

No 4. Healing Procedures

Biblical accounts of actual healings by Christ and His disciples show that there are a variety of methods employed, depending on the circumstances and the persons involved.

LAYING ON OF HANDS

The most common practice for imparting healing was the laying on of hands, which provided a point of contact for the Spirit to be imparted. It also has the capacity to release faith in the recipient. Laying on of hands is a ministry for **ALL who believe**.

“These signs will follow those who believe...they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.” Mark 16:18.

Administered by Jesus Who Rejected no One

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 4:40.

“And the whole multitude sought to touch Him, for power went out from Him and healed *them* all.” Luke 6:19.

“When they got out of the boat, immediately the people recognised Him, ran through that whole surrounding region, and began to carry about on beds those who were sick to wherever they heard He was. Wherever He entered, into villages, cities, or the country, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged Him that they might just touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched Him were made well.” Mark 6:55-56.

Administered by the Apostles

“And it happened that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and dysentery. Paul went in to him and prayed, and he laid his hands on him and healed him.” Acts 28:8-9.

“And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people.” Acts 5:12.

“...so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid *them* on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed.” Acts 5:15-16.

Accompanied by Anointing With Oil

Some accounts reveal that laying on of hands was accompanied by anointing with oil, which is a symbol of the Holy Spirit.

“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.” James 5:14-15.

“And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed *them*.” Mark 6:13.

Accompanied by the Use of the Authority of the Name of Jesus Christ

The use of the name of Jesus in ministry is not an optional extra. It signifies before all powers of darkness that oppose this ministry that you are representing the Lord Jesus Christ, and that you have the authority to call on the power associated with His name. It signifies that the Lord is present with you, and directing His power through you.

Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." ⁷ And he took him by the right hand and lifted *him* up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.

What Peter did have was the authority to use the name of Jesus. He didn't have the power to heal in himself, but by ministering in the name of Jesus He could bring Jesus into the ministry. He went on to explain to the bystanders:

"Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?"

And HIS NAME, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, THE FAITH WHICH COMES THROUGH HIM has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all." Acts 3:6-8, 12-13, & 16.

Obviously a healing ministry must be accompanied by faith, but Peter knew where his faith came from. So often we struggle to build up faith, and to say the right words, resulting in stressful fleshly activity that bears no fruit. If our ministry is initiated by the Lord, and completely surrendered to Him, we can trust that He will uphold it by imparting His faith.

**"If we are faithless,
He remains faithful;
He cannot deny Himself."** 2 Tim 2:13.

Sometimes Accompanied by a Command or Action

Sometimes actions or a command like "**stretch out your hand**" were part of a healing ministry, not as an aid to the actual healing process, but as a means of releasing faith in the recipient. Obedience to a command often releases faith, and that is why Peter asked Jesus to command him to come to him on the water. "**And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water."** So He said, "**Come.**" And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. Matt 14:28-29.

The Holy Spirit knows each heart, and the way to release faith in each individual, and it is He who initiates such actions. This stresses the need to be continually open to His guidance in all ministries. e.g. "**He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. And He said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, Sent). So he went and washed, and came back seeing.**" John 9:6-7.

The clay and saliva had no healing properties in their content, but the command and the going gave time for faith to come forth and grow as he acted in obedience. Here are other examples.

"And when He had looked around at them all, He said to the man,* "Stretch out your hand." And he did so, and his hand was restored as whole as the other." Luke 6:10-11.

"Arise, take up your bed and walk." Mark 2:9-10.

Peter **“took him by the right hand and lifted *him up*”** Acts 3:7.

The Presence of the Lord in the Power of the Holy Spirit

When we minister in the name of Jesus, we have His promise that He is in our midst. These readings show that He is personally involved in each ministry.

“Therefore they stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands.” Acts 14:3.

“And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with *them* and confirming the word through the accompanying signs.” Mark 16:20.

