



A Biblical Perspective on Healing¹

James 5:13-15 (KJV) *Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. 14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: 15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.*²

We wrote in 2016:

"Over the last few years, many of the precious saints at CRC have lost loved ones, endured personal sickness, or walked with friends and family through sickness. We've experienced sudden deaths, sudden and unexpected illnesses, accidents, emotional turmoils, and other maladies out of what to us, seemed like the clear blue sky.

For even the most ardent lover of Christ, the most fervent prayer warrior, or the most mature faith-filled disciple, it can seem overwhelming. "Lord, why is this happening? Why are you allowing this? Did I do something wrong?" These are questions I KNOW I HAVE ASKED. Maybe you have too?"

And then there was the year 2020 and COVID-19.

One of my favorite commentators on the Bible is William MacDonald. As I often do when getting prepared to teach, I'll quickly scan certain commentaries written by trusted teachers to see "If I'm in the ball park" with my approach. When working through James 5:13-15 years ago, it became more than a quick check. I sat down and was MINISTERED to by his words.

Again, given the coronavirus, the various sickness, hospital stays, doctors reports, deaths, mental illnesses, and thankfully, present healings (for some) that we experience in this life, I think CRC needs the ministry as well.

MacDonald's Opening Words on James 5:13

"The theme of the closing verses of this Epistle is **prayer**. The word occurs seven times, either as a noun or a verb.

James 5:13 (KJV) *Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.*

In every circumstance of life, we should go to the Lord in prayer. When in trouble, we should approach Him with Ernest entreaties. In times of rejoicing, we should lift our hearts to him and praise. He wants to be brought into all the change moods of our lives.

We should see God as the first great Cause of all that comes to us in life. We should not look into what Rutherford called the 'confused rolling of the wheels of second causes.' It is defeat to

¹ <https://calvaryreformationchurch.org/sermons/2016/4/a-biblical-perspective-on-healing>

² <https://calvaryreformationchurch.org/sermons/2016/4/the-power-of-prayer-and-confession-pt-1>

allow ourselves to be victims of circumstances, or wait for our circumstances to change. We should see no hand but His.

This is one of the most disputed portions of the Epistle, and perhaps the entire NT. It brings us face-to-face with the place of healing in the life of the believer today. But before looking at the verses in detail, it should be helpful to review what the Bible teaches about sickness and healing.”

A Biblical Perspective on Healing

1. All sickness is, in a general way, the result of **sin in the world.**

- At the Fall (Gen 3), sin and death entered the world, as did sickness and every other form of pain and suffering.
- *Romans 5:12 (KJV) Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:*
- This is an important point; it is foundational to a biblical perspective. It also points us forward to this day: *"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." Revelation 21:4 (KJV)*
- Hallelujah!

2. Sometimes sickness is a direct result of **sin in a persons life.**

- In 1 Corinthians 11:28-30, we read:

But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

- Apparently, certain Corinthians were “weak and ill, and some have died” (ESV) because of not “confessing and forsaking” the sin in their own lives.
- There is certainly OT precedent for this...plagues, sicknesses, and death due to the sin of the people.

3. However, not **all sickness is a direct result of sin in a persons life.**

- Recall our review of Job last month. It wasn't Job's sin that cause all the calamity. God Himself said, “Have you considered my servant Job?” (Job 1:8, 2:3)
- MacDonald points out that the man born blind in John 9:2-3, suffered not due to sin, but “the works of God should be made manifest in him.”
- Also, Paul's friend Epaphroditus was sick, near death, due to his tireless work on the behalf of Christ! (Php 2:25-30)
- In other words, sometimes there is a divine **purpose** for and in sickness we cannot see.

4. Sometimes sickness is a result of **satanic activity.**

- Again, Satan caused Job's terrible illness: *“So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and struck Job with loathsome sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.” (Job 2:7)*
- Remember the crippled woman in Luke 13:10-17?

*And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. 11 And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. 12 And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. 13 And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. 14 And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day. 15 The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? **16 And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?** 17 And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.*

- Paul's "thorn in the flesh" is called a "messenger of Satan." (2 Cor 12:7)
- Hence the continued need for us to "submit to God and resist the devil!" (Jam 4:7) May we not open the "devil door" through our disobedience!

