

# Divine Healing

Part 3: Jesus Demonstrated the Will of God

BRAD ETTORE  
AGATHOS CHURCH  
AUGUST 21ST, 2016

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## Full Text (for reading on your own)

### *Envisioning Healing*

Wouldn't it be exciting if you became a person who was going out praying for the sick and seeing the healing power of God manifest in their bodies? If you haven't already been experiencing that or walking in that, take a moment to really imagine just how exciting that would be!

It is really good to have a goal. Anytime you want to accomplish something it's your goal that becomes your target. A goal will energize you. If you want to work out and get into shape, and you have no particular goal it is much harder to make progress. You can get in shape without a specific goal, but most don't. Instead, if you have a specific and timely goal such as to sign up for a marathon that runs in six months, it makes your energy in your workouts skyrocket. You find yourself motivated with thoughts like "I've got to get into shape! I'm signed up and I have paid my fee. In six months I am going to have to get out there with the crowds and run!" Being able to picture those realities in your head really energizes you. Similarly, if you were trying to learn Italian, buying a plane ticket for 9 months from now will motivate you to learn that language because you've got a goal in mind.

Now, really think about it and imagine yourself sitting outside a grocery store like I was the other day at Whole Foods and you see someone walking in limping with an obvious problem in their hip joint. They cannot even walk correctly. Imagine saying "excuse me can I talk to you for a minute?" and they say "yeah, sure." You continue "I just noticed your leg seems to be hurting you ..." and you talk to them about praying for them and they are open to it. As you pray for them, you hear a snap, crackle, and pop as their hip joint is instantaneously realigned. Your new friend exclaims "oh my gosh this is crazy! I haven't walked normal my whole life!" And then they just start crying as it occurs to them just how good God is!

We need to envision and imagine things like this happening in our lives. This has happened in my (Pastor Brad) life hundreds of times already. To me, I'm really kind of disappointed in myself that it is only hundreds of times. To be plain, it should be thousands of testimonies. I guarantee you it could be thousands. I don't need any more faith than I already have. It is all about overcoming fear. So many times I have seen someone like the person walking into Whole Foods this past week and let

it go. I looked around to see whose around me. I wasn't so much concerned for myself as I thought that he would be really embarrassed if I tried to do it. But I still think to myself that I should have just gone to where he was and pulled him aside so that the location could work. Nevertheless, it's good that I'm thinking it through to consider how I could have done that so that I don't put him in an embarrassing situation. So, I'm learning from that recent missed opportunity, but so many of those situations are passed up out of fear. I'm working on overcoming that; I want to get better at not caving to fear.

Healing is exciting; it is really exciting. I have many stories of people who have been supernaturally healed their lives are permanently changed because *I took the time* to find out God's will about healing, understood it, and then I ministered His will to other people. Their lives are now permanently changed by an undeniable expression of His love and goodness towards them.

So, as you study divine healing, have that goal in your mind right now. Envision yourself in a Whole Foods, a park, or a mall. Envision yourself at a family reunion or in the break room at work. Envision yourself praying for your children or spouse. Envision yourself laying your hands on the sick and seeing them recover. Having that vision as you hear the Word about healing will help you absorb it. The vision will create the hunger in your heart that says "hey I need this Word!" A hungry heart opens its gates (which include your eyes and ears). Vision creates hunger and hunger opens your heart to hear the Word.

Do not allow yourself to be content with only a mental assent to God healing people. Instead ask yourself "is divine healing operating in my life?" If the answer to that is "no" then conclude "obviously I need some more understanding! Lord give me what I need!" God may just have one pearl for you right now that will unlock a door for you. But, you have to be ready for it. You can't mine for gold with a cursory glance or a flippant attitude. The very nugget you are looking for is found through diligently sifting through what is before you. You have to be ready to absorb the Word and in so doing you will find the key that unlocks the next new territory for you.

### ***Jesus Demonstrates the Father's Will that ALL would be Healed***

Jesus demonstrated the will of God perfectly. We may tend to separate Jesus and the Father in our minds. We think "well that is Jesus..." but we consider the Father as a little bit stiffer and a little bit harder. We want to get closer to Jesus, but we're a little more afraid of the Father. Many believers think that way. But, Jesus says that if you are thinking that way you totally misunderstand My Father. How do we know that? Look at John 5:19 and listen to Jesus' own words. *"Then Jesus answered and said to them, 'Most assuredly I say to you the Son can do nothing of Himself but what he sees the Father do.'"*

Jesus can do nothing of Himself but what He sees the Father do. What does that mean? Everything Jesus did the Father did first. Jesus saw it in the Spirit. Jesus was just imitating the Father. Jesus said *“I do nothing but what I see the Father do. For whatever He does the Son also does in like manner.”* So, when you are seeing Jesus, guess what? You are seeing the Father, that is the Father, it is not something else, Jesus is not something else, He is the Father.

John 14:7-10 says this, *“If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him.”* Philip said to Him, *“Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.”* Jesus 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’? Do 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.”* There it is, clear as day, Jesus told us “if you see me doing it that is the Father doing it in me. I see it and I do it. I look at what He does and I do it in like manner.” Jesus’ works are the Father’s works. Jesus was revealing the will of the Father. That is what He came here for – to show us the Father.

