

Healing Grace

Part One

From: Overcoming the Overwhelming:
A 40-Day Journey toward Rediscovering Faith in God

Taken from Day 39: Healing Grace
by C. D. Hildebrand

I've often wondered why the topic of divine healing wasn't addressed at length in at least one of Paul's letters to the churches, and the only answer that makes any sense to me at all is that it simply was not controversial at that time. Miracles routinely happened, and healing was commonplace (Acts 3-4, 4:29-30, 5:12-16, 8:6-7, 8:13, 9:34, 9:36-42, 14:8-12, 15:12, 16:18-19, 19:11-12, 20:9-12, 28:3-6, 28:8, 28:9). However, since then, the church has added and subtracted from this truth just as we have on so many other topics.

How wonderful it would be simply to share the good news about healing (or any other grace, for that matter) without needing to address the multiple layers of contradictory teachings that have become the body of what so many collectively believe. Imparting this good news only seems preferable, but after finishing, there would remain so many ifs, ands, and buts that the whole of the truth about divine healing would be nullified, and my readers would remain confused on the matter. Good news brings faith and freedom, but just as surely as law cancels out grace, teachings bent on discounting the truth of the grace of God cancel out faith in it. My hand being forced, I shall share the truth as purely from Scripture as I can, while also addressing the traditions that have been added over the centuries which strip this glorious good news of its power in our lives.

If you find yourself preparing your list of objections as if going to battle, or you are cheering me on thinking you know what I am going to say next, may I ask you to please put your current understanding of the topic aside? I'm not asking you not to use your brain or forsake analyzing what is being presented here, only that you allow your heart to listen and to hear.

Consider this: many of us, at first, rejected the good news of the gospel of God's grace later to learn that we had it all wrong. What a joy it was to discover that we are completely forgiven, righteous, and holy before God apart from works. Please consider the possibility that, on this topic also, what you were taught or the conclusions to which you came, whether pro or con, might also be incorrect.

If you would, pray like this, "Father, I want to know the truth. If I'm missing something on this topic, please speak to my heart. If I believe things that are not true, show me. If this is not the truth, show me." If after you have heard me, you still disagree, I see no reason to separate into camps, but rather let us agree to disagree knowing that one day we "shall know even as we are known".

This topic becomes confusing because humans are biased and because, as I mentioned before, we tend to form our doctrines around our experiences instead of letting Scripture speak for itself. At one extreme, we have people saying that healing is "guaranteed" to all believers and that if one isn't healed, it's because he lacks faith. On the other side, we have those who absolutely do not believe that divine healing is for believers today, some even declaring that anyone who teaches that it is for today is teaching "doctrines of demons". Both views are ridiculous. That being said, allow me to present the case for the grace of divine healing, keeping in mind that when we hear of the good news of His grace toward us, faith will come.

The God Who Heals You

In Exodus 15, we find the children of Israel rejoicing over the miracle of God opening the Red Sea so they could escape the Egyptians who sought to destroy them. From this glorious victory, Moses led the people into the Wilderness of Shur, where they were three days without water. When they finally found water in Marah, it was not safe to drink. When Moses cried out to the Lord, God showed him a tree, and after he cast it into the bitter water, the water became drinkable. We can only imagine the joy of this scene. These are the verses that follow.

Exodus 15:25-26

There He made a statute and an ordinance for them, and there He tested them, ²⁶and said,

*"If you diligently heed the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. **For I am the Lord who heals you.**"*

Our God calls Himself Jehovah Rapha, the Lord who heals us. Some have said this was referring only to the waters that were healed and that the truth for us today is that God can heal the difficult situations we encounter, and yes, He can, but notice in verse 26 the Lord makes specific reference to diseases.

Each of God's names reveals His character. Jehovah Rapha tells us that God does not bring sickness upon us, but rather healing. Nowhere does God call Himself "the God who makes you ill".

This concept of healing was well-known even before the cross, as expressed here by the Psalmist David. It was viewed as a benefit of God.

Psalm 103:1-5

Bless the Lord, O my soul;

And all that is within me, bless His holy name!

