physical ailments. High blood pressure, heart problems, circulatory diseases, asthma, stomach ulcers and chronic headaches are but a few of the many illnesses typical of those induced by wrong mental and emotional attitudes.

When a person's sickness is psychosomatically induced, he needs not only the physical sickness to be healed, he also needs an inner healing of his emotional and mental processes. It is a simple thing for God to heal the physical symptoms, but if the mental attitude is not radically altered, the person will soon be ill again with the same or similar sickness.

For instance, it is a simple matter for God to heal a stomach ulcer. What is more difficult is the inner healing of the mental attitudes that caused the ulcer. If the person concerned insists on carrying a great burden of mental stress, worry, and anxiety, those attitudes will quickly cause another ulcer.

David gave an effective formula for the healing of such chronic problems.

### a) **Cast your burdens on the Lord**

David encourages us to "*Cast the burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee*" (**Psa 55:22**). This entails the casting of every anxiety, worry, fear or negative attitude upon the Lord. Before we can do this, we must surrender our life completely to the Lord. When our life is totally yielded to God, it has become His personal property. He is then responsible for the upkeep of it. He will maintain it in good health and strength. It is only as we are willing to get rid of those burdens by casting them upon the Lord, and He is then able to sustain us. If we insist on carrying those cumbersome burdens, not even God can sustain us in health!

**b) Meditate on God's Word**

David also describes the blessings of the man who meditates in God's Word, day and night. *"He shall be like a tree planted by rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper"* (**Psa 1:3**). Meditating in God's Word has great therapeutic value. Solomon, son of David, further states that God's Word *"is health to all their flesh"* (**Prov 4:22**).

**c) Bring your thoughts into captivity**

Every thought can be brought into captivity to Christ. Sometimes there are troublesome thoughts that never leave us alone. They are like satanic strongholds in our mind (**2 Cor 10:3-5**). There is no reason to remain ruled by these thoughts. Tackle them with the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Take passages of scripture that are the God-given solution and fight against the fear. *"God hath not given us a spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind"* (**2 Tim 1:7**). Don't say it just once. Dwell on it. Let God make you powerful and victorious. Confess it aloud. Strengthen your heart in it. The strongholds of the enemy will come tumbling down!

**d) Fix your mind upon God**

*"Great peace have they which love thy law; and nothing shall offend them"* (**Psalm 119:165**). The peace that comes to one through constant love for God's Word is a healing peace. The mind is kept *"in perfect peace, as it is stayed upon God, trusting in Him implicitly"* (**Isa 26:3**).

God wants His people to be completely free from every mental and emotional problem, and also from the various sicknesses that are ultimately caused by the retention of those wrong attitudes.

**3. Releasing the human spirit**

At rebirth, eternal life is restored to the human spirit. This life is not an impersonal force; it is the Holy Spirit Himself who comes to dwell within (**1 Cor 6:17**). He is the life of God that we receive. Sadly, many believers are untaught in the things of the Spirit or tragically, taught incorrectly. Many have been taught that the age of miracles has passed. Many have been taught that the gifts of the Spirit were only for the Apostolic Age. Many are ignorant of the power there is in the Word of God. Because of this ignorance, their spirit is like an innocent man in jail. There is nothing wrong with the human spirit of the man, but ignorance and error have blinded and stunted spiritual growth.

As the mind is renewed by the Word of God (**Eph 4:22-24; Col 3:10,16**), the revelation sets the human spirit free and growth takes place. Those who minister the Word in the power of the Spirit are God's instruments to bring this spiritual release. Jesus said, *"If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth shall set you free..."* So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed (**John 8:31,32,36 NIV**).

*"But when he, the spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth"* (**John 16:13 NIV**). *"Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom"* (**2 Cor 3:17 NIV**).

The Holy Spirit uses people who yield to Him as His instruments to bring spiritual release and well-being. When this release takes place, we move into real spiritual health. This is the foundation of total man well-being.

Correct teaching helps people to avoid many of the pitfalls and traps that produce sickness and trouble. A primary objective in teaching the Word is to strengthen the influence of the God-conscious reborn spirit; or, in other words, to develop the spiritual senses or sensitivity of the saints. So many Christians are unable to distinguish between their natural judgement and the counsel of God in their hearts. This is like spiritual malnutrition. By feeding them on the Word of God, they will learn to identify the voice of God, because they will recognise that it harmonises with their knowledge of the Word. This brings spiritual release and consequent health to the total man.

God's concern is for the total health and well-being of man. Physical healing is a vital way of producing this health. God-inspired teaching is another way of producing this divine health.

## EVANGELISTIC HEALING

This is the ministry of healing that Jesus said would follow the preaching of the Gospel. It is one of the five evidences He promised would always follow the proclamation of the true Gospel (**Mark 16,17,18**). Several things are required in order to see the manifestation of this kind of healing.