So, let’s look at how Jesus revealed the will of the Father as it relates to healing. In Mathew 9:35. we read *“Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.”* Jesus healed **every** sickness and **every** disease among the people. Now, I want you to use some logic here. Jesus did it all the time. For instance He asked “which of you having a son that asked for bread would give Him a rock? Or if He asked for a fish would give Him a serpent?” Jesus was using logic to make a point saying “how much more my Father – if you ask a good thing from Him, would He not give it to you?”

Jesus healed **every** sickness and **every** disease in all these cities that He went into. (Mt. 9:35) So, let me ask you a question using logic: does that say to you that the Father might heal some people and not heal others? If it were the case this would be an incredible phenomenon that the particular cities He chose happened to be cities in which everyone there fell under the will of the Father to be healed. Wow, that would be really weird! It doesn’t even make sense! The reason Jesus healed **every** single person in all the cities that He went to was because it must clearly be the will of the Father to heal **every** sickness and **every** disease!

Matthew 12:15 says, *“And great multitudes followed Him.”* Picture that in your imagination! Great multitudes followed Him. It doesn’t even say “a lot of people,” it doesn’t even say “multitudes,” it says *great multitudes*. Do you know what that means? That is like the whole city following Him, and what did He do with them? Jesus Healed them! Whom did He heal? “He healed them **all!**” Have you ever looked up the word for “all” in the Greek? It means “all”!

Now do you see anything in Matthew 12:15 that would signify Jesus stopping and asking the Father concerning each person “do you want to heal this one? What about this one? What about that one? What about this one?” No! Great multitudes followed them and He healed them all. It is the will of the Father to heal **all**. It is God’s will to heal every single person every single time without exception. Every single time we pray for healing and healing does not take place the hold-up is on the part of man, it is not on the part of God. His will has been revealed. God hates sickness, it is a bad thing, and He wants it gone. Sickness came into the world through sin, not God.

Lets continue in Matthew’s gospel account. We’re staying in just Matthew right now so that you know that each of these verse are all speaking to different situations. In Mathew 15:30 we read “*Then great multitudes came to Him, having with them the lame, blind, mute, maimed, and many others; and they laid them down at Jesus’ feet, and He healed them.*”

Here we have a very large crowd again. It was not two people! Great multitudes give us a larger sampling which gives us even stronger evidence of the fact that Jesus was not only healing some people. So, we see that great multitudes came to Him having with them not just people with colds, (not that it matters to God it only matters in our mind) but the lame, blind, mute, maimed and many others, These were some bad cases. And the people laid the sick and diseased and disabled down at Jesus’ feet and Jesus healed them. He healed them. He healed them, period, end of story.

Likewise in Matthew 19:2 we see that the “*blind and the lame came to Him in the temple.*” What did Jesus do with them? “*He healed them.*”

Let’s look at one more from 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, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: ‘He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses.’*”

This one is awesome it really just says it so clearly. Jesus healed all who were sick. In fact, in the Gospels alone, there are seventeen different occasions where it says Jesus healed them **all**. Seventeen different occasions where He healed them all! Additionally, there are forty-seven occasions where they were individuals or a couple of people (but it wasn’t a crowd) and it says “He healed them.” Seventeen times He healed them all. The other 47 times they were just individuals that came to Him. For instance, the blind man yelled out ‘Son of David’ and Jesus said, ‘what do you want?’ “That I may receive my sight.” The man was healed. In those kind of stories Jesus healed them all because there was only one person.

Now this is Jesus revealing the will of the Father, nowhere do you find Jesus turning anybody away for healing, anyone who came to Jesus for healing He said “yes.” Jesus’ answer was “yes, yes, yes, yes, yes” to all who came to Him for healing. In fact, John said there are not enough books in the world

to hold account of all the miracles Jesus did. "Lord do you want to heal me?" "Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes." So, when you come to God what do you think His answer is? "Yes!" What about my knee? "Yes." Back? "Yes." Flu? "Yes." Back again? "Yes." Knee again? "Yes." My aunt? "Yes." Cancer? "Yes. Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes!"

All the promises of God are yes and Amen in Christ Jesus! It is because of Jesus that the answer is yes! It is always "yes." It is God's will to heal every single person all the time immediately without exception.

### *Sickness is a Curse and Jesus Took that Curse from Us!*

Sickness came from sin - not your or my sin, but the sin in the garden of Eden, the fall of man introduced sickness. Do not think that because sin and sickness are connected that anytime we see sickness in someone's life that obviously there is sin in their life.

Sickness is a curse. Look at Deuteronomy 28 which lists blessings in one half verses 1-14, starting at verse 15 it lists the curses. Guess where sickness is found in that chapter? It is under the area of cursing. God says sickness is a curse. Sickness is not a blessing. God is not using sickness to teach you anything. It is not a blessing it is a curse. Galatians 3 says that Jesus bore the curse for us that the blessing of Abraham might come upon us. That is Deuteronomy 28 that Paul is referring to in Galatians 3. Jesus bore all the curses so that all the blessings would be on us. What is our portion of Deuteronomy 28? The blessing. Sickness is not in that list! Don't ever buy into anything that says maybe God is causing or using sickness. No, no, no God is not doing anything other than healing sickness!

