

The Life of Faith #3: Miraculous Faith

THE GIFT OF FAITH

1 Corinthians 12:9 lists faith as one of the supernatural gifts of the Spirit. The gift of faith is distinct from the faith we have in Christ's life and works, which leads to salvation. The gift of faith refers to the supernatural endowment of the Spirit to remove mountains, undertake great enterprises for God's Kingdom, cast out devils, perform miracles, endure great suffering, etc.

1. The gift of faith is a gift.

1 Corinthians 12:7-9 (ESV)

To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit...

The Scriptures tell us that not everyone has all of the gifts of the spirit (1 Corinthians 12:27-30). We shouldn't expect everyone in the church to walk around with mountain-moving gifts of faith. However, we should expect some to possess such gifts. If we don't find the gift of faith in our mix, we are to obey the command of Scripture, and earnestly ask the Lord for the gifts we lack.

1 Corinthians 14:1 (ESV)

Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy.

2. The gift of faith builds up the church.

One distinction between the gift of faith and saving faith is whom it benefits. Faith that is common to every believer is for the salvation, sanctification, and the perseverance of that individual. The gift of faith, on the other hand, is for the edification of the church, and the expansion of God's kingdom. The gift of faith supports and encourages others in their struggles helping them grow in their faith.

Hebrews 12:1 (ESV)

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us...

3. The gift of faith is crucial for God's mission.

Without the gift of faith, God's mission cannot be accomplished. The whole purpose of spiritual gifts is power for the mission.

The missionary in a foreign country hoping to break into a closed community; the church planter asking God to create a healthy, thriving church where previously there had been none; or the college minister looking to launch a new student ministry on campus must all exercise the gift of faith.

Hebrews 11:7 (ESV)

By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

FAITH FOR HEALING

Because of man's sin in the Garden, the curse of sickness and disease is abundant in this fallen world. Consequently, faith for healing is one of the challenges we face.

1. The Atonement of Jesus has made provision for our healing.
 - Scripture affirms that Christ died for our sins *and* for our sicknesses.

Isaiah 53:4-5 (ESV)

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

Matthew 8:16-17 (ESV)

That evening they brought to him many who were oppressed by demons, and he cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick. This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: "He took our illnesses and bore our diseases."

2. God's promises include healing.
 - Scripture affirms that healing has always been a provision of God's Covenant.

Exodus 15:26 (ESV)

...saying, "If you will diligently listen to the voice of the Lord your God, and do that which is right in his eyes, and give ear to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you that I put on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord, your healer."

Matthew 9:35 (ESV)

And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction.

3. Healing demonstrates Christ's destruction of the works of the enemy.

Acts 10:38 (ESV)

...how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.

Hebrews 2:14 (ESV)

Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil...

THE HEALING METHODS OF JESUS

1. Jesus utilized different methods to heal the sick.
 - Three times Jesus laid His hands on people (The Leper, The Man with Dropsy, The Slave's Right Ear).
 - Six times Jesus spoke the word to people (The Centurion's Servant, The Paralytic on the Roof, The Syro-Phoenician Woman, The Dead Man of Nain, The Man at the Pool, Lazarus).
 - Four times Jesus touched and spoke to people (Peter's Mother-In-Law, The Two Blind Men, Jairus's Daughter, Blind Bartimaeus).

- Four times Jesus commanded them to do something (The Man with the Withered Hand, The Ten Lepers, The Child of the Royal Official, The Man Born Blind).
- One time Jesus was touched in faith (The Woman with the Issue of Blood).
- Two times Jesus used other unique methods (The Deaf and Dumb Man, The Blind Man and the Walking Trees).
- One time Jesus used an undisclosed method (The Demon Possessed Blind and Dumb Man).

WHY PEOPLE DO NOT GET HEALED

The Bible records some reasons why people do not get healed.

1. Unbelief.

Matthew 13:58 (ESV)

And he did not do many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.

It is important to note here that the unbelief to which the Scripture is referring in this passage is not unbelief in the possibility of miracles. Generally speaking, people at the time the Gospels were written were more inclined to believe in supernatural activity than the people of our days. The unbelief that Jesus faced in Nazareth was unbelief in His nature and character. They could not get passed the fact that Jesus was the son of Joseph and Mary, and would not accept that he was the promised Messiah, despite what they heard and what they saw.

2. Un-confessed sin.

James 5:16 (ESV)

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

I Corinthians 11:28-30 (ESV)

Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died.

3. God's sovereign purposes.

II Corinthians 12:7 (ESV)

So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited.

DISCUSSION QUESTION

1. How have you personally experienced the gift of faith?

HOMEWORK

Read one of the following and write a brief paragraph summary of any key observations or insights regarding healing that comes from your reading.

1. Appendix A: Healings in the Gospels (read one account of each healing)
2. Appendix B: Healing in Acts

Appendix A: Healings in the Gospels

General Healing

Matthew 4:23-24

The Leper

Matthew 8:1-3

Mark 1:40-42

Luke 5:12-13

The Centurion's Servant

Matthew 8:5-11

Luke 7:2-10

Peter's Mother-in-law

Matthew 8:14-15

Mark 1:30-31

Luke 4:38-39

The Evening Healing Meeting

Matthew 8:16-17

Mark 1:32-34

Luke 4:40

The Paralytic and the Roof

Matthew 9:2-7

Mark 2:2-12

Luke 5:17-25

Jairus and the Woman

Matthew 9:18-25

Mark 5:22-42

Luke 8:41-55

The Two Blind Men

Matthew 9:27-29

General Healing

Matthew 9:35

The Man with the Withered Hand

Matthew 12:10-13

Mark 3:1-5

Luke 6:6-10

General Healing

Matthew 12:15

The Blind and Dumb

Man

Matthew 12:22

The Fringe of His

Garment

Matthew 14:35-36

Mark 6:54-56

Luke 6:17-19

The Syro-Phoenician

Woman

Matthew 15:22-28

Mark 7:26-30

The Crippled and the

Lame

Matthew 15:30-31

Blind Bartimaeus

(and friend)

Matthew 20:29-34

Mark 10:46-52

Luke 18:35-43

General Healing

Mark 3:9-10

The Deaf and Dumb

Man

Mark 7:32-35

The Blind Man and

the Walking Trees

Mark 8:22-25

The Dead Man of

Nain

Luke 7:11-16

General Healings

Luke 7:21,22

General Healings

Luke 9:11

The Mute Man

Luke 11:14

The Man with Dropsy

Luke 14:2-4

The Ten Lepers

Luke 17:12-19

The Slave's Right Ear

Luke 22:50-51

The Child of the Royal Official

John 4:46-53

The Man at the Pool of Bethesda

John 5:2-9

The Man Blind From Birth

John 9:1-7

The Raising of Lazarus

John 11:1-45

The Woman with the Spirit of Infirmary

Luke 13:10-16

Appendix B: Healings in Acts

The Cripple at the Gate Beautiful

Acts 3:1-16

General Healings

Acts 4:33

General Healings

Acts 5:12, 14-16

General Healings

Acts 6:8

General Healings

Acts 8:5-7

Saul's Healing

Acts 9:17-18

The Healing of Aeneas

Acts 9:32-35

The Healing of Tabitha

Acts 9:36-42

The Cripple at Lystra

Acts 14:8-11

General Healings

Acts 19:11-12

The Healing of Eutychus

Acts 20:7-10

The Healing of Publius' Father

Acts 28:7-9