1. The command that preceded the promise was, "*Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature*" (**Mark 16:15**). This is an evangelistic ministry: going into new territory and proclaiming the Gospel to the unconverted. Paul followed this rule. He sought to preach the Gospel where Christ had not yet been made known, rather than build upon a foundation that someone else had already laid. In consequence, his ministry was attested by God with .."*might signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God*" (**Rom 15:18-20**). The result being that the Gentiles were made obedient to the Gospel by "word and deed."
2. The proclamation of the Gospel in the New Testament setting included an emphasis upon physical healing as well as the hope of eternal salvation. A great portion of the ministry of Jesus was taken up with ministering to the sick and afflicted. They came to Him in multitudes and we are told that on many occasions, "*He healed all that were sick*" (**Matt 8:16**). In a similar manner crowds of sick people came to the Apostles. On at least one occasion, the shadow of Peter falling upon the sick as he passed by brought healing and deliverance (**Acts 5:15,16**). Many wonders, signs and miracles were wrought by the Apostles (**Acts 5:12**). It was largely as a result of such signs that great multitudes were subsequently added to the church (**Acts 5:14**).
3. The laying on of hands was also a specific feature of this particular aspect of healing. Consider some aspects of the significance of this act. In the cultural setting of the people, the laying on of hands was frequently used in order to confer something upon a person. Usually it was the conferring of an honour or a blessing, a privilege etc. Thus, those upon whom hands were laid, would traditionally be expecting to receive something. Notice what Jesus said about this matter. It is "*them that believe*"

who should lay hands on the sick. It must be done in the name of Jesus. The believer's hands must be stretched out towards, and laid upon the sick. Jesus declared, "*they shall recover*" (**Mark 16:17**).

By reaching out our hands towards the suffering, we identify ourselves with them. We do so *in the name of Jesus*.

As we do this in faith, we become an extension of the hands of the Lord. God has no hands but our hands with which to reach a needy world.

Preaching the Gospel and laying hands on the sick is a command of Christ. We must be obedient to Him. We must do it in faith.

When you touch the afflicted ones, claim the promise of God at that moment: "They shall recover."

Recovery is not necessarily an immediate, instantaneous healing. It may be a process. It begins at the moment of contact, but it may be some time before it is finally complete. Do not lose faith. Do not start to doubt. Maintain an attitude of positive faith in God's statement. His word is true. It cannot fail.

This ministry of healing should accompany every evangelist. That is the promise implicit in this commission. It should accompany every "believer." These signs shall follow them that believe.

## **ECCLESIASTICAL HEALING**

Whereas evangelistic healing is primarily a ministry to the unconverted, to convince them of the truth and reality of the Gospel, ecclesiastical healing is a ministry within the church.

The scripture that forms a basis for our consideration of this channel of healing is **James 5:14-16**. "*Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*"

The instructions in this passage are addressed specifically to Christians. "*Is any sick among you?*" clearly indicates that James is addressing those within the church. The instructions that follow are quite different from those in **Mark 16:15-20**.

1. The sick one is to "*call for the elders of the church.*" The initiative is with the sick one. He is to make the request, calling for the elders to minister to him.
2. There is to be a confession of faults. If any sins have been committed, they are to be confessed also.

We have already considered the fact that a great deal of sickness begins on the inside. There may be sin inside. Perhaps there are wrong attitudes. Often-times there

are harmful thought patterns and detrimental emotions. These are spiritual diseases that also produce physical ailments. There must be an acknowledgement and a confession of these sins. Confession brings these hidden destroyers into the open. There can never be a healing of these inner problems until they have been confessed and repented of.

Many people find it hard to acknowledge that they have any faults. Consequently they never obtain healing for them. We must be willing for God to search the heart and put his finger upon any attitude or thought that is displeasing to Him. Be open and honest before God. He is a loving Father who wants to heal you, not a dreadful monster who wishes to punish you. He does not want to uncover these problem areas to embarrass or shame you. He wants to get them out of your heart and mind because they are poisoning and destroying you. If God makes you aware of some sin or resentment that is out of harmony with His will, confess it to the elders (leaders).

It is better for this to be done in privacy rather than before a public meeting. However, there are times when a confession to the whole body is required. This is generally where the sin has been committed against that company. Otherwise, the confession should be received by the elders privately and the details should remain confidential to the elders.

Though the confession is made in the presence of the elders, we are actually making our confession to God. We may have offended our brother, but it is God against whom we have sinned and we must earnestly seek His forgiveness. Confession should also be made to the person we may have sinned against or offended. We should confess in a spirit of humility, sincerely seeking his forgiveness.

Under the Old Covenant God required a trespass offering to be made in respect of an offence against a brother (**Lev 6:1-7**). One of the requirements of that offering involved the making of full restitution, plus 20% (**Lev 6:5**)

The principle here is that we must seek to make a generous restitution to the one we have offended. We should try to make up to him for the harm or hurt we may have caused him by our actions.

