

Title: The Book of Mark: Part 3

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Passage: Mark 1:21-34

Big Idea: The Scriptures provide an accurate and healthy perspective on healing



Healing

What do you believe the Bible says about healing?

When it comes to the topic of healing, it's often sensationalized on one end of the spectrum, like many healing preachers on TV do, and on the other end of the spectrum it is minimized and delegitimized.

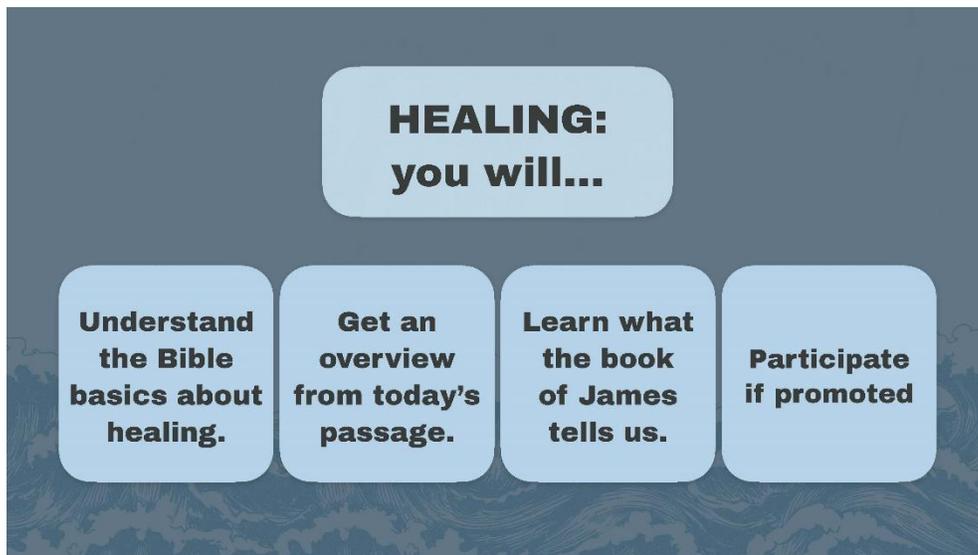
BIG IDEA

The Scriptures provide an accurate and healthy perspective on healing.



Mark records over 15 instances where Jesus healed someone, and the passage today records the first one.

This chart explains the trajectory of today's message and the pieces you will learn and experience:



What does the bible tell us about healing?

In the beginning God created a perfect world with no sickness. But then Adam and Eve sinned, they rebelled against God in the Garden of Eden resulting in them and all of us who have followed to be separated from God because of sin. And one of the effects from the fall is sickness and physical death that impacts every human being.

As a result, God made a way for us to be restored to a relationship with him through his son Jesus. Jesus came, He died on the cross for our sins, and rose so that we might be forgiven. And there is an element of God's ultimate plan that relates to our bodies here and in the next life.

God is often described as our healer. One of his names in Hebrew, was Jehovah-Rapha which means "The Lord Heals."

Exodus 15:26, "I am the LORD, who heals you."

Psalms 103:3, "He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases."

In the Old Testament, priests were involved in bodily healing, not as healers, but more like health care consultants. They would verify that a healing had occurred. The prophets, however, were portrayed as agents of healing.

In the New Testament, Jesus often healed. The gospels record 6 exorcisms and 17 healings. Each gospel mentions several occasions when Jesus healed. Jesus' miracles were a sign that Jesus was ushering in this new kingdom of God and that Satan had met a power greater than his own. Jesus had the authority to heal, defeat evil and sickness, and defeat death which he showed when He rose from the dead.

The bible records other miraculous healings in the early church in Acts as well but not in the epistles which were books that follow. These epistles or letters give some insight on healing and although the gift of healing is mentioned, there are no recorded healings after the book of Acts.