WASHING THE DISCIPLES’ FEET

Jesus **“rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel with which He was girded.”** He explained to His disciples, **“What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this... “You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, *your* Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.”** John 13:4-7, 13:13-16.

Of course Jesus did not expect us to take this literally, and go about looking for feet to wash. The feet are our contact with the world, and so this is an enjoiner for us to minister to those who are “dusted up” by living under the pressures of being in contact with worldly activities and people. Taking a broader perspective, it is an instruction to minister to all those in need – the bowed down, the sorrowful, the depressed, and those with debilitating ailments. Healing of those who have been bowed down by their circumstances is a pressing need in our high pressure society.

Should we minister to everyone who presents himself? In washing each others’ feet we should minister in the name of Jesus to all who present themselves, unless we are checked by the Holy Spirit as by word or a strong lack of peace. Words of comfort and love may be all that is needed to restore those who have been cast down.

THE POWER TO HEAL VARIES ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF GOD

While we are engrossed with the circumstances we are involved in, God has an all encompassing view of the Church and the establishing of the Lord’s kingdom on earth. The scope and power of each ministry is measured by God, who sees what is best for the ultimate growth of the Lord’s kingdom.

“Now it happened on a certain day, as He was teaching, that there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting by, who had come out of every town of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was *present* to heal them.” Luke 5:17-26.

“Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them.” Acts 19:11-13.

On the other hand, the negative attitude of the local populace can have a detrimental effect on a healing ministry.

“Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed *them*.” Mark 6:5-6.

THE MINISTRY OF THE ELDERS

“Is anyone among you sick? 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 will save the sick, and THE LORD WILL RAISE HIM UP.” James 5:14-15.

This reading points to a specific kind of ‘sickness.’ The word *asthenei* literally means “to be weak.” The ministry is directed especially, but not exclusively, to those who have been overwhelmed by the pressure of their ministries, through being confronted with spiritual warfare and reprisals from Satan, and through being continually confronted by persistent need and suffering. In such a state of depletion, spiritual, mental, psychological or physical depletion, they are advised to **“call for the elders of the church, who will “pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.”** There are four aspects to the ministry.

1. They are to anoint his head with oil, which is a symbol of the Holy Spirit.

2. This will automatically be accompanied by laying on of hands, providing a point of contact through which the Holy Spirit may flow and impart life.

3. The elders are to pray over him the **“prayer of faith.”** The prayer of faith is a declaration of what Jesus procured for us by His sacrificial death for us on the cross. e.g. **“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.”** 1 Peter 2:24.

The reading says that the prayer of faith **“will save the sick.”** ‘Sozo,’ the Greek word used for save, has these meanings: *“to heal, preserve, save, do well for, be made whole.”* By this prayer of faith every claim of Satan to inflict the sick person is negated, and so it is declared that he is set free, or saved from Satan’s legal rights or power to inflict him.

4. The way is now paved for the next process: **“the Lord will raise him up.”** Notice that this is not a promise of immediate healing. Raising up suggests that a gradual healing process is initiated.

CONFESSING SINS

James continues his discourse on healing by saying, **“Confess *your* trespasses* to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed.”** James 5:16.

Jesus confirmed the relationship between sins and healing in this ministry.

“Then behold, men brought on a bed a man who was paralysed...When He saw their faith, He said to him, Man, your sins are forgiven you.”

In answering the scribes and the Pharisees concerning His authority to forgive sins, Jesus responded by saying, **“Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Rise up and walk’? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins” — He said to the man who was paralysed, “I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.” Immediately he rose up before them, took up what he had been lying on, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.”** Luke 5:18-26.

Jesus warned “...if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” Matt 6:15. In particular, sins such as not forgiving others, dishonouring parents, and not discerning the Lord’s body, have a punishment attached to them that may fall on us if we do not repent and confess our sins.

The dire consequences of not discerning the body, will be discussed in the following study, number five.