

Healing

James 5:13-18, January 8, 2012

From studying the Bible we are clear that Jesus healed and some of the disciples healed, but there is not exactly a clear command for churches to pursue healing ministries. The question is should a church practice a healing ministry?

Common objections to a healing ministry

General objection

1. All supernatural is nonsense

Theological objections

2. Just for Jesus
3. Just for the apostles
4. Just for sin

Practical objections – because not all people are healed

5. Is it wise? – raising people's expectations
6. Doesn't it create confusion? With an associated sense of unfairness.

1. All supernatural is nonsense

The following is a logic tree demonstrating that life is essentially supernatural and that divine healing makes sense within the framework of human knowledge.

- a. If I was to place all the inorganic materials we find in living creatures in one box.
- b. Then give the box to a team of the best scientists in the world, with the best equipment and funding.
- c. And asked these scientists to create out of this material just one living self replicating single cell organism...
- d. No matter how long they worked at it, all I would get back is a box of dirt because of the following reasons:
- e. The sum total of all human knowledge indicates that inorganic matter does not transition into organic life-forms. Simply – things not alive never become alive.
- f. The sum total of human knowledge indicates that organic life-forms only transition from other organic life-forms. Simply – life only comes from life.
- g. Therefore, if things not alive never become alive, and life only comes from life and there was a time in the universe when there was no life at all. Logically, life could not have come from this universe.
- h. Life could only have come from other life outside our universe.
- i. Genesis 1:11, Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so.
- j. Supernatural – from the medieval Latin word – *supernaturalis* – meaning above or transcending nature. By that definition, and considering all we know and understand about life, life is naturally supernatural – and divine healing fits within that framework.

2. Just for Jesus?

- Was divine healing only a sign of Jesus divinity / his identity as Messiah?
- There is no doubt that healing is used in the Bible to authenticate Jesus identity as Messiah (Isaiah 53:4, Matthew 8:16-17).
- However – healing is also used in scripture as a sign of the Kingdom – the reign of God which Christians are a part of (Matthew 4:23, 9:35, 10:7-8, Luke 9:2, 10:9).
- We live in the era of the Kingdom – it stands to reason that unless the Bible teaches otherwise, healing would be a part of our life in the Kingdom (John 14:12-14, Matthew 28:18-20, Luke 10:9).



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3. Just for the Apostles?

- Were healing miracles only given to the apostles to authenticate their message and demonstrate they had the right to speak on behalf of Jesus and then they disappeared from the life of the church?
- No biblical text supports this view (1 Corinthians 13:9,10 is sometimes cited but the context and meaning don't match).

Non apostles commanded to heal

- The 72 (Luke 10:1-9)
- Philip the evangelist (Acts 8:6-7, not the disciple – first mentioned in Acts 6:5)
- Possibly Stephen (Acts 6:8, the phrases wonders and miraculous signs generally included healing)

4. Just for sin?

- Is the healing spoken of in the Bible only for the healing of sin? (1 Peter 2:24) According to John 3:16 – salvation is the most important ministry of the church because every one of us is going to die from some disease – and only our new heavenly bodies guarantee ultimate healing. Therefore healing from sin has to be the primary goal of the church.
- However the Jewish understanding of Salvation involved God's concern for the whole person – body and soul with its foundation on God's care for his people suffering in slavery (Exodus 3:7, Psalms 103:1-3, Hebrews 10:22).

According to the Bible healing is just for God (Exodus 15:26 –Yahweh-rapha – God heals, 2 Kings 5:14)

5. Is it wise? – Raising people's expectations – because not everyone is healed. Why isn't everyone healed?

- We don't really know.
- Faith is part of the picture (Matthew 17:19-20).
- But not all the picture – Paul – of great faith – healed many (Acts 14:8-10, 16:16-9, 19:11-12, 20:9-12, 28:8-9).
- But not all (2 Timothy 4:20, 1 Timothy 5:23, Including himself - 2 Corinthians 12:7-9).
- Is it wise? According to scripture it is almost impossible not to annoy or upset some people – we need to act for the very best outcome (Matthew 11:18-19).

6. Doesn't it create confusion? With an associated sense of unfairness.

- Yes it does.
- However, in 1 Corinthians 13:12-13 – we see in a mirror dimly – there is confusion there is uncertainty in this life – but the greatest gifts we have to deal with that confusion and uncertainty are faith, hope and love – and the greatest of these is love – and we note that one of the reasons Jesus healed was out of love (Matthew 14:14).

Finally – we do not pursue a healing ministry we pursue God – and from time to time God grants us a glimpse of our final destination – a new life with new heavenly bodies (Revelation 21:3-4).

Questions

1. Did this message help answer any questions you have about healing?
2. Do you have any unanswered questions that concern you about healing?
3. Describe a major health challenge you have faced in the last 12 months?
4. What impact has this made on your life?
5. How has prayer impacted your life during this time?
6. What impact has this made on your faith?