**3.** They should be anointed with oil.

Oil is symbolic of the Holy Spirit. When we anoint someone with oil we are symbolically calling upon the Holy Spirit to come upon this person for whom we are about to pray

The disciples evidently used this method quite frequently. In **Mark 6:13**, we read, *"And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them."*

Oil symbolises light. The candlestick in the Holy Place was actually an oil lamp. It was oil, therefore, that gave light in that Holy Place. Thus, when we anoint someone with oil, we are also saying, "Father, we recognise that we are performing this act in the light of Your presence. We understand that nothing is hidden from You., You know all things. Therefore, help us to be totally honest in this situation, for nothing dishonest or insincere will escape Your attention. If this sick person, now seeking You has any faults of which they are genuinely unaware, may the light of Your presence reveal these things that they may be dealt with."

Oil, further, is symbolic of healing. It contains healing properties. It was probably the oldest medicine known to man. It has a soothing, healing effect. The man rescued by the Good Samaritan had oil and wine poured into his wounds. The wine was to cleanse the wounds, the oil to heal them. Now when we anoint with oil, we are not applying it as a medicine, but as a symbol of healing, looking to the Holy Spirit to impart His healing to the sick one. Having anointed with oil, the elders must now pray the prayer of faith.

James says, "*The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up*" (**Jas 5:15**).

## HEALING THROUGH HOLY COMMUNION

In **1 Corinthians 11:23,32** we have a clear indication that participating properly in the Holy Communion meal will result in healing and health.

Paul maintains that improper participation has resulted in many of the Corinthians being ill and some of them actually dying prematurely. "*For this cause many are weak and sickly among you and many sleep*" (V 30). It therefore follows that proper participation will promote good health. Let us look together at this important matter.

## HOLY COMMUNION TYPIFIES THE PASSOVER MEAL

When Jesus first instituted Holy Communion, it was at the time of celebration of Passover (**Matt 26:19**). The disciples who gathered around Him that night were keenly aware of the implications of this meal. They were mindful that it symbolised the original Passover some 1,500 years previously. They remembered the covenant that God had made with their fathers. He had brought their ancestors out of Egypt on the first Passover and they had experienced a glorious deliverance from Egypt and all its bondage. By the mighty outstretched hand of God, they were brought out from slavery.

The original Passover meal comprised of roast lamb and unleavened bread. The blood of that lamb had been applied to the door-post and lintels of their homes. That blood was a sign to God. "*When I see the blood, I will pass over you*" (**Ex 12:13**) He told them. They came out through those blood-stained door-posts into the freedom of salvation. The blood was for their redemption. God also told them to roast the lamb with herbs and eat every part of it before they commenced their journey into freedom. This nourishing meal was to strengthen their bodies in preparation for the arduous journey. It was to minister physical strength to them. Thus, the Passover meal was for salvation and health.

As Jesus shared the bread and wine with them that night, He was making a New Covenant with them. The wine symbolised His blood, soon to be shed for their salvation. The bread typified the Passover lamb to be eaten for health and strength.

Paul shares some meaningful principles relating to our partaking of Holy Communion.

### a) Remembering Jesus

Jesus said, "*Do this in remembrance of me*" (**Luke 24:19; 1 Cor 11:24**). As Jesus sat at the table with them that night, He was the embodiment of human perfection.

Throughout Jesus' life Satan had tried, in every way to attack and destroy Him.

He had sought to seduce Him (**Matt 4:1-11**). I am sure that he had tried to put many dreadful diseases upon Him. Jesus moved among so many sick and diseased people during His ministry, many of whom would have had contagious diseases, I am sure that Satan sought to contaminate Jesus with them. But every effort of Satan had failed miserably. At the close of His earthly ministry, Jesus was able to say, "*The prince of this world [Satan] cometh, but hath nothing in me*" (**John 14:30**). Despite all the efforts the devil had made, here was Jesus sitting in their presence, robust with health.

A perfect specimen of manhood Jesus was saying "When you celebrate this event in future, think about Me. Picture Me in your mind as I am this night. Healthy and strong, - kept by the power of God, preserved from all evil and disease by the Father's protection and providence. realise that the Father wants you to be like this too.

### b) Celebrating His Death

As He passed around the bread and wine Jesus said, "This is my body, which is broken for you.... This cup is the new testament in my blood."

Paul says, "As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the Lord's death, till He come." (**1 Cor 11: 26**)

In the deepest sense Communion is a celebration. Of course there is some sadness as we remember that it was our sins that caused Jesus to be nailed to the cross. However, as we meditate on Christ's death we cannot remain sad for very long. Calvary was not a defeat; it was Christ's greatest triumph. Through His death He "destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil." (**Heb 2:14**)

As we celebrate that victory we rejoice to remember that Jesus has purchased perfect freedom for us from sin and all its evil effects. Jesus has restored to us everything that Adam lost. We are complete in Christ. (**Col 2:10**) He has restored us to wholeness through His triumphant victory.