At the same time scripture recognizes doctors and medicinal cures. Luke, a disciple, was himself a doctor. If you are in the medical profession, see yourself as agents of healing. You have a powerful, important place in God's plan to care for the sick and dying. I affirm and deeply appreciate your work which can be so stressful, especially as a result of and during the height of the Covid pandemic.

It is important to understand that the worldview expressed in the Bible differs from our western mindset on sickness and disease.

Today disease has to do with something in your body that needs biomedical intervention. A biblical worldview, however, views sickness in more holistic ways: with physical, spiritual, social, relational, and emotional components. Fortunately, more and more doctors are beginning to treat disease more holistically.

You see, God is concerned with our whole being. The Hebrew word shalom means completeness, wholeness, and not just wholeness of our body but our souls as well.

When Jesus healed, he was most concerned about the whole person, body, soul, and spirit, not simply the body. Although we are unified as one person having body, soul, and spirit.

So, when the Scriptures speaks of physical healings, while they historically occurred, they also serve as symbols of how God wants to heal all of us spiritually.

That's a very brief overview of healing in the bible but we will get a more detailed look at the practical side further on.

Let's now look at today's: Mark 1.21-34, and then move to see what the book of James says about healing.

²¹ They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. ²² The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. ²³ Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an impure spirit cried out, ²⁴ "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!"

²⁵ "Be quiet!" said Jesus sternly. "Come out of him!" ²⁶ The impure spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.

²⁷ The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, "What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to impure spirits and they obey him." ²⁸ News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.

²⁹ As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. ³⁰ Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they immediately told Jesus about her. ³¹ So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them.

³² That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. ³³ The whole town gathered at the door, ³⁴ and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.

Mark 1.21-34

Mark 1:21, "They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach."

Jesus had just called four fishermen to follow Him to become fishers of men. They would become the first four Apostles.

So, with these guys in tow, he takes them into the synagogue. It was Jewish customs to allow visiting preachers to preach, and Jesus begins to preach.

Mark 1.22, "The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law."

His preaching was quite different from the lackluster preaching of the other teachers, called scribes who were the scholars of the day. Jesus' preaching carried great authority because it came straight from God and the people in the audience immediately recognized it. Later in His ministry he often had conflict with these religious leaders.

Mark 1.23-24, “Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an evil spirit cried out, ‘What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!’”

This demon possessed man recognized who Jesus was and cried out, but Jesus says:

Mark 1.25-26 “‘Be quiet’ said Jesus sternly. ‘Come out of him!’ The evil spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.”

Jesus had no scripted magic formula, but he performed an exorcism right then and there.

Mark 1.27, “The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, ‘What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to evil spirits and they obey him.’”

So, this audience experienced not only Jesus’ power and authority through His preaching, but also through this miracle. Thus, they were amazed. As a result, this happened:

Mark 1.28, “News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.”

This must have given hope to people who had been sick for so long.

Mark 1.29-31, “As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. Simon’s mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told Jesus about her. So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them.”

Here we have in the book of Mark Jesus’ first recorded physical healing of Simon’s mother. And she immediately began to serve them, probably fixing them a meal.

Well, no rest for Jesus because of what comes next:

Mark 1.32-34, “That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. The whole town gathered at the door, and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.”

After sunset would have been the following day according to how the Jews determined when the sabbath began and ended. So, the day after the Sabbath, this crowd of people brought Jesus their sick friends and family members and he healed them.

He told the demons he cast out of people, to not speak because it was not the time yet to reveal his Messiahship. He would reveal it at God the Father’s timing.

Can you imagine being one of these first four disciples to witness all this after having had been a fisherman? Their minds were probably spinning at the impact of these events. We find out later in the book of Mark how the disciples struggled to understand who Jesus was and understand His mission.

Let’s now look at what the book of James tells us about healing.

¹³ Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise. ¹⁴ Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵ And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. ¹⁶ Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

James 5:13-16

This passage, if it’s about anything, is about prayer: we are to pray when in times of suffering, success, sickness, and sin.

James 5:13, “Is any one of you in trouble?”