As an aside, there is a whole group of people in the Body of Christ that would be referred to as being in the "faith camp." I (Pastor Brad) am absolutely one of those people. I would 100% count myself in the faith camp, and considering that God says the just shall live by faith it is really good to be found there, you do not want to be found outside the faith camp! That said, the vast majority of the people in the faith camp will say "God never makes someone sick. Sickness is of the devil and therefore God never makes someone sick." Unfortunately, that part of what they say is not true.

It is too obvious in Scripture, God has made people sick. But, consider where you find those examples. They are in the Old Testament. It was a form of punishment. Now God would never put sin on people but He would put sickness on people. But, on the cross, God put sickness on the Lord when He put sin on Him. Sickness had to go on Jesus with the sin because sickness is an offspring of sin. When God put the sin of all mankind on the Lord and punished it, there is now (in the New Covenant) no more punishment left for those who have put their faith in Jesus' work on the Cross. Therefore sickness is no longer going to be used of the Lord to punish because He'd be punishing the sin which has already been punished in the body of Christ. Did you get that?

Both sin and sickness were removed at the Cross. Jesus paid for sin in the atonement, therefore, there is no punishment left for it. If God punished anyone who has put faith in Christ that would be double jeopardy because He already punished Jesus for it! God actually already punished you for sin because He said you were crucified with Christ. So, you were already punished for it. He'd be punishing twice for sin if He were to put sickness on you.

I encourage you to try and find one believer in the New Testament where God put sickness on them. It doesn't exist. And yet, there are several examples of it in the Old Testament. Not one on this side of the cross, it doesn't exist. Sickness as a punishment went away when sin went away. Now there are a couple of examples in the New Testament where people got punished like the Jezebel in Revelation where God cast her into a sick bed. Note that she's obviously not a believer; she has not put faith in the Cross so she doesn't have that portion of the atonement to her. That is a blessing to the believer. The blessing of all of what Jesus paid for on the cross is a blessing to the believer. You enter into the covenant relationship with God when you accept Christ into your life. Jezebel was leading a bunch of people astray and God punished her. But she was not part of the Christ's body. That is why I said look at the New Testament try and find a *believer* that God put sickness on. It doesn't exist.

### *Demonic spirits Causing Sickness*

Sickness is often caused by demons. It can be demonic in its source. Not always though, so don't go one extreme to the other. Often times people being sick has nothing to do with a demonic activity. Other times people being sick is 100% a demonic activity that is causing that sickness. So just know these two possibilities. One possibility is that sickness is just as a result of the fall of man. It is in our system, it is in our bodies, and it happens. The other is literally a direct attack of the enemy putting sickness on people. I know it can seem weird that a demon is causing a crippled leg, for example. People would probably think it is weird unless they saw you cast a demon out of someone and all of a sudden the guy's leg is fine. It may still be weird, but it worked!

I'll share an example, I was playing congas one time on a worship team in a church many years ago. As I was playing the congas I was just feeling so sick (flu-like symptoms). Now that particular Sunday I had to leave right after church and go and minister in a prison. I had a regular prison ministry and I was scheduled to minister in the prison. As I was feeling sick and was saying in my heart "Lord not now you know, because I have to go minister." Then the Lord spoke to me and said "do you notice a pattern?" And I thought about it and it occurred to me "wow I'm going to minister in the prison and the last time and the time before that too ... I was sick on each one of those days, it was every time I was getting ready to go and minister in the prison I'd get sick!"

So, each time I'd fight it and I'd fight it off. I always went to minister anyway, I would just rebuke it and I would go. But, the Lord spoke to me this time and said "do you notice a pattern?" It was a

demonic attack. It felt like flu symptoms; it didn't feel like a demon, it felt like flu, but it was demonic. I got angry, I recognized what was going on. I said "in the name of Jesus I take authority over the spirit of infirmity that would be assigned against me, I bind you and I command you to leave, in the name of Jesus!" I was healed instantaneously and it never returned.

Let's look at a couple of scriptural examples so you can see it. In Mathew 12:22 we read "*Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw.*" Think about this, a blind person who can't speak. You would think "no that is being caused by something from birth." Yet the Bible here says the man was demon-possessed, blind and mute, and Jesus healed Him so that the blind and the mute man both spoke and saw. He healed him. How did He heal him? Jesus cast the devil out, that's how He healed him!

Now let's look at Mathew 17:18. This is that story where the father had a boy that would fall down and convulse and he said the devil would throw him into water and try and drown him and throw him into fire and try and burn him. So the father brought his epileptic and demon-tormented boy to the disciples and the disciples all prayed for him, but couldn't see him healed. And then Jesus came walking up and He and the father brought the boy to Jesus and filled the Lord in.

What did Jesus do? Jesus rebuked the demon and it came out of him and the child was cured from that very hour. So, this child was an epileptic; he had seizures. Jesus cast the demon out and the boy was cured. Do you see it? Demons can create many kinds of sickness.