²Bless the Lord, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits:

³Who forgives all your iniquities,

Who heals all your diseases,

⁴Who redeems your life from destruction,

Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies,

⁵Who satisfies your mouth with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

Young's Literal Translation expresses verse three this way,

"Who is forgiving all thine iniquities,

Who is healing all thy diseases."

Even under the Old Covenant, healing of disease was seen as a benefit from God to His people. If this was a benefit for Old Covenant believers, shall it not also be a benefit for us? He is still the God who heals us, and He does not change.

Malachi 3:6
For I am the Lord, I change not.

If You've Seen Me

Understanding the names of God helps us come to recognize His good and benevolent character and loving intentions toward us. These truths about God were revealed through a variety of situations His people faced. God's desire was that the people would know Him, but because their minds were not redeemed, they could not see Him perfectly.

All of this changed when God sent His Son to the earth.

When we see the life of Jesus, when we hear His words, when we observe his actions, we see the Father in a more excellent way. It is imperative that we understand that Jesus is the exact representation of God the Father.

Colossians 1:15-18

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. ¹⁸And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

The Amplified version expresses verse fifteen this way:

He is the exact living image [the essential manifestation] of the unseen God [the visible representation of the invisible].

The above passage is one of the strongest representations of the deity of Jesus. He is God. All things were created through Him and for Him. While on earth, He was not only man but God, as is expressed in His name, Emmanuel, God with us. When we observe Him, we are observing God Himself.

For centuries, mankind longed to know God. Little did they know that He was walking among them. After the resurrection, those who heard Him speak and who lived with Him certainly became aware of this amazing fact. Without knowing it, they had physically walked with God. After the resurrection, they became one spirit with Him. Imagine what this was like for them. They had the memories of His physical presence along with the certainty of His continued abiding presence.

John 1:14, 16-18'

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. ¹²And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. ¹³For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁴No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.

Jesus clearly proclaimed these glorious truths in this passage.

John 14:1-11

"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ²In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there may be also. ⁴And where I go you know, and the way you know."

⁵Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?"

⁶Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

7“If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him.”

8Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.”

*9Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? **He who has seen Me has seen the***

***Father**; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?*

*10Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? **The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. “Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.***

To see Jesus, to hear His teachings and see the works He did, is to see God the Father, for Jesus is the visible image of the invisible God. Jesus’ words were not His alone; they were the Father’s. His words and deeds demonstrate the will of God. When He rebuked the hypocrites, we see God’s attitude toward false religion. When He had compassion on sinners, we see His desire to reconcile. When He healed the sick and cast out demons, we see the will of God to liberate and heal. When we read the gospels, we see God. We understand God’s will. We hear His heart. This good news of who He was while on earth brings faith to our hearts because, as He has always been, He will forever be.

Hebrews 13:8

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

I Am Willing

If we want to know what God’s will is about healing us, let us look at Jesus while He lived on earth. There are no examples at all of Him ever saying that He was unwilling to heal anyone. This one fact about the life of Christ gives us hope.

Jesus was demonstrating the willingness of God to heal us.

Matthew 8:2-3

And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."

³Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

When Jesus said, "I am willing,"

He was speaking of God's willingness to heal, not just His willingness to heal this one person.

Who Heals All Our Diseases

Another amazing demonstration of God's willingness to heal is that Jesus healed all of those who asked, believing. This did not include a person here and another there, but multitudes.

Matthew 12:9-15

*Now when He had departed from there, He went into their synagogue. ¹⁰And behold, there was **a man who had a withered hand**. And they asked Him, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"—that they might accuse Him. ¹¹Then He said to them, "What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out? ¹²Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." ¹³Then He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out, and it was restored as whole as the other. ¹⁴Then the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him. ¹⁵But when Jesus knew it, He withdrew from there. **And great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them all.***

Luke 4:40

*When the sun was setting, **all those who had any that were sick with various diseases brought them to Him**; and He laid His hands on **every one of them and healed them.***

Luke 6:17-19

*And He came down with them and stood on a level place with a crowd of His disciples and **a great multitude of people** from all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, who came **to hear Him and be healed of their diseases**,¹⁸ as well as those who were tormented with unclean spirits. **And they were healed.** ¹⁹And the **whole multitude sought to touch Him**, for power went out from Him and **healed them all.***