This trouble includes any kind:

- sickness,
- hardship,
- persecution,
- suffering,
- loss,
- disappointment,
- emotional pain,
- stressed out.

Is anyone happy?

At the other end of the spectrum of subjects pray about are good experiences like when...

- you get a raise,
- you ask your teenager it’s time to get up and take the trash out and their response is, “sure mom, glad to and can I make breakfast for you as well.” That might be a time to check your teen for a fever. If you are a teen, I have had three, and I understand how we as parents can be. So, I’m not picking on you.
- your new baby sleeps all through the night,
- you get a good boyfriend or girlfriend,
- in general, good things happen to you that make you happy.

He writes that we should talk to God even when good things are happening.

This next section gets more difficult.

James 5.14, “Is any one of you sick?”

This could mean weak or ill, but the main focus here is physical sickness which is too much for you to bear alone. He doesn’t say we should go to the elders for a sniffle, sore back, or every time you’re sick. I believe it also includes mental, emotional, spiritual, and relational problems/sickness.

James 5.14, “He should call the elders of the church”

Who calls? The sick person. That person takes the initiative. We see this pattern in Jesus’ ministry. He often waited for the sick person to come to Him and ask for healing, although not always.

Who is called? The elders/church leaders. These leaders represent the church. Notice it says nothing about them having any gift of healing.

One reason we call others when we are really sick, is that sometimes things are so difficult that it is tougher to pray for ourselves. Therefore, we must enlist help from other believers, church leaders.

James expands this responsibility that all believers can pray for each other. Sometimes a life group is the best group of people to pray for you because they know you most.

James 5.14, “to pray over him and anoint him with oil”

This was probably olive oil which was used as medicine, a symbol of the holy spirit, and a symbol of health and vitality. Kings were anointed as a visible sign of God’s presence. This oil was not a magic potion or a charm or something through which grace is imparted but a humble reminder that all healing must come from God. The oil is subsidiary and secondary to the praying

This is the only place in the New Testament letters and epistles where oil was used so it is not even required for such prayers.

Because oil was a common medicine James could be implying that in the healing process we can pair spiritual resources with natural resources like medicine and doctors.

James 5.14, “in the name of the Lord.”

This is not some incantation but rather a way to communicate submission to his will and authority. It implies that all healing is ultimately God’s doing and this is an opportunity for his power to intervene in this situation.

We can come to Jesus with the confidence that he wants the very best for us, but not with stubborn insistence that he must do what we ask. You better heal this person.

We obey scripture (pray for the sick person) and leave the results to God, whatever the results may be, healing or not.

Verse 15 is a mysterious part.

James 5.15, “And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well;”

Some believe that since Jesus died for all our sin and sickness, all we have to do is claim it, claim our health and if no healing occurs, I must not have mustered enough faith or the right kind of faith. This kind of thinking makes faith a commodity in different strengths like regular Tylenol and extra strength Tylenol. Some of you get the extra strength and some of you only get aspirin.

It might go like this. To pray for healing from a cold might take 1 unit of faith whereas an abscessed tooth might take 25 units and cancer 1,000 units.

That kind of measuring faith by its apparent results leads down a road you don’t want to go. It does 3 things:

1. It removes emphasis on God and places it on me and my faith
2. It induces guilt. It must be my fault for a lack of faith.
3. It might lead some to neglect sound medical care which occasionally comes up in the news when a child dies because the parents believed God would heal him and did not get the medical treatment they needed.

This is an unusual expression not found anywhere else in the New Testament. In one sense we are to offer all prayers in faith, or they would not be biblical prayers.

So, when church leaders or anyone prays for any kind of healing, we come with an attitude of complete trust in God that He can and will do what is needed in every situation. He will do what is best. We must, by faith, trust in His goodness and knowledge and power no matter the visible outcome.

We come, express our earnest desire, and leave the case with Him.