### c) Discerning His Body

Here is the crux of the whole matter. Our problem is often a failure to discern Christ's Body as we celebrate Holy Communion. This has resulted in much sickness amongst Christians. (**1 Cor 11: 27-32**) So, what does it mean to "discern the body of the Lord?"

Firstly it means to understand that the body of Jesus was healthy and strong and that God wants us to enjoy health and strength.

Secondly, that as we eat the bread, it is by faith the Body of Jesus. (**1 Cor 11:24**) Inherent within it is the life, health and strength of Jesus. We should therefore eat in faith appropriating to ourselves the health that is in Christ.

Thirdly, we are to discern the mystical body of Christ. I believe this is the deepest and most significant aspect. This is the very point at that so many Christians fail. Paul calls the whole church -the Body of Christ. (**Eph 1:22,23**) Every born again person is a member of that Body. As we discern our relationship to Christ, so we must recognise our relationship to every other child of God. Failure to do so is "eating and drinking unworthily." Partaking of that holy meal, whilst failing to

recognise the oneness of Christ's mystical universal body is participating unworthily. Please notice that word "unworthily" refers to something we *do*. It does not refer to the worthiness or unworthiness of the persons themselves. It refers to whether or not this act of taking communion is done in a worthy or unworthy manner.

**d) A Time for Self Examination**

*"But let a man ( person ) examine himself, and so let him eat the bread and drink the cup."*  
( **1 Cor 11:28** )

The Apostle Paul, in this powerful treatise on the Lord's Supper, reminds us that the celebration is also to be a time for self examination. This is an extremely important aspect of the meal. Just as the Jews had been admonished to remove all traces of leaven from their homes before keeping the Passover Celebration, ( **Exod 12: 15,19** ) so we are commanded to examine ourselves before partaking of the emblems of Christ's Body and Blood.

As we examine our hearts in this manner we must confess to God any sin or rebellion we may become aware of and sincerely seek for and receive His forgiveness. As we turn from such sin through confession and repentance, God has promised that He is faithful to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ( **1 John 1:9** )

Thus the celebration of Christ's death on a regular basis can become a real source of spiritual, mental and physical health and strength. But in order for this to be effective and beneficial we must genuinely observe the admonition to confess any sin we are aware of and sincerely receive Christ's forgiveness. In this manner we are able to eat and drink in a worthy and beneficial manner. Paul also reminds us that *"If we judge ourselves we shall not be judged or chastened of the Lord."* ( **1 Cor 11: 31,32** )

There is both cleansing and healing at the table of the Lord. We should celebrate this meal regularly and do it in a worthy manner, rightly recognising the Body of the Lord. In so doing we shall enjoy the glorious blessing of Divine health in spirit, soul and body.

## **PRAYING THE PRAYER OF FAITH**

**a) Faith is based solely on what God's Word declares**

The foundation upon which the prayer of faith stands is the integrity of God's Word alone. It does not look to any other source for confirmation or encouragement. It believes implicitly that God's Word is the only source of ultimate truth. *"Let God be true, but every man a liar..."* ( **Rom 3:4** ). Bible faith has its origins in God's Word. *"Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God"* ( **Rom 10:17** ). It follows that if we are to pray the prayer of faith, we must familiarise ourselves thoroughly with God's Word, relative to His will about healing. We must *know*, from His Word, that it *is His* will to heal. There must be a sound foundation of faith deep within us, built by God's Word alone.

**b) Faith knows the will of God**

A leper once said to Jesus, *"If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean"* ( **Matt 8:1-4** ). This leper had no doubt whatsoever as to the ability of Jesus to heal his condition. His

doubt was in the area of whether or not it was His will to do so. Jesus settled this immediately when He replied, "*I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed!*" We must also be firmly settled in our heart that it is God's will to heal. If any uncertainty or doubt within causes us to conclude our prayers with "If it be Thy will" then we have NOT prayed the prayer of faith.

In addition to knowing from the Bible that it is God's will to heal the sick, we should also seek God earnestly to know His will specifically for the person for whom we are praying. In other words, while it is always God's desire to heal, sometimes His healing is delayed for certain reasons and we need to ascertain that it is indeed God's will to heal this person right now. Sometimes when we seek this specific knowledge, God reveals some hindrance that is blocking the manifestation of His healing power. We can then seek to rectify that problem and clear the way for healing to take place.

James goes on to make clear that such a doubting person shall receive nothing from the Lord (**Jas 1:7**). The prayer of faith is, therefore, totally committed to the confidence that God is going to answer prayer and heal the sick one. There is no room for doubt, uncertainty or hesitancy. This prayer is one of supreme, committed confidence.