Now let's look at Luke 13:10-18. Jesus saw a woman who was bent over. You've too have probably seen people like this - they can't even stand up they are totally bent over. Here's the account from Luke: "*Now He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise herself up. But when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him and said to her, 'Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity.'*"

What was it that she had? He calls it a spirit of infirmity. It is a demonic spirit of infirmity. Do you know there are spirits of lust that will get on someone, there are spirits of addiction that get on people, there are spirits of all kinds of un-Godly soulish behavior that create that feeling in a person, drive them that way. This is why pornography, by the way, is so dangerous. I'm one hundred percent convinced, after ministering to many guys caught in pornography, that it is demonic. That is why it is so hard for to break it. You have to understand what is going on so you can address the issue. It is also why you should never touch it. Don't go anywhere near it, you know don't entertain it, because literally if you open the door to it, a demonic influence will come into your life. By the act of your will you are saying yes to it, then you just gave into the enemy and a demonic spirit will attach itself to you. And then you will really struggle to break it. And you will think it is your own flesh, you are thinking "man I can't break this, you are right you can't, you have to understand where it is coming

from and address the enemy. It is a demonic influence you have to come against.” Now you can snap that thing off you in a moment’s time, but from what I’ve experienced with these guys that I’ve dealt with it is still a struggle afterwards, but you have to at least address the root. Come against the spirit of lust. I’m saying it is not just you and your flesh, it is demonic.

So anyhow, back to Luke 13, there is a spirit of infirmity meaning it is a spirit that causes sickness,. This woman had it for eighteen years so He told it to come out and He cast the spirit out of her. Guess what happened? She could immediately stand up after eighteen years of being hunched over. Then the leader of the synagogue gets ticked off that Jesus healed on the Sabbath, and he says “you have six days in which to get healed.” And how many people were they seeing healed over those six days weekly? Zero.

But this one gets healed and the leader of the synagogue gets mad because it is a Sabbath day. And then Jesus says to him, *“Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead it away to water it? So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound—think of it—for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?”* Jesus makes it clear that it was Satan that had bound her and He called it a spirit of infirmity. There it is again, clear as day that demonic spirits cause sickness. You need to know that. Don’t back away from that. Many times when you go to pray for someone it may be demonic, but how do you know? Well sometimes the Holy Spirit will just make it really clear to you, other times they’ll manifest a demonic activity; you’ll see it. Other times, you won’t know for sure. So, if it is a really bad situation, I’ll just usually cover the bases, I’ll pray for him one way and then I’ll cast any devils out as well.

In order to help that not be offensive, sometimes what I’ll do is I’ll tell them ahead of time “you know sometimes it is demonic spirits that cause sicknesses so while I’m praying for you I’m going to address that issue just in case to cover it. It doesn’t mean you are demon-possessed that is not what it is it just means a demon can attack and put sickness on people.” So I tell them that so it doesn’t freak them out. And then I’ll just pray and when I do if it is not a believer or a touchy situation I’ll just pray more gently like this “in the name of Jesus I command this sickness to leave your body and any spirit of infirmity in the name of Jesus I command you to leave this person now, in Jesus name.” I say it real calm I scream “in the name of Jesus I cast the devil out of you!” Now if it is a brother in Christ I may go for it! It depends on the situation.

Perhaps the thought of sickness being caused by a demon make you want to back away from praying for people. But listen! Satan has been stripped of all of his power and all that he has is a bark and what he wants to do his best to scare you off with that bark. But when Jesus rose, He talked to His disciples He said “all authority on heaven and on earth has been given unto me. Go therefore into all the world make disciples.” He was saying that we go in His name. So, we have the authority like God.

Luke at Luke 10:17-19. The context is that Jesus had sent out seventy people to go out and He gave them a direct command to heal the sick, raise the dead, and cleanse the lepers. He told them that they had freely received, so freely give! Then the seventy came back, and we read this: *“Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, ‘Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.’ And He said to them, ‘I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.’”* Jesus said I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions – those are terminologies throughout the Scriptures referring to demonic activity. God gave you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions and over how much over all the power of the enemy! **All** the power of the enemy. And not only that, but Jesus also goes onto to say *“And nothing shall by any means hurt you.”*

Don't be afraid of the devil; he is a toothless liar. He might try and gum you to death, but that is all he can do. He is just going to try to talk you to death. He has no power; it has been taken from him. The only power Satan has is the power we give him. It has to be volunteered power that we have given to him.

### **Objection: “But that was Jesus!”**

A lot of people say “Sure Jesus healed all these people, but that was Jesus!” But in Acts 5, we read that they brought all the sick people and put them in the street on cots just to get within a shadow's distance of Peter and the scripture says they were all healed. Jesus-type results right through the life of Peter.

In Matthew 10, Jesus sends out the twelve. Look at the instructions Our Lord gives them in verses 1, 7, and 8: *“And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him He gave them power over unclean spirits ... And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.”* This is addressing the objection “that was Jesus, and you know, we are different.” Jesus gave them power over the enemy, to cast demons out and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease. He told them that they should preach saying “the kingdom of heaven is at hand” and heal the sick. You notice what Jesus did not say? He did not say pray to God and find out what His will is for someone's healing.

This is really important if you think about this. Jesus said “heal the sick.” Period. The will of God is revealed clearly. He didn't say “ask the Father,” He said heal the sick; cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast all demons, freely you receive, freely give! So, the power to heal all can't just be with Jesus, because He told His twelve disciples go and do it.

The next argument you'll have is “yeah but that was the apostles, it ended with the apostles.” In fact, that is a major doctrine, that divine healing ended with the apostles. They say they see the healing in the Bible, they say they see without a question that the apostles were doing it but that it ended with

the apostles. So, let's address that objection. Luke 10:1 says *"After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go."* Now let's jump to verse 9: *"And heal the sick there, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'"*

So, Luke 10 tells us that the Lord appointed how many? 70 others also! Are we beyond the apostles? There were only 12 apostles! So there had to be more than the apostles if there were 70 sent out to heal the sick in every city in which Jesus was about to go. Jesus sent out seventy people and told them to heal the sick. That is way beyond just the apostles.