In Jesus case,

- sometimes he healed in response to the sick person’s faith
- sometimes a lack of faith prevented Jesus from healing
- sometimes he healed and faith was not even mentioned
- sometimes to instill faith, he would heal so that people would believe that he was the true Messiah, like this first miracle of healing we read in Mark 1 when Jesus healed Simon and Andrew’s mother of a fever.

The second piece of this verse says, “will make the sick person well”. The word “well” is one word which means to save.

We can think of healing as getting rid of the disease: rewinding the clock to make the person go back to their previous state.

Biblical healing is a much broader concept that involves coming into a right relationship with God first and foremost, then it touches every part of life, body, soul, and spirit.

It is often God's will to physically heal our sicknesses. That is why this passage is in the Bible.

It is not always God's will to heal physically, or no believer would ever die. The bible includes examples of people who were not healed although they prayed for it. Paul, a super Christian prayed for his thorn (probably an eye disease) to be removed. He prayed a lot! God's response: "my grace is sufficient for you". Physical healing did not occur.

When healing occurs, it may be instant or over a longer time period. It may be what we would call miraculous, or due to medicine or surgery or the body's healing process. We cannot propose a "one size fits all" response to sickness and healing.

[James 5.15, "the Lord will raise him up."](#)

This power to heal is not:

- channeled through the oil,
- because of the leaders or their faith,
- because of a proper quantity and quality of faith,
- or even because of our prayers.

It is because Jesus is the ultimate healer, it implies a potential tie exists between sin and sickness. That's why James writes this passage.

[James 5.15, "If he has sinned, he will be forgiven"](#)

Three ideas about this verse:

1. All sickness is fundamentally the result of sin, the fall,
2. Some sickness is the direct result of sin in our lives. God chastises us for our sin because we violated God's moral laws. God's fundamental desire is that we are freed from sin and its effects.
3. Some sickness results from the bad choices we've made. We've not taken care of our body and the bible says we reap what we sow.

Imagine a friend says, "Please pray for me, I've got this terrible cough." But your friend is a chain smoker. What do you pray for, his cough or that he changes his behavior which probably causes his cough. He needs to quit smoking.

There is a potential tie of sin to sickness, but not all sickness is due to sin. Sometimes it is to glorify God.

[John 9:1-3, "As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. 'Teacher,' his disciples asked him, 'why was this man born blind? Was it a result of his own sins or those of his parents?' 'It was not because of his sins or his parents' sins,' Jesus answered. 'He was born blind so the power of God could be seen in him.'"](#)

So, potentially there exists a spiritual component to sickness. Sin is a contributing factor, from the fall and from our choices. That's why he says in verse 16 to confess our sins. It seems pointless to pray for healing if we harbor sin in our hearts and refuse to confess it.

When we confess sins, it removes a block to God's power and sin affects the body's healing power. A guilty conscience physically affects your body. It dampens your immune system and affects other part of our body. King David wrote about the effect of his sin and refusal to confess his sin.

Sin has a separating effect, it separates us from God, God's best for us, from others, and from his power.

When we confess and are forgiven, God removes that barrier, we can be restored back to right community with God and with others. Sometimes we must confess our sins to one another when we've offended another. It provides a pathway back to a healed relationship.

How do we pray for the sick?

1. Aggressively

2. Fervently

The prayer of a person living right with God is something powerful to be reckoned with.

3. Submissively

F.B. Meyer writes, "The greatest tragedy is not unanswered prayer, but unoffered prayer."

When I've prayed for some physical or relational or emotional healing and it didn't occur, I take great comfort in this promise of what heaven will be like.

Revelation 21:4, "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

Now for this special prayer time.

In our service, there will be elders and their wives ready to anoint people with oil and prayer over them. For those watching online, a number is available to text your prayer requests and have them prayed for. This number is also available for those reading this transcript. If you have a prayer request that you are being prompted to bring forward, text it to this number: [226-499-8071](tel:226-499-8071) and someone on our pastoral staff will pray for you.

Don't be ashamed to ask for prayer. Don't let fear of awkwardness keep you from seeking prayer.