Sickness is Not God's Punishment

One fact must be made clear. Not once did Jesus ever place His hands on anyone to make them sick. As some today think God uses sickness to keep us humble or teach us a lesson, then why is there no example of this, not even one, in all of the records of His life? We can rest confidently that this is simply a false tradition. **God does not send sickness on His children to teach them. He speaks to us by His Holy Spirit and teaches us by His grace.** This is good to know because if we are sick or when sickness tries to come on us, we can confidently conclude it is not from God and resist it. When we seek healing, we know He is willing for us to be well and not sick.

This is not to say that if one is sick, he is out of God's will, as if being sick displeases God. We can confidently know that we don't need to submit to illness, and this good news can set us free to believe for healing.

By Whose Wounds You Were Healed

While we call healing a promise of God, it is also a provision. I delight in the fact that when Isaiah prophesied that the Messiah *would* be a healer, he used the present tense as if it was already done even though Jesus had not been wounded.

Isaiah 53:4-6

Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted.

⁵ But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities;

*The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we **are** healed.*

⁶All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

While Jesus walked the earth, one of His main ministries was to heal the sick and set free those who were oppressed by the devil. According to Matthew, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, this was a fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy about Him healing our sicknesses.

Matthew 8:16-17

*When evening had come, **they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed.***

***And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick,** ¹⁷that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:*

"He Himself took our infirmities And bore our sicknesses."

Then Peter looking back on the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy uses not the present tense, but the past—clearly saying that the prophecy had been fulfilled. Notice the reference to us being as sheep who had gone astray which clearly reflects Isaiah 53:6.

1 Peter 2:24-25

*Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you **were** healed.*

²⁵For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

The word "healed" means "to cure, heal, make whole", so some have argued that this statement is not about physical healing but only about the fact that when we come to Jesus, we are made whole. Certainly it is true that Jesus makes us whole in every way, but why exclude the physical body in this verse? Of the 28 times this word is used in the New Testament, 25 of those instances are clearly referring to physical healing. The other three can be seen

as some other type of wholeness. It is irresponsible to claim that 1 Peter 2:24 is *only* referring to the wellness of the spirit and soul and not the body, especially when we consider that **Peter makes clear reference to Isaiah 53:6, and Matthew said that the fact that He healed the sick and cast out demons was a fulfilment of that prophecy.**

The fact that 1 Peter 2:24 is in the past tense should cause hope to spring from within our hearts, for it clearly declares that this is already provided and that just as salvation is already available for all, and we need only receive it, so healing has already been given to us, and it is ours to receive. It is not sinful to ask to be healed, of course, but we can do so not begging for it to be so, but knowing it is already provided.

For those bent on nullifying this glorious truth, please don't put words in my mouth. I'm not cold-heartedly accusing people who are suffering or those who have died of disease as being culpable. I'm declaring that healing for our spirit, soul, and body has already been provided for us in the same way salvation is available to all. To be saved, we believe it and confess it. The same is true with healing.

Christina's Faith

Our daughter, Christina, had an inguinal hernia at about age five. I didn't notice it until she began to take gymnastics. When she would jump, we could see it pop out. So, we showed this to the doctor. He said it wasn't life-threatening, and we could watch it for a while. Over time, it got bigger, about the size of a small walnut. The doctor said that the next step would be surgery. I was not pleased with this option.

So, I told Christina, "When you see it pop out, say, 'By His stripes I am healed.'" Thankfully, she didn't have layers of negative ideas to get in her way of believing. She simply had faith that Jesus was her Healer.

On her next check-up, the doctor said to her, "Jump. Jump again." Then he looked at me and said, "Didn't she have a hernia right here?"

I looked, and sure enough, it was gone. I said, "Yes," and then explained to him what happened.

He said, "Well, I don't know what you did, but whatever it was, it worked."

Christina heard the good news that Jesus was her Healer, and based on the fact that by His wounds she was healed, she received healing.

**The above is Part One of Day 39: Healing Grace.
Part Two is the next entry in 24-7-365**