Let's look at John 14:12: *"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father."* He who believes in Jesus will do what Jesus did and beyond. It does not say "the apostles will do what I did and greater works." Jesus said "he who believes in me will do the same things that I did."

Let's look at one more scripture to prove that healing did not stop with the apostles. Mark 16:14-18 says this, *"Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen. And He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.'"*

In Mark 16, Jesus is talking to the apostles and He is telling them to go into all the world and preach the gospel, those who believe and are baptized shall be saved and then He says this, *"And these signs will follow those who believe."* Not the apostles. He said those signs will follow those who believe!

Jesus was telling the apostles that the ones that you go and talk to and they believe in me and they get saved, if they believe this, these signs will follow them. What are those signs? *"In my name they will cast out demons, alright, they have the authority, they will speak with new tongues, they will take up serpents and if they drink anything deadly it shall by no means hurt them. They will lay hands on the sick and they shall recover."*

*Jesus showed the will of the Father. The apostles healed just like Jesus. The 70 were sent to do the same and returned with great joy. And here in Mark 16, Jesus says "everyone who believes" will see these signs. Do you believe? "Everyone who believes" is WAY beyond the apostles, there is zero argument that healing ended with the apostles when you look at the Scriptures.*

### ***Objection: “Aren’t we supposed to suffer for the Gospel?”***

Some believers say “doesn’t the Word teach that we are to suffer for the sake of the gospel?” Does the New Testament teach that we are to suffer for the sake of the gospel? It sure does! 1 Peter 4:12-13 says *“Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.”*

Throughout the New Testament there is absolutely an understanding that we will suffer for the sake of the gospel. Let me tell you that word suffer is ‘*pascho*’ in the Greek. It is used sixty-five times in the New Testament. Only one time does it refer to sickness. Sixty-five times the word is translated “suffer.” Once it refers to sickness and that one sickness is in Mathew 17 with the demon-possessed epileptic boy. It says that the boy had suffered many years, and it is referring to sickness in him. Jesus said that is a demon causing that and He cast the demon out.

When you study this Scripture be careful, really, really careful to not inject manmade ideas — your own ideas. Instead, you must always let Scripture interpret Scripture. How does the Bible use this word? For instance, we can inject our understanding of what humility is, but if you read the Scripture when it talks about humility, you can see what it says humility really is. You will be very surprised. Likewise about love. You have to look at how the Scripture uses its own wording and don't inject manmade ideas. In this case, the word ‘suffer’ we have our own ideas we can inject, but if you look at it and allow Scripture to interpret itself, it is used 65 times to mean “suffering” and only one time does it refer to sickness and in that case Jesus said it is a demon causing the suffering not God, and He cast him out. He is saying that is not of God.

So, what is suffering? The Bible is very clear in the New Testament: always, always, always when it is talking about suffering it is referring to trials, tribulation and persecution - never sickness, not even poverty. Those are considered a curse and God doesn’t put curses on His children. You need to have that clear in your thinking. If you’ve accepted Christ, Christ took the curse to give us the blessing, therefore God doesn’t put curses on you. Period.

Difficulty, however, is not a curse. If you are in a difficult job and you’ve got difficult people around you and it is really working on you, you may pray to God and say “God please get me out of here get me a new job.” He might do it. If your character is such that this isn’t helping your character develop any further, and this is just not a good thing He very well may move you on. However, He might not move you on because there might be something in this situation He is using to work character in you. I want you to know there are some people of the “faith camp” who wouldn’t like what I’m saying, but it is absolutely sound scripturally.

God will use situations to develop character in us. That is a hundred percent scriptural. But don't just throw everything in that "character development bucket" and say "oh that means God will use sickness and He will use poverty and He will use sin to teaching me something." People come up with crazy ideas that way! "You know, that adulteress relationship that was God that put me in it." And the reason people will say that is because how much they learned through the process. That is a totally erroneous conclusion! No, God never tempts us with evil! Never, never, never. James said "*let no man say when he is tempted of evil that he is tempted of God, for God tempts no man with evil.*"

This is about rightly dividing the Word of truth. Sickness is a curse; God doesn't use it. Sin is a curse. It is bad, evil, and not of God; God doesn't use it. Difficult situation? Yes God may use that. It doesn't always mean a difficult situation is from God. You've got to pray and look into it, check your own heart and see how you are with the situation. Are you handling it well? Are you blowing up and getting mad at that certain person? If so, it is probably a good sign that even if it wasn't God who arranged this situation, just stay there until you can handle it in a God-like manner. Take advantage of the situation and say "Lord obviously I need help in this area."

So, there the answer is that we ought to suffer, but you need to understand what that includes and what it does not include. It never includes sickness; it is not scriptural.

### ***Objection: "What about Paul's Thorn in the Flesh?"***

Everyone loves to bring up Paul's thorn in the flesh. Remember that you must interpret Scripture with Scripture. Don't just say "well a thorn in the flesh ... I'm sure that meant sickness." Where does it say that? Did it say it was sickness? No it did not. But, it might be, so let's study.