**c) Faith has a definite objective**

Jesus frequently asked, "What wilt thou, that I should do unto thee?" In modern terminology He was asking, "*What is your specific desire?*" What is the specific nature of your requests?" Christians are often so non-specific in their prayers that they would not even know afterwards whether God had answered their prayers or not. If we pray vaguely, we shall not receive anything. We must define specifically what it is we are believing God to do, and make that request known to Him in prayer, with thanksgiving.

A blind man to whom Jesus addressed such a question replied immediately, "*Lord, that I might receive my sight!*" (**Mark 10:51**). He stated his desire definitely, specifically and concisely. Jesus responded to his request at once and the man received his sight.

**d) Faith asks and receives**

Many sincere Christians have failed to understand that the prayer of faith is both asking and *receiving*. To ask and keep on asking indefinitely can sometimes be an indication of our unbelief. Jesus said, "*Ask and it shall be given you!*" (**Matt 7:7**). So when we have asked Him, we need then to receive our request from His hand with appropriate thanks.

**e) Faith has a right motive**

James explained two main reasons why we sometimes do not receive the answers to our prayers (**Jas 4:2,3**). The first that we sometimes simply do not pray! The second reason is that we pray, but with the wrong motive. James says "we ask amiss" for selfish reasons. So we ought to ensure that our motives are pure. Do we want this request for the right reason? The right reason is that God should be glorified and His Name exalted. Anything less than this is frequently suspect in its motivation.

Many desire things for extremely selfish reasons. God does not generally respond to self-centred prayers. It is good to clarify one's motives and make sure they are worthy ones.

The minister whom God may use to impart healing must also ensure that his motives are worthy ones. Some pray for the sick because of vain and superficial motives. Too many ministers begin to think that the power comes from them instead of through them. Many are puffed up with pride because God is using them. They frequently disqualify themselves from greater effectiveness through this carnal attitude. Still others would seek to use the gift of God for personal gain. In doing so they pervert that gift. The principle is, "*Freely you have received, freely give*" (**Matt 10:8**).

**f) Faith has a bold confession**

A positive confession is essential to the functioning of faith. "I believed and therefore I have spoken" (**2 Cor 4:13**). "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (**Rom 10:10**). "Let us hold fast to the profession [confession] of our faith without wavering; for he is faithful that promised" (**Heb 10:23**).

Jesus explained the relationship between our confession and receiving what we ask of God. "For verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he sayeth shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith" (**Mark 11:23**).

If your confession does not agree with the Word of God then it is not faith speaking. Faith always agrees with God's Word. The literal meaning of the verb to confess, in N.T. Greek is to agree with, to say the same thing. If we are to pray the prayer of faith, without doubting, then our conversation and confession must also harmonise with our prayer.

**g) Faith acts in agreement with our confession**

Our faith confession is a verbal statement that agrees with the attitude of faith we hold about the healing of this sick person. We must go somewhat further than speaking words of faith. We must take faith actions. These are actions that agree with the faith statements we have made. This is literally acting upon God's Word.

James says, "*Faith without works is dead*" (**Jas:2:20**). If we profess to believe something but do not act upon it, then our profession is empty.

So often Jesus demanded faith action from those whom He healed. "*Arise, take up your bed and walk,*" He commanded the lame man (**Mark 2:9**). It is usually at this precise moment, when one begins to act in faith, that a miracle takes place. In contrast, many do not receive healing because at that moment at which they should act in faith, they fail to finally act on the promise.

**h) Faith continues steadfastly**

**Hebrews 1:23** says, "*Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised.)*" Very often our faith is tested in that the result we believe for is not immediately manifest. This is a very critical and important factor in the exercise of faith. True faith has an enduring quality that continues to believe steadfastly even

when the results are not immediately evident. True faith does not *"cast away its confidence, which has great recompense of reward"* (**Heb 10:35**).

Bible faith relates solely to what God's Word declares. It does not depend upon feelings, symptoms or evidences discerned by the natural senses. It believes, confesses and acts upon the Word of God. So when there is no apparent change or improvement, it goes on believing that God's Word is true. Faith always confesses that the Word is true and acts accordingly.

**i) Faith gives the glory to God**

Abraham is well known as a man of great faith. His example in this regard is both inspiring and instructive. **Romans 4:17-21** gives us some helpful principles concerning the operation of his faith. These include the fact that Abraham was careful to give the glory to God. The trouble with many Christians is that God cannot trust them with great exploits of faith because they will take the glory to themselves. They would make themselves appear to be someone great. God is extremely jealous of His glory. He will not share it with another. We also need to be mindful of this fact. Always be careful to give honour and glory to God for the wonderful things He accomplishes. It is not your faith that has performed the miracle; it is God's power. Your faith, at best, has been but a channel for God's power to flow through.

## Chapter 5

### NEW TESTAMENT EVANGELISM AND HEALING

We have seen clearly in preceding chapters that God is a healing God: *"I am the Lord that healeth thee"* (**Ex 15:26**).