5. The good news is that God can and does heal! In a very real sense, all healing is divine.

- God is our healer! (Jehovah Rapha, or the variant Ropheka, Ex 15:26)
- As creator, God engineered our bodies to heal. It's actually quite amazing how if taken care of, our bodies will heal "naturally" through processes God designed.
- God also heals through medicines. Paul told Timothy for example, to drink a little wine for this frequent stomach and other ailments. (1 Tim 5:23)
- Sometimes God uses physicians. Jesus taught they would be needed. (Matt 9:12) Luke was a doctor. (Col 4:14)

6. And yes, God also heals miraculously!

- We don't have enough time to list the references! Just in Christ's earthy ministry alone we could teach for months if not years!
- **We don't believe there is anything in Scripture that prevents God from healing miraculously today. We believe in divine healing.**
- The issue is whether God MUST always do so.

7. Yet we must also be clear that it is not always God's will to heal.

- It is clear from Scripture that God's will is not always to heal on earth, but in heaven.
- Paul's thorn was not healed. Furthermore, he eventually had his head removed in Rome for His faith in Jesus. Trophimus was left sick at Miletus. (2 Tim 4:20) Most of the Apostles were martyred.
- Saints, if God always chose to heal, we'd never die. Yet that of transition is appointed to all unless He returns first!
- **To have a *Biblical Perspective on Healing*, we must wrestle with God's loving sovereignty.** This is why when we suffer we must pray (James 5:13). God, in His mercy, often helps us understand His plan, or at a minimum, rest in His sufficient grace. Indeed...

1 John 5:14-15 (KJV) And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: 15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

8. God has not promised to heal in every case; therefore, healing is not something we can **demand from Him.**

- This is contrary to some hyper-faith streams, but the evidence of this truth is all around us. Frankly, I'm fearful to demand anything of God. Who am I? A sinner. The kind of "praying" that tells God what He is going to do (In Jesus' Name of course) borders on blasphemy.
- Going back to Epaphroditus, Scripture says *"Indeed he was ill, near to death. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow."*
- *MacDonald* said, "Healing is spoken of as a mercy, not something which we have a right to expect."
- **God can and does mercifully heal our bodies. He also sometimes mercifully allows suffering, and even at times, mercifully takes us home into His bosom.**
- In modern times, we confuse "praying with expectation" with "God MUST DO what I say!!"
- But faith does three things: faith **asks**, faith **believes**, and faith **trusts**. The trust part is the difficult part because the answer isn't up to us, but Him.

9. While it is true in a general sense that our healing is in Christ's **Atonement, it is also true that not all the blessings of the atonement have been given yet.**

- This is important! Are we healed by Christ's suffering? Yes! But the purpose for His Atoning sacrifice is for the forgiveness of sin: (Isaiah 53:5)

Wounded for—> Our transgressions (sin)

Crushed for—> Our iniquities (sin)

His Chastisement for—> Our peace (with God, needed because of sin)

By His Stripes—> He purchased our redemption, or Our spiritual healing

- Matthew 8:17 shows the fulfillment of Isa 53:4:
 - *Isaiah 53:4 (KJV) Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.*
 - *Matthew 8:17 (KJV) That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.*
- His Atonement also purchased our glorified, sin-free, totally healed bodies! (1 Cor 15)
They are yet to come!
- **My point is that God can and does heal...praise Him! However, He has the divine right to make decisions contrary to our wishes. Thank you LORD for your sovereign grace and merciful hand.**

10. It is not true that failure to be healed always indicates a lack of **faith.**

- Again, remember Job! There may be other spiritual realities!
- Oh friends, let us lament the number of precious believers who beat themselves into an emotional wreck because some preacher said a lack of healing was caused by a lack of faith!
- **We are NOT commending doubt; we are lifting up true faith in our loving God!**

Final Thoughts:

Ask, believe, then **trust** dear friends. If you are a child of Jesus, know that He loves you. He has your best in mind. In this world, we will have tribulation, but He has overcome the world.

Sometimes, we pray in accordance to His will, and He heals. Sometimes, we make our petitions known to Him in faith, and He is glorified, but has a different plan. He is sovereign. He is Lord. He is perfect and never errs. Trust Him, and walk by faith.

Matthew 6:10 (KJV) Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

Amen.