

GREATER THINGS

Fired by the Spirit of Jesus

Six conversation starters from Easter to Pentecost

3. Healing with Jesus

Video Transcript

Welcome to week three of 'Greater Things' and this week our title is 'Healing with Jesus'. When we read the book of Acts it's full of the disciples healing in the name of Jesus. Here's the very first one:

Acts 3:1-10

One day Peter and John were going to the temple at a time of prayer - at three in the afternoon. Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, "look at us!" So the man gave them his attention expecting to get something from them.

Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. When all the people saw him walking and praising God, they recognised him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

I love this simplicity. A man comes to Peter needing help and Peter who must have seen this umpteen times before just says "in the name of Jesus get up and walk"- and the man does. Isn't it interesting how healing can slip off our radar? For lots of good reasons actually (which) I'll go into but part of this session is (that) I long to see healing back on our radar.

I love watching my son play rugby and I got chatting to one of the dads in the bar afterwards. This was last year and he just stepped into quite a senior job. He's articulate, charismatic, very good at making his case and he was clearly very well read on the less than savoury facts about the Christian faith and church history and he was giving me a run for my money. So it was quite a high octane conversation. Under my breath I prayed for the peace of Jesus on my conversation and I found myself just saying I'll be praying for him in his new role. At that point the conversation changed gear. He told me about a friend of the family who'd been miraculously healed in the last few weeks against all the odds and this was because her church had been praying for healing.

When my dad was given six weeks to live after his treatment for leukaemia failed he and my mum happened to be passing a gazebo on the streets of Bolton advertising prayer for healing by a local church. In desperation they called in and something significant happened. He wasn't miraculously cured but there was a notable measure of healing. He lived for another 18 months and my mum said "why don't you advertise this more? Why don't you tell people that Jesus can heal today? Your churches would be full".

The first historian to write a history of the English people was a monk from Northumbria called Bede in about 731 AD and, if you're interested, his book which is called 'The Ecclesiastical History of the English People' is one of the best-selling comprehensive accounts of the period. Astonishing accounts of the Christian faith literally flourishing across the north in a generation or so. It's a gripping read full of giants of faith and eyewitness accounts of healing and deliverance. As a famous old boy of the North East of England Bede's tomb is just within the entrance of Durham Cathedral. When I was last visiting the cathedral there were queues of people filing past his tomb to get to this lovely art installation of the moon. Lovely piece of art but I suddenly felt quite overwhelmed. It felt as if the queue was sleepwalking past a much more potent story. Not pie in the sky, but real adventures here and now. I noted in my journal "Bede's tomb, deep sobs and tears, pleading that people, men, women, boys and girls, might hear the gospel in their own language, might encounter healing and deliverance by Jesus the rescuer. Peace from heaven itself come on."



I would love to see healing normalised across our churches and our chaplaincies in this county. My experience is it's always worth asking Jesus for healing and my experience is that he never falls short of that prayer. There's not always a cure by any means. I lost both my parents to cancer and I saw the ravaging effects in some ways of, in theory, unanswered prayer but the impact of praying for healing is always significant.

I first got onto the whole idea that Jesus could heal when I went on a trip to India, to Hyderabad in India and then Kenya. This was with my church in Cambridge when I was a student. In theory we were going to help these churches out in India and it was the other way around completely. I'd never seen people prayed for and then healed and I did that multiple times myself. In Kenya someone was given their sight back again, (I'd) never seen that. And when I came back to England, I remember landing in Gatwick and was feeling like our nation is asleep. We reach for other solutions, don't we? But we're not reaching for the Jesus who said he will do greater things if we ask him.

My experience now is always to ask for healing and ask with ambition, ask with aggression. He will deal more than generously is my experience; with when that doesn't always come the way we might expect; but it's a beautiful thing to encounter the peace of Jesus in healing.

I'm here at St. T's Family Centre in Lancaster and next to this beautiful window which depicts heaven as described in Revelation 22. That's what we're doing, isn't it? In asking for healing, in asking for the Spirit of Jesus to work in us like he did in Jesus. We're literally asking for his Kingdom to come, his will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. We're asking for that future where there's trees for the healing of the nations, that future to break into the present now and he is more than able to do that. As I pray around Lancashire, I'm often praying for the Heavenly Lancashire, the Heavenly Blackburn, the Heavenly Blackpool, wherever you are. I think we often at the corner of our eye get glimpses of what the heavenly version of the place or the people we live with.

So Jesus might not always cure but he always heals and do keep asking.

I was bowled over just this week, a colleague rushed up to me and said, Bishop Jill, thank you so much for praying for healing for me. The doctors say it's all okay. This was quite a threatening thing for her own work actually and I'm really grateful to her for sharing that story.

Bishop Phillip was in the Liverpool Cathedral for the consecration of the new Bishop of Liverpool. One of the clergy suddenly collapsed in the vestry as they were waiting to go in. Bishop Phillip got out his oil, plenty of oil and while they were running for the ambulance, looking like this guy was on his way out, Phillip anointed him and he completely recovered. That man would credit that anointing as the reason he is still around today. So as Bishop Phillip would say, do use plenty of oil. In the New Testament we're commanded when someone is sick to anoint and pray for them. So do have courage in this area.

It's interesting how, this is a whole other story, but it's interesting how pain gets airbrushed out of our story. We can sometimes feel helpless in the face of pain and it's right that we support our NHS and I know our workers are doing an amazing job there, but what if rather than reaching for the aspirin bottle, we reached for the anointing oil again and again and again.

So may Jesus coach you to ask for his healing in his name. May his Spirit prompt you of how to pray for healing in the wider sense across your communities and may you see greater things because you're asking in his name. Amen.



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Guidance Notes

Gathering

Welcome members of the group and ensure they all know each other. Consider inviting members to share briefly how their week has been and any stresses or distractions they may have.

Introduction and Prayer

Share a short introduction to today's topic.

Open in prayer, inviting God to speak to us as we read and ponder scripture.

Scripture

Read Acts 3:1-10 aloud.

Conversation Starter

Play this week's video or have the transcript read aloud.

Discussion

Either in your group or alone, reflect on the following questions:

- What stands out to you from the passage we have read?
- What are Peter and John doing and why? What is the lame man doing and why?
- How did Peter heal the man?
- How did he (the lame man) react? How did other people react?
- What has been your experience of prayer for healing?
- What do you think Bishop Jill means by 'Jesus might not always cure but he always heals'?
- Have you seen glimpses of the heavenly version of Lancashire or your community? How can we pray for more?
- How are you praying ambitiously for healing? What puts you off?

Prayer

Conclude by leading the group in a time of prayer.

Spend some time praying for healing. This could be for members of the group or people they know.

Want more?

[Festival of Healing at Renewal](#) - Saturday 12 October 2024 at Blackburn Cathedral.

Check out these [podcasts](#) by healing ministry; Acorn.