Christ is a healing Christ: *"By whose stripes ye were healed"* (**1 Pet 2:24**).

The Word is a healing word: *"He sent His Word and healed them"* (**Psa 107:20**).

The New Testament Church was a healing community: *"And by the hands of the Apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people"* (**Acts 5:12**).

### NEW TESTAMENT EVANGELISM INCLUDED HEALING

When we speak of New Testament evangelism, we mean that type of evangelism that is inspired, anointed and empowered by the Holy Spirit, and attested to by the same signs, wonders and miracles that followed the ministry of the early church. Unfortunately many ministers today rely upon talent, training, personality, organisational ability, publicity etc., and place little dependence upon the Holy Spirit. Hence the scarcity of miraculous signs accompanying their ministry!

The early church had so little of the things in which many today put their faith. They enjoyed no prestige or standing in the community. They did not have magnificent buildings, colleges and universities. They had very little of the social refinements that come from education, culture and social position. Instead, they were the social outcasts of their society. Despite all these apparent disadvantages, they succeeded in turning the world upside down for Christ. If we employed the principles evident in their ministry, we would see the same results today!

Signs, wonders, miracles and healings were an essential factor in the growth of the early church. *The Acts of the Apostles* is full of great miracles that Christ did through those early believers. The book of Acts is not only an historic account of that period; it is the Divine blueprint for the Church in all ages. God never intended the miraculous to disappear with the death of the apostles. Miracles were not only for the Apostolic Age; they are for our day too!

Let us look at the dynamic effect of miracles in the program of the Early Church.

#### 1. Miracles attracted crowds

This was true in the ministry of Jesus.

*"Many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did"*  
(**John 2:23**).

*"And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased"* (**John 6:2**)

It was also true in the ministry of the early apostles. The miracle wrought at the Gate Beautiful (**Acts 3:1-16**) resulted in 5,000 people turning to Christ (**Acts 4:4**).

*"And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people. And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women" (Acts 5:12,14).*

*"There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one" (Acts 5:16).*

## **2. Miracles confirmed the message**

Jesus predicted that supernatural signs would attend the preaching of the true Gospel. *"These signs shall follow them that believe" (Mark 16:17,18)*. One of those five signs was, *"They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark 16:18)*.

*"And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did" (Acts 8:6)*. The inference is clear. The people were impressed by Philip's authority when they saw the miracles attending his ministry, and consequently gave close attention to what he had to say. So great was the response that great joy filled the city (Acts 8:8).

## **3. Miracles met the real needs of communities**

There was always a tremendous crowd around the apostles because so many sick folk wanted to be healed. They came for the healings. Many left with far more - they received the Kingdom. Healing and miracles always attract great crowds. This is as true today as it was in Bible days. It is often hard for people to admit they are sinners in need of a Saviour, but it is not difficult to convince a sick person that he needs healing. He is very much aware of this need. True New Testament evangelism meets the physical needs of man as well as the spiritual ones.

## **4. Miracles proved the resurrection of Christ from the dead**

Many disputed the facts of Christ's resurrection. The many miracles that God began to perform in the name of Jesus convinced the multitudes of the reality of the Resurrection. If Christ were still dead, then His name would have no power. When Peter spoke to the elders concerning the healing of the man at the Gate Beautiful, he said, *"Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole" (Acts 4:10)*. Peter was obviously referring to the miracle, to prove to them that Christ was indeed risen from the dead.

## **5. Miracles brought glory to God**

We read concerning the blind man who was healed, *"And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God; and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God" (Luke 18:43)*. On another occasion Jesus healed a man who was sick of the palsy. *"And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion" (Mark 2:12)*.

Concerning the healing of the lame man at the gate, we read, *"For all men glorified God for that which was done" (Acts 4:21)*.

## 6. Miracles established converts in the power of God

Paul told the Corinthians that he had come, "*Not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God*" (1 Cor 2:4,5).

When the Gospel comes in the supernatural power of God, the converts are established in and by that power. The wisdom of men, (philosophy, logic, rationale) can never establish men and women in the Christian faith.

## EARLY CHURCH PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES THAT PRODUCE HEALINGS

### 1. They preached the Word of God

Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14-36) and Stephen's address (Acts 7) are fine examples of the biblical content of the preaching of the early Church.

Preaching the Word of God carries a divine weight of authority. God always stands behind His Word. "*I will hasten [watch over] my word to perform it*" (Jer 1:12). Preaching the Word of God will also create faith within the hearers as nothing else will. "*Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*" (Rom 10:17).

Their preaching exalted Jesus Christ. He was the grand theme of their message. They quoted all the prophecies that related to Him. They showed how God's Word had predicted His coming and how He had fulfilled all the prophecies. They showed clearly that Jesus was indeed the Son of God.

