



## Jesus' Ministry of Healing

### Summarized Position Statement

God's master vision for the Kingdom of God includes a restoration of all things through Jesus Christ. Even now, Jesus has begun to bring healing to all aspects of creation, and particularly to all aspects of human existence. As Jesus' friends and co-laborers, we are ministers of His healing. Jesus manifests his healing love, compassion, and care by giving gifts of healings through the Holy Spirit, dispensed in God's Sovereignty and timing.

### Complete Position Statement

As Paul informs the Corinthian church about the manifestations of the Holy Spirit, he says that some are given "gifts of healing." (1 Cor. 12:9) To understand these gifts of healing, and their purpose, we need to be reminded of the overall story of redemption.

When the apostle Peter preached to those who were marveling over the healing of a man crippled from birth by the name Jesus, Peter called the crowd to repent and turn to God that their sins may be forgiven, that God may send times of refreshing, and that God may send the Messiah [again]. Peter then explained that [Jesus] "must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to *restore everything*." (Acts 3:21)

As Jesus appeared to the disciple, John, in a series of visions while John was exiled on the island of Patmos, he said to John, "I am *making all things new!*" (Rev. 21:5)

Though the human family had plunged itself into ruin and misery by rebelling against God, God in His mercy and love, is bringing a complete redemption through Jesus Christ. Jesus is making all things new, and will restore all things!

As Jesus proclaimed the good news of the Kingdom of God, he accompanied that proclamation with a gracious restoration of human hearts and lives. Jesus' restorative work was all-encompassing as He healed people's bodies, souls, and spirits. Wherever Jesus, and His apostles went preaching and teaching, the spoken word was accompanied by healings and miracles that accomplished this restorative work.

Jesus not only delegated power and authority to His disciples for driving out demons and healing the sick (Luke 9; Matthew 10), but He also stated that "all who had faith in Him would do the things he is doing and even greater things because He is going to the Father." (John 14:12)

Jesus continues to show His concern, love and power by giving gifts of healings to His body, and these gifts are not limited to a select few. The Holy Spirit can express the gifts of Jesus' healing ministry through any Christian.

Jesus' healing ministry is extensive precisely because He is restoring all things. Although much time could be dedicated to studying and growing into Jesus' healing ministry, we will here only briefly state the main forms of healing Jesus brings through His body as He gives gifts of healing.

## Forms of Healing

### Spiritual Healing

Jesus restores us into a relationship with God the Father. Reconciliation with God takes place through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. By faith in Jesus, we are born again through the Holy Spirit, becoming a new creation, and being brought into the new reality of the Kingdom of God. (John 3:3-8; 2 Corinthians 5:17-19)

This most basic form of healing is the root and wellspring of all other forms of healing. It is often the first step of being restored to God's original design. As we become recipients of God's grace, restored to intimacy and fellowship with God, the stage is set for us not only to receive but also to participate in ministering each of the other forms of healing.

### Inner Healing

Our own sins, and those of others against us, leave us all in need of Jesus' restorative work. We have been bruised, wounded, and malformed by hurtful words, actions, and poor choices. Whether from scorn or derision, abuse or neglect, abandonment or rejection, critical words or lack of affirmation, untrue thought patterns or sinful habits, we are all in need of inner healing. We need to be restored to wholeness, renewed in the image of God. We need to have our minds renewed, our hearts healed, and our wills purified. Jesus came to "bind up the brokenhearted!" (Isaiah 61:1; Luke 4)

As we, like the Samaritan woman in John 4, encounter Jesus, a process of healing begins to unfold that includes a remodeling and restoration of identity in and through Jesus. Shame melts away. Forgiveness cleanses. Old identities fade and die, and a new identity is received. The love of Jesus Christ, which surpasses understanding, transforms every crevice of our hearts and lives! As this process unfolds, we increasingly reflect the character of Christ, who is healing us. This is part of the process of sanctification, which comes from the work of the Holy Spirit within us.

### Physical Healing

Physical healing takes place as God restores health to parts of our physical body. Jesus Christ, the first to be resurrected from the dead, has promised eternal life to all who believe in Him. Through Jesus, we are brought into the river of life and promised a glorious, imperishable body at His return.

However, even now the physical healing ministry of Jesus in the New Testament, remains at work through the Church by the Holy Spirit, and is a harbinger of the abundant life in the Kingdom to be fulfilled in the new heaven and new earth (John 11:25-26).