Here is another little lesson in studying Scripture: when you study Scripture you have to look at two contexts, the immediate context and the whole context of the Word, and your interpretation of a scripture has to fit both. When you study something, first make sure you understand the context that it's in, it has got to fit that "local" context. If you don't do that, you can take a scripture and make something out of it, but if you read the whole context it is not even what the passage was talking about. A proper interpretation of a scripture has to fit the local context, but it also has to fit the whole context of Scripture. If you are considering an interpretation that fits the local context, but does not fit the whole context of the Word, go back to the drawing board. Think "what else could fit this context and the whole context, it has got to fit both." It is actually also possible to get an out of context revelation that doesn't fit the local context, but does fit the whole context of Scripture. In this case, that revelation is actually true, but it is not true of that particular context.

If you want to know what a scripture is talking about it has to fit the immediate context and the whole context. So, in this case lets look at "what is a thorn in the flesh?" In the local context it seems that perhaps it could be referring to a sickness. But, before we make that conclusion, let's consider

whether that same terminology is used anywhere else in Scripture. And we find that it is actually used several times. Let me show you a couple really quick. Remember that Paul was extremely knowledgeable in the Old Testament. He knew it inside out backwards and forward alright. When you read these Old Testament verses you are going to see that Paul was using Old Testament language in describing his “thorn in the flesh”.

Let’s start by looking at Joshua 23:12-13. *“Or else, if indeed you do go back, and cling to the remnant of these nations—these that remain among you—and make marriages with them, and go in to them and they to you, know for certain that the Lord your God will no longer drive out these nations from before you. But they shall be snares and traps to you, and scourges on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land which the Lord your God has given you.”* When Joshua said “they will be scourges in your sides and thorns in your eyes” do you think He actually meant physical thorns in their physical eyes? No. it was a terminology. Joshua was saying these guys are going to vex your soul, they are going to mess you up, they are going to be troublesome. That is what the terminology meant.

Look at another example of this Old Testament terminology in Numbers 33:55 *“But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall be that those whom you let remain shall be irritants in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and they shall harass you in the land where you dwell.”*

God is telling these things to Moses and He refers to people who harass you as what? “Thorns in your sides.” Again, do you think God is talking about anything actually physical in their bodies? No, God says what He means with that terminology. He says what it means - that they will harass you in the land you are called to take. But God refers to it as a “thorn in your side.”

One more example from Judges 2:1-3: *“Then the Angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said: ‘I led you up from Egypt and brought you to the land of which I swore to your fathers; and I said, ‘I will never break My covenant with you. And you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall tear down their altars.’ But you have not obeyed My voice. Why have you done this? Therefore I also said, ‘I will not drive them out before you; but they shall be thorns in your side, and their gods shall be a snare to you.’”*

Do you think the Angel of the Lord is talking about anything physical happening to their physical bodies? No, He is saying these people are going to harass you, they will be thorns in your side. Do you see it? Now, let’s go back to Paul.

Paul mentioned his thorn in the flesh in 2 Corinthians 12:7 *“And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.”* Remember that chapters weren’t there in the original text so if we back up into chapter 11 and read it going into chapter 12, Paul describes these people that were

harassing him in every town he went into. Everywhere he went they were chasing him down. He says he was beaten with rods three times, stoned once and left for dead. Five times he received forty stripes minus one. He was shipwrecked. He was hungry and cold. Paul talks about all these attacks in 2 Corinthians 11. He said everywhere he went he was being attacked. Does that sound like people harassing him?

It's in that context that we read 2 Corinthians 12:7 "*And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.*" Note that Paul says exactly what the thorn in the flesh was. It was "*a messenger of Satan to buffet me.*" What Paul is saying is that Satan was stirring up people to attack him everywhere he went.

We read in verses 8 and 9 "*Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness."* People read this and say "oh that is what it was. It was because Paul had great revelation and God didn't want him to be exalted with pride." We may read that into it, but it doesn't say that! it says, "*lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me.*"

Paul had already received an abundance of revelation and he was not new to receiving revelation. Now He received a whole bunch more revelation. Paul was having an enormous effect on the Gentile nation and was leading them to Christ left and right. What was happening here was Satan was trying to stop the furtherance of the gospel through Paul's ministry so he was buffeting Paul to stop this messenger of God. It wasn't God trying to keep Paul from being exalted for pride, it was Satan trying to keep Paul from being exalted such that his message and his ministry would affect more people. Satan didn't want Paul being exalted in the eyes of the people.

Remember that God is not opposed to exalting His people. The Word of God clearly says "humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that he may exalt you." (1 Pe. 5:6) God will actually exalt you, it says in Joshua that God magnified Joshua in the eyes of the people that they would respect him and follow him. Paul was not a prideful man he was a very humble man. This was not a matter of God trying to keep him from being prideful; it was the devil keeping him from being exalted by buffeting him, and he called it a thorn in His side. God was saying "my grace is sufficient." God never promises to deliver us from persecution, He says in 2 Timothy 3:12 "*Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.*"

But, the grace of God is more than enough. You can walk right through the middle of it in pure joy. Look at Jesus. Was Jesus without persecution? There wasn't anybody who received more persecution! Did you ever see Jesus out of joy, out of peace, or losing His temper? In one place well Jesus was had a

righteous anger in the temple because they were trying to keep people from going to God. He wasn't personally offended. No, Jesus was fighting for the cause of the hearts of other people right. A totally different thing; that was a righteous indignation, it is totally good.