Their preaching clearly announced the Lordship and authority that God had placed upon Jesus. The title, *Lord Jesus Christ* featured strongly in their preaching and teaching. They taught that God had made Jesus the ultimate authority over all things. *Jesus Christ is Lord* was the underlying theme of all their teachings.

**He is Lord over all things.**

Lord of Creation.

Lord of Redemption.

He is Lord over Satan, having spoiled principalities and powers through His death on the cross.

He is Lord over fear, sickness, disease and demons.

The people were helped to see that when Christ's Lordship was established in their lives, it was also established over their circumstances.

### 2. They exercised spiritual authority

These leaders of the early Church had a deep awareness of the authority that God had placed upon them through Jesus Christ. He had clearly told them, "*Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name; he will give it you*" (John 16:23). He had conferred upon them the "power of attorney," a legally constituted right to act in His name. This means to act in His behalf.

Faced with a pathetic cripple, lame since birth, they had their first opportunity to use their newly given authority. *"Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk"* (**Acts 3:6**).

Peter later made it clear to the astounded audience that it was through the authority in the name of Jesus, and by faith in that name, that the cripple now stood before them whole (**Acts 3:16; 4:10**).

Jesus had commanded them to go forth in His name and to use the authority of His name (**Mark 16:17,18; John 14:12-15 15:16**). This authority is still vested in the Church.

The early disciples knew who they were and what their authority was. They had no confidence in their natural abilities or resources. They had supreme confidence in the authority that lay in the name of Jesus. They knew that the power of God's throne was behind that name. God made all His power and authority available to mankind, in the name of Jesus.

There is healing and wholeness in the name of Jesus. As we speak in that name, demons have to obey us. Sickness has to retreat before the might and authority of that name.

Jesus has given you the authority of this name. He wants you to go forth and exercise authority. Speak in His name. Command sickness to go in that name.

### **3. They encouraged people to be healed**

Peter reached down, took the cripple by the hand and began to lift him to his feet. It was at that precise moment, as the man began to rise in faith, that the power of God went through his body and completely healed him (**Acts 3:7**).

Without the active encouragement of Peter, the miracle might never have happened. Ministering healing involves much more than instructing the sick one, giving only verbal encouragement. Having spoken to him with spiritual authority, in the name of Jesus, Peter now actively assisted him to do what he could never do before. This faith action released the power of God into the man's crippled limbs. His feet and ankles received strength, *"And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with the into the temple, walking and leaping, and praising God"* (**Acts 3:8**).

### **4. They spoke by the power of the Spirit**

In the upper room, the disciples had been filled with the Holy Spirit. It was a life-transforming experience. They were different men when they emerged from that room. One of the more remarkable changes that occurred was the new boldness they manifested. Peter was a prime example. Prior to Pentecost, he had been fearful and acted in cowardice; frightened to even confess that he knew Jesus; afraid of admitting to a young servant girl that he was a follower of Jesus. Now he emerged, filled with new confidence and a holy boldness. He immediately began to release that boldness as he preached Christ to the multitude. These were the very people who had crucified Jesus and of whom he had been so afraid. Now he proclaimed to them the Lordship of Christ with great authority and boldness.

**Acts 4:8** is an example of bold speech inspired by the Holy Spirit, *"Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them..."*

Much modern preaching lacks this quality of boldness. Instead, it is apologetic and weak. One reason is that preachers often present their own ideas and thoughts instead of faithfully proclaiming the Word and the counsels of God. Another reason is that they rely on their powers of oratory instead of the anointing of the Holy Spirit. They preach with the enticing words of men's wisdom rather than demonstrating the power of the Spirit. Paul declined to do this. He, above all others, had the ability to do so. His education and religious training afforded him the ability to speak with the wisdom of men, but he chose instead to rely wholly on the inspiration and anointing of the Spirit. (**1 Cor 2:1-5**)

#### 5. They also acted with boldness

People marvelled at the boldness of Peter and John and recognised this quality of boldness as a result of their having spent time with Jesus (**Acts 4:13**). It had the same marks as did the boldness of Jesus. It was not the brashness of self-confidence, but the quiet authority of those who know that God is with them to confirm and attest His Word in their mouth and actions.

When the local authorities strictly forbade them to speak or teach in the name of Jesus, their response was to seek God earnestly in prayer for an even greater measure of boldness (**Acts 4:29**).

Bold action is born in one who knows his divinely given authority and acts within the areas prescribed by it. In the healing ministry, such action is the result of :

- a) Knowing that God has made a healing covenant.
- b) Having a thorough understanding of the Word of God relative to healing.
- c) Knowing God's will in the matter of healing.
- d) Possessing an assurance of faith that God will heal this person.
- e) Believing that God will confirm His Word with signs following.

#### 6. They performed many signs and wonders among the people

The early Church had a tremendous entrance into the local communities through the great ministry of miracles that God was granting them (**Acts 5:12**).

