

The Healing Ministry of Jesus Christ

Matthew 8:1-17, 8:28-9:8, 9:18-38

Having concluded His teaching ministry in the Sermon on the Mount (chs.5-7), Jesus Christ here (chs.8-9) resumes the healing ministry He had commenced prior to that sermon (4:23-25). Herein observe:

I. Variations in Jesus Christ's Healings

1. Christ healed a variety of infirmities: leprosy (8:2-4); paralysis (8:5-13; 9:1-8), fever (8:14f), demon-possession (8:16f; 8:28-34), hemorrhaging (9:20-22), blindness (9:27-31), muteness (9:32-34), and even death (9:18f, 23-25). No one is beyond His healing power!
2. Christ healed a variety of persons: both Jews and Gentiles, both young and old, both male and female, both upper and lower classes, both freemen and slaves, both friends and strangers, both those who came to Him and those who had to be brought, both those nearby and those far away, both those He touched and those who touched Him, both alive and dead, both physically and spiritually infirm. Instances include:
 - i) An Israelite leper (8:2-4). He was an outcast and untouchable, and of the lowest class of person among the chosen nation of God. Here is good news for all afflicted with the leprosy of sin.
 - ii) A servant of a Roman centurion (8:5-13). He was of the lowest class of Gentiles, whom the Jews considered the lowest class of peoples. Here is good news for the worst and lowest of heathen peoples. Here is also good news for the high and mighty, as Christ was mindful of the request of a centurion, a very high ranking man and even one who was an enemy of, and ruler over, Israel.
 - iii) The mother-in law of a disciple (8:14f). In taking care of strangers, Christ does not forget His friends. Here is good news for His own people.
 - iv) Two demon-possessed men to whom He went (8:28-34). Christ heals not only those who are "brought to Him" (8:16), but He goes searching for those in need of healing. Here is good news for heathens in far lands and obscure places. And Christ heals those who are under the control of Satan and his demons. Here is good news for men today who are in "the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will" (2 Timothy 2:25f).
 - v) A paralytic who was brought to Him (9:1-8). Here is good news for those who are unable of themselves to come to Christ, but who have friends who care enough for them to bring them.
 - vi) Two blind men (9:27-31). Here is good news for those who are spiritually blind (Acts 26:18).
 - vii) A mute demoniac (9:32-34). Christ heals those who are incapable of physically calling out to Him. Here is good news to those who will but believe in Him, and thereby be delivered from the power of Satan.
 - viii) A woman who had hemorrhaged for twelve years (9:20-22). She "had spent all her livelihood on physicians and could not be healed by any," but was instantaneously healed upon touching Christ (Luke 8:43f). Here is good news for sinners who have wasted their lives in man-made religions,

and who will be freely and instantaneously saved upon coming to Christ.

ix) A dead girl (9:41f, 49-56). Christ raises the dead! Here is good news to those who are "dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1) and in need of being "born again" (John 3:3-8). "For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will" (John 5:21).

II. Commonalities in Jesus Christ's Healings

1. These healings evidenced His compassion for the needy. "He was moved with compassion for them" (9:36). And He turned away no one!
2. These healings evidenced His willingness to heal. This was especially evident in the healing of the leper (8:2f): "a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, 'Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.' Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him [the "untouchable"], saying, 'I am willing; be cleansed.'" And when the centurion said "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented" Jesus replied "I will come and heal him" (8:6).
3. These healings evidenced His deity. None but God has the power to heal as Christ did. Christ evidenced His deity when He healed a paralytic as proof that He forgiven his sins (9:2-7). Men denied His deity, but demons did not (8:29-32).
4. These healings were performed pro gratis. Christ did not require offerings and fees as do today's charlatan "faith-healers".
5. These healings were performed without fanfare. Christ healed with a mere touch and/or a word, with none of the circus atmosphere and mass advertising promoted by today's charlatan "faith-healers".
6. These healings were performed instantaneously and without fail. Here again, Christ is in sharp contrast to today's charlatan "faith-healers".
7. These healings provoked the ire of His enemies, the religious leaders of Israel. This was probably one of the reasons why Christ repeatedly told the healed to "See that you tell no one" (8:4; 9:30). Upon witnessing these healings, His enemies accused Him of blasphemy (9:3) and of being satanic (9:34). Christ receives no better treatment from leaders of false religion today.
8. These healings moved the healed and seekers of the truth to praise Him (9:8): "Now when the multitudes saw it, they marveled and glorified God, who had given such power to men." And the healed were so elated by His mercies to them that they could not comply with His request to keep silent about what He had done for them (9:30f).
9. These healings fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah 53:4 (8:17): "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: 'He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses.'" Christ suffered with those who suffered in two ways. Empathetically, He personally and fully entered into the sufferings of the sufferers. Vicariously, He took upon Himself the sins that were at the root of their sufferings, and died in the place and stead of the sufferers.

Are you in need of healing? Trust in Jesus Christ, the "Great Physician"!

– Daniel E. Parks (April 16, 2017; #974)