So, Jesus despite many persecutions still walked in joy and stayed in peace. They wanted to throw Him off cliffs, throw rocks at Him, hate Him. He didn't care. Jesus knew how to walk in God's grace. You can be in the midst of hell itself. You can do that. It is a place that we can walk in. We can walk in total joy in the midst of hell. God was saying to Paul, Paul my grace is sufficient, don't try and just get rid of all problems in your life. That is never going to happen; you are always going to have problems.

How can I just know for certain that it is the will of God? If you just need a couple of scriptures to go to and hammer it home and know that it is the will of God look to the provision on the Cross. In other words, it is the atoning work of Christ, what was bought and paid for on the cross? Isaiah 53:4-6, you can see in there very clearly "sin", "sickness", "sin", "sickness" were on the Cross. And then if you think well that healing for the sickness referred to in Isaiah 53 wasn't real physical healing it was spiritual healing, thank God we've got Mathew 8:17-18. You want to draw an arrow connecting those two. Mathew 8:17-18 interprets Isaiah 53. How does Jesus do it? He casts out demons He heals all the sick that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah and then He quotes the verses out of Isaiah. So those two verses go together synergistically by telling you it is the will of God all will be healed.

And then there is 1Peter 2:24 same thing he says, "*Who bore our sins on His own body on the tree that we having died the sin might live for righteousness by whose stripes you were healed.*" Put those scriptures together and let it be settled forever. God paid the price for you and I to be physically healed and walking in health our whole life. And then someone might say well then how are you supposed to die? Psalms tells you how. He takes away your breath. That's how we're supposed to go. When it's time to go, He takes away your breath. Nowhere in Scripture can you find that you are supposed to die of cancer or diabetes or some other sickness. You are supposed to die well, healthy, and strong! And then you say "Lord, my work is done, I am out of here." And He will say "OK, come be with Me!" And you check out nice and peaceful in the middle of your sleep. :)

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## Text Summary (for reading as a group)

Wouldn't it be exciting if you became a person who was going out praying for the sick and seeing the healing power of God manifest in their bodies? If you haven't already been experiencing that or walking in it, really imagine just how exciting that would be! It is really good to have a goal. A goal will energize you. For example, if you want to work out and get into shape, it's much much harder to make progress without a goal. Similarly, we need to envision and imagine healing happening in our lives. So, as you study divine healing, have that goal in your mind right now. Envision yourself laying your hands on the sick and seeing them recover. Having that vision as you hear God's Word about healing will help you absorb it. Do not allow yourself to be content with only a mental agreement with God healing people. Instead ask yourself, "Is divine healing operating in my life?" If the answer to that question is no, then conclude, "Obviously I need some more understanding! Lord give me what I need!"

Jesus demonstrated the will of God perfectly. Listen to Jesus' own words: *"Then Jesus answered and said to them, 'Most assuredly I say to you the Son can do nothing of Himself but what he sees the Father do.'"* So, when you are seeing Jesus do something, guess what? You are seeing the *Father* do something — not someone else. Jesus is not someone else — He *is* the Father.

John 14:7-10 says *"If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him."* Philip said to Him, *"Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us."* Jesus 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'? Do 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."*

Jesus' works are the Father's works. Jesus was revealing the will of the Father. That is what He came here for – to show us the Father.

So, let's look at how Jesus revealed the will of the Father as it relates to healing. In Matthew 9:35 we read, *"Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people."* Jesus healed **every** sickness and **every** disease among the people.

Does this scripture say that the Father might heal some people and not heal others? Of course not! The reason Jesus healed **every** single person in all the cities He went to was because it was clearly the will of the Father to heal **every** sickness and **every** disease! Likewise in Matthew 12:15 we see great multitudes followed Jesus and He healed them all.

It is the will of the Father to heal *all*. It is God's will to heal every single person every single time without exception. Every single time we pray for healing and healing does not take place the hold-up is on the part of man — not on the part of God. God's will has been revealed. God hates sickness, it is a bad thing, and He wants it gone. Sickness came into the world through sin, not God.

In fact, in the Gospels alone, there are seventeen different occasions where it says Jesus healed them *all*. Additionally, there are 47 occasions when individuals or a couple of people (i.e., not a crowd) came to Him and it says, "He healed them." In those examples, Jesus healed them all because there was only one person. This is Jesus revealing the will of the Father, nowhere do you find Jesus turning someone away for healing. Anyone who came to Jesus for healing, received a YES.

So, when you come to God what do you think His answer is? "Yes!" What about my knee? "Yes." Back? "Yes." Flu? "Yes." Back again? "Yes." Knee again? "Yes." My aunt? "Yes." Cancer? "Yes. Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes!" All the promises of God are yes and amen in Christ Jesus! It is because of Jesus that the answer is yes! It is always yes. It is God's will to heal every single person all the time, immediately and without exception.

Sickness came from sin - not your or my sin, but the sin in the garden of Eden. The fall of man introduced sickness. Do not think that because sin and sickness are connected that anytime we see sickness in someone's life that there is obviously sin in their life.

Sickness is a curse. Look at Deuteronomy 28, which lists blessings in verses 1-14. From verse 15 on, it lists the curses. Guess where sickness is found in that chapter? The curses! God says sickness is a curse. Sickness is not a blessing. God is not using sickness to teach you anything.