Miracles dramatise the presentation of the Gospel.

Miracles confirm the truth of the message.

Miracles attract the multitudes (**Acts 5:14**).

Miracles convince the unconverted that the work is truly of God.

This emphasis on miracles, signs and wonders was one of the vital keys with which the Church opened the doors to the heathen world. The Gospel spread so rapidly during those years because of the authority evident in a ministry confirmed by miracles.

Such miracles are still an essential part of the Gospel. The argument of some that miracles no longer attract or convince because people have become too sophisticated, is not substantial. The sections of the church today that are making the greatest impact and experiencing the most rapid growth are largely those groups who are exercising the ministry of the miraculous.

## 7. They consistently taught daily of Jesus Christ

The message of the early Church was a relatively simple one: they preached and taught Jesus Christ (**Acts 5:42**).

Their message was not complicated by denominational emphasis. It was not diluted and compromised by modernistic doctrine. Their teaching was not composed of theological theories.

They did not teach a doctrine, they introduced a person. They did not teach the "letter of the law" that kills. They ministered the Spirit of the Word, that gives life (**2 Cor 3:6**).

Their teachings were not restricted to the temple area. They also taught daily in every home. Jesus was introduced into the practical reality of their daily life. He was not contained in a small religious closet marked, "Open on Sunday only."

When they taught Jesus Christ, they exalted Him as supreme Lord (**Acts 2:36**).

They introduced Him as the only Saviour (**Acts 2:38; 4:12**).

They represented Him as the mighty Healer (**Acts 3:6-8,16**).

They presented Him as the Baptiser in the Holy Ghost (**Acts 2:38**).

They constantly and consistently exalted Him in their preaching and teaching.

Their ministry was inspirational as well as instructive. It was faith-inspiring.

The Bible says that "*Faith cometh by hearing the word of God*" (**Rom 10:17**). Unfortunately, faith "leaves" under much modern preaching. Many preachers today tend to undermine and destroy faith rather than create and strengthen it.

The consistent emphasis upon the miraculous in the ministry of the early Church encouraged the emergence of charismatic leadership. Both Stephen and Philip were originally appointed as deacons to assist in administration (**Acts 6:1-7**). The next time we hear of Stephen, he is preaching a tremendous message to a great crowd of people (**Acts 7**). The next reference made to Philip describes his miracle ministry in Samaria, "*He preached Christ unto them*" (**Acts 8:5**).

The scope of his message and the indication of matters he mentioned in preaching Christ is revealed in those things that began to transpire among his hearers.

Luke says that Philip preached the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus, (and all that the authority of that name could mean to them). What glorious subjects! What scope he had, preaching on these great themes, to proclaim the fullness of the Gospel of Christ.

In the atmosphere of faith created by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God, miracles began to happen. "*For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed*

*with them: and many taken were palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And there was great joy in that city" (Acts 8:7,8).*

Philip is the only person in the New Testament who is specifically designated as *evangelist*. His mission to Samaria must, therefore, be recognised as an example of the ministry of an evangelist. It included preaching Christ, but also the ministry of healing and exorcism. The impact made upon Samaria could never have been so great without the miraculous elements in his ministry.

## **GOD WANTS HIS CHURCH TO BE AN INSTRUMENT OF HEALING TODAY**

God's purpose and desire for the Church of our day is that it might also make a tremendous impact upon the heathen world. This can only happen as we believe God for a great restoration of His miraculous power upon the Church. The Holy Spirit is working throughout the earth to accomplish this. May our hearts and minds be open to the Spirit, that He may accomplish His purpose in us! It has frequently been observed in contemporary church planting within the emerging nations that healings and miracles have been the keys that have opened effectual doors. In fact, this appears to be the most frequently used method of gaining effective entrance into a new area. Many Asian evangelists and church planters enter a new community without any credibility or favour. They trust God to lead them to the person or persons whose hearts He has prepared. It often transpires that one or more of such people are in need of healing and restoration. As God grants healing in answer to prayer the resultant miracle becomes a key that opens the door to that community.

### **EPILOGUE**

I have purposefully emphasised the positive aspects of healing in order to encourage faith in God's desire and willingness to heal. However, I am also very conscious that God cannot be contained in our small boxes of doctrine. The important thing is not that you learn about Divine healing but rather that you grow in your knowledge of the Divine Healer. God is not dictated to by our theological persuasions. He is GOD and ultimately He does according to His own sovereign will. One of the tendencies amongst Christians is to over simplify everything and to go to extremes. In regard to the supernatural, including healing, the extremes are to either deny the supernatural or to expect its manifestation immediately upon demand.

I sincerely trust that you will not be content merely to learn about the principles or doctrine of healing but rather that the study of this subject will stir up within you a stronger desire to truly know The Healer and to understand Him and His ways.

**GERALD ROWLANDS.**