Jesus mercifully welcomes all who seek His healing and commends the vital roles of righteousness, faith and perseverance in asking for such healing. However, we must also make room for both redemptive suffering, allowed by God, as well as God's sovereign wisdom in deciding when and how He will heal. In all our asking, we remember and trust that "nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:39)

A part of what this means, practically, is that while God, who is full of tender compassion and deep love, welcomes our every prayer for healing, we may not ever view ourselves as entitled to receiving healing in this era of waiting for Christ's return; nor may we claim that healing is ours, as some do on the basis of passages like Isaiah 53:5, "And by his wounds we are healed." For although the Hebrew notion of healing certainly includes all aspects of being "thoroughly made whole," we understand from the rest of Scripture that the completeness of this healing may only find its fulfillment at Christ's return.

Therefore, while we encourage and exhort all to express faith in God's gracious willingness to heal, we also believe that laying claim to healing, without leaving room for the sovereignty and providence of God, is biblically unfaithful and pastorally harmful.

### **Relational Healing**

Grace and forgiveness are extended to us, enabling life within the Kingdom of God. Even as Jesus restores our relationship to God the Father, so His healing grace and forgiveness are to be extended from us in our relationships with others. In Jesus Christ, there is to be no more division, but rather one new humanity.

Jesus is bringing healing to the ruptured relationship between male and female, restoring mutuality, trust, and love. Jesus is bringing healing to societal, ethnic, and racial divides, as Paul so beautifully explained when He said: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:28)

When Jesus returns, relational healing will be completed as people of all nations, tribes and people groups gather before His throne, laying down their crowns and bringing Him a joyfully unified song of worship. Indeed, the river of life will completely renew human relationships at that time!

### **Restoration of the Created Order**

Sin affects the whole created order, as Paul says in Romans 8:20-22. Therefore, in God's Kingdom design, healing extends beyond the human race to include the whole created order. When creation is set free from its bondage to decay, death will no longer ravage creatures, and the land will no longer languish. The restoration of human beings will result

in responsible dominion over the natural world. Even the land itself will be returned to fruitfulness and abundance as the river of life flows through it. The prophet Isaiah saw a vision and prophesied about this type of healing which fills the coming Kingdom with “shalom,” or peace, where all things are restored to God’s created order. (Isaiah 11:6-9) This process of healing all of the effects of the Fall will be consummated in the New Heavens and the New Earth, after Jesus returns. However, we who belong to Jesus have already started to experience it now!

### **Overcoming the Devil and Casting Out Evil Spirits**

As Jesus visited the region of the Gerasenes, a man afflicted by many evil spirits came out of the tombs to meet Him. The man's life was in shambles as he had been reduced to nakedness, self-cutting, and madness. Jesus confidently drove every demon out of this poor man, restoring him to his right mind and giving him back his dignity. (Mark 5:1-20)

As Jesus taught in the synagogue, he regularly partnered that teaching with deliverance from evil spirits. On one such occasion, Luke records Jesus driving an unclean spirit (demon) out of a woman who had been crippled by it for eighteen years, setting her free and restoring her ability to walk! (Luke 13:10-13)

Jesus' work of restoring humanity and creation to God’s original purposes involves the necessary warfare of overcoming and driving out evil spirits. As John wrote: “The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.” (1 John 3:8) Indeed, as Peter testified about Jesus: “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil.” (Acts 10:38)

Today, through the Holy Spirit, Jesus continues to bring healing in many ways, including through the work of deliverance from evil spirits. Jesus does this, by the Holy Spirit, through His Church, in order that Jesus’ own words may be fulfilled:

“Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons...”  
(Mark 16:15-17)

## Summary

God's master vision for the Kingdom of God includes a restoration of all things through Jesus Christ. Even now, Jesus is working to bring healing to all aspects of creation, and particularly to all aspects of human existence. As Jesus' friends and co-laborers, we are ministers of His healing. Jesus manifests his healing love, compassion, and care by giving gifts of healings through the Holy Spirit, dispensed in God's Sovereignty and timing.

We begin to receive and express Jesus' gifts of healings by allowing Jesus' compassion to move us towards the brokenness we see around us. As we see need for healing, we ask merciful Jesus to give gifts of and to minister healing.

Receiving and expressing these gifts of healing requires also receiving and expressing the gift of faith. It is our experience that this gift of faith sometimes comes as God gives a clear sense of what He desires to do in a given situation - perhaps through a prophetic word or a word of knowledge.

However, it is also our experience that in situations where we have far less certainty about what God intends to do, we find faith to pray or act boldly rising up as we meditate on His character, and are able to pray with faith in God, trusting His absolute goodness and wisdom, despite not knowing His particular intention. As we pray this way, we often see good fruit, and so we praise God for all of the ways that He works through His gifts, as He is making all things new in His perfect timing. We praise God for the gifts of healing that He gives now, even as we long for Jesus to return and fully restore all things!

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### - REVISION HISTORY -

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