Galatians 3 says that Jesus bore the curse for us that the blessing of Abraham might come upon us. It is Deuteronomy 28 that Paul is referring to in Galatians 3. Jesus bore all the curses so that all the blessings would be on us. What is our portion of Deuteronomy 28? The blessing. Sickness is not in that list! Don't ever buy into anything that says maybe God is causing or using sickness. No, no, no — God is not doing anything other than healing sickness! It is true that God has made people sick.

But, consider where you find those examples. They are in the Old Testament. Sickness as a punishment went away when sin went away.

Sickness is often caused by demons. It can be demonic in its source. Not always though, so don't go from one extreme to the other. Often sickness has nothing to do with demonic activity. Other times sickness is 100% a demonic activity. So just know these two possibilities. In Mathew 12:22 we read, "*Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw.*" The Bible here says the man was demon-possessed, blind

and mute, and Jesus healed Him so that the blind and the mute man both spoke and saw. He healed him. How did He heal him? Jesus cast the devil out, that's how He healed him!

Likewise, in Luke 13, we see that there is a spirit of infirmity (meaning it causes sickness) in a woman for 18 years. Jesus makes it clear that it was Satan that had bound her and He called it a spirit of infirmity. Don't back away from that. Many times when you go to pray for someone it may be demonic. How do you know? Sometimes the Holy Spirit will just make it really clear to you, other times they'll manifest a demonic activity and you'll see it. And at other times, you won't know for sure. So, if it is a really bad situation, I'll just cover the bases, pray for the person and cast any devils out as well. God gave you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions and over **all** the power of the enemy!

A lot of people say, "Sure Jesus healed all these people, but that was Jesus!" But in Acts 5, it says they brought all the sick people and put them in the street on cots just to get within a shadow's distance of Peter. The scripture says they were all healed. Those are Jesus-type results right through the life of Peter. In Matthew 10, Jesus sends out the twelve apostles to heal the sick, cleanse lepers, raise the dead and cast out demons. In In Luke 10, Jesus sends out seventy others to heal the sick in the cities He was going to go to — so it wasn't just the apostles!

In John 14:12 Jesus says those who believe in Him will do what He did and beyond. In Mark 16:14-18 Jesus tells the apostles to go into all the world and preach the Gospel. He also says those who believe and are baptized shall be saved and that, "*These signs will follow those who believe.*" Not the apostles. He said those signs will follow those who believe!

Some believers say, "doesn't the Word teach that we are to suffer for the sake of the gospel?" It sure does! But if you look at it and allow Scripture to interpret itself, the Greek word for suffering is used 65 times to mean "suffering" and only one time does it refer to sickness. In that case, Jesus said it was a demon causing the suffering not God, and He cast it out. Jesus is saying it is not of God. The Bible is very clear in the New Testament: always, always, always when it is talking about suffering it is referring to trials, tribulation and persecution - never sickness, not even poverty. Those are considered a curse and God doesn't put curses on His children. Difficulty, however, is not a curse. God will use situations to develop character in us.

Often, Paul's "thorn in the flesh" is brought up as justification for God causing sickness. Remember, you must interpret Scripture with Scripture. Let's consider whether that same terminology is used *anywhere* else in Scripture. We find that it is actually used several times. Paul was of course extremely knowledgeable in the Old Testament. He knew it inside out, backwards and forward. When we read these Old Testament verses we see that Paul was using Old Testament language in describing his "thorn in the flesh."

In Joshua 23:12-13, Numbers 33:55 and Judges 2:1-3 “thorns in sides” refer to people who harass you. Paul mentioned his in 2 Corinthians 12:7, *“And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.”* Remember that chapters weren’t there in the original text so if we back up to 2 Corinthians 11, we find Paul describing people who were harassing him in every town he went into. What Paul is saying is that Satan was stirring up people to attack him everywhere he went.

Some believers say the thorn was allowed because Paul had great revelation and God didn’t want him to be exalted with pride. But actually, Satan was trying to stop the furtherance of The Gospel through Paul’s ministry by buffeting Paul. Remember God is not opposed to exalting His people. The Word of God clearly says “humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you.” (1 Peter 5:6) This was *not* a matter of God trying to keep him from being prideful; it was Satan keeping him from being exalted by buffeting him, and he called it a thorn in his side.

In Matthew 8, Jesus casts out demons and heals all the sick so that what was spoken by Isaiah would be fulfilled. It is the will of God that all would be healed. God paid the price on the Cross for you and I to be physically healed and walking in health our whole life.

Finally, someone might say “well then how are you supposed to die?” Psalms tells you how. He takes away your breath. That’s how we’re supposed to go. When it’s time to go, He takes away your breath. Nowhere in Scripture can you find that you are supposed to die of cancer or diabetes or some other sickness. You are supposed to die well, healthy and strong! And then you can say, “Lord, my work is done, I am out of here.” And He will reply, “OK, come be with Me!” And you check out nice and peaceful in the middle of your sleep. :)

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### Points to Ponder . . .

- How did Jesus express God’s will concerning divine healing?
- Provide some examples of how sickness can be demonic in origin and how to deal with that.
- How do we know for sure that divine healing is not just a ministry for Jesus and the apostles?
- How do we know that suffering for the sake of the gospel is un-related to divine healing?
- How do we know what Paul’s thorn in the flesh actually was?
- What is your vision for how healing could look in your day-to-day life?