

What We Believe
Lesson 11
Divine Healing

Article 11 of the Church of God Declaration of Faith:

“We believe divine healing is provided for all in the atonement.”

When speaking of healing, we are speaking of the various forms of healing and restoration provided by God.

- Healing is provided on a spiritual level.
- Healing is emotional because of the fractures in a person’s emotions.
- Illness is also physical; healing must have a physical dimension.

The word “dis-ease” when broken down into its etymology, means “when the individual is not at rest.”

It is not accurate to say God heals emotional or spiritual illnesses and does not heal physical illnesses or to call one a miracle and not the other.

The world of medicine, psychiatry, and counseling are coming to understand the unity of disease and to include the emotional, spiritual, and physical infirmities.

I. Basic Premise: All Healing is Divine

A. Whatever is good has its origin in God – James 1:17 Every good and perfect gift is from above and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

- It is the character of God that He remains the same, His compassions are not changed nor are they withdrawn or withheld.
 1. In James’ passage, we know that good things, such as healings, are present in the world because of the goodness of God.
 2. God’s will is to do good for His creatures, because they are the creatures of His Word.
 3. All legitimate instruments and agents of healing have their origins in the grace of God, even if the agent who administers those good things is not aware that he/she is a minister of God or may not even be a believer in God.
 - a. These agents may include physicians, psychiatrists, counselors and methods of surgery, counseling, bone-setting.
 - b. It also includes the instruments of healing such as medications, orthopedic appliances and other techniques.

B. Scripture does place special emphasis on healing as direct, divine intervention.

1. In divine healing, God dramatically and/or miraculously restores the body's ability to restore good health. God may intervene to restore sight, correct paralysis, restore hearing, or correct other ailments instantaneously, not gradually.
2. These two processes – whether instantaneous or gradual are not to be discounted as not from the goodness of God.

C. Seeing good results is not the only way to tell if something is good:

1. In the realm of the demonic – witchcraft, demon worship, the reign and worship of the Anti-Christ – good results seem to appear.

These could be fraudulent appearing to be good when they actually are not good but open the door for evil in the person's life.

- a. Scripture refers to “lying wonders,” which are designed to deceive:

2 Thessalonians 2:9-10 The coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,¹⁰ and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

- b. Revelation 13:11-15 refers to the “deadly wound” which was healed v. 12, “great wonders” v.13, “fire coming down from heaven v. 13, miracles occurring v 14, and life given to the beast v 15. All done by the power of the anti-Christ.

Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon.¹² And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.¹³ He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.¹⁴ And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived.¹⁵ He was granted *power* to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

2. The name in which healing occurs is the more important indication of what is good than the physical result.

So, a lying or healing wonder that inspires worship of satan or obedience to Anti-Christ is demonic, even if a blind person can see.

D. Healing must be done in the course of worship of Jesus Christ, as He has given to us in Scripture.

E. Full healing goes back to the concept of restoration of what was the original.

II. **Healing in the Atonement**

The word **atonement** means “satisfaction or reparation for a wrong or injury; amends.”

- The doctrine of unlimited atonement states that Christ died for all people, whether or not they would ever believe in Him. When applied to Jesus’ finished work on the cross, atonement concerns the reconciliation of God and humankind, as accomplished through the suffering and death of Christ. Paul highlights the atoning work of Jesus when he says, “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him! For if, while we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!” Romans 5:8–10.

A. There is a lot of controversy in theological circles whether healing is provided in the Atonement.

The answer is: “If it is not provided in the Atonement, then where is it provided?”

When Jesus died, He paid for our sins and to restore us back to the fellowship man had with God in the Garden of Eden which included spiritual and physical restoration.

B. Healing is an intervention against sin: It is a correction of one of the damages caused by sin. God intervenes against sin at its basic point by means of the Atonement – what Christ has provided for us.

C. The references to healing because of the suffering of Christ are in Isaiah 53:4 “Surely, He has borne/carried our griefs and carried our sorrows.” Translated **PAINS**.

1. Matthew 8:16-17 applied directly to physical healing – 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, ¹⁷ that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: “He Himself took our infirmities and bore *our* sicknesses.”

2. Matthew translates from the Hebrew text that physical healing is determined by and is provided for in the sufferings of Christ.
3. 1 Peter 2:24 Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.

D. The emphasis of these New Testament applications is atonement for sins includes healing.

This is verified in that the infirmities of the body are due to the fact we have sinned against God.

1. Ultimate healing is the resurrection of the body and is certainly based on atonement-based provision.
2. There is no theological reason this text should not include both physical and spiritual healing.
3. Biblically provided access to healing is appropriate to the Atonement and it is based on appropriations (accepting healing for yourself) related to the Atonement.

III. Healing Comes by the Word of God

- Psalm 107:20 He sent His word and healed them and delivered *them* from their destructions.
- God heals of all consequences of sin.
- The pattern of His healing is by His Word and by whom God accomplishes His will.

IV. Prayer is emphasized in the order of healing

- The elders are to pray for the sick that they may be healed – James 5:14-16
Is anyone among you sick? 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 will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. ¹⁶ Confess *your* trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.
- One of the appointed duties of elders is to pray for the sick.

- It is a sacramental appropriation that elders are to anoint with oil, and the prayer of faith shall save the sick. (vv. 14-15)

V. The Evidence of Healing in the Old Testament

- A. God showed His willingness to heal in the revelation of His nature
- B. The first crisis for Israel after crossing the Red Sea was at Marah (bitter).
The Lord made an ordinance to protect them from the diseases with which He had afflicted the Egyptians.
This was a divine and redemptive intervention against the physical infirmities that were common with the Egyptians – Exodus 15:23-26
Now when they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they *were* bitter. Therefore, the name of it was called Marah. ²⁴ And the people complained against Moses, saying, “What shall we drink?” ²⁵ So he cried out to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a tree. When he cast *it* into the waters, the waters were made sweet. There He made a statute and an ordinance for them, and there He tested them, ²⁶ and said, “If you diligently heed the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I *am* the Lord who heals you.”
- C. The afflictions associated with the Fall and the sin in this world can be taken by God and used in the process of saving His people.
1. There are many instances where that occurs: In the Psalms, it is the affliction that causes people to be aware of God’s mercy and power.
 2. It is a false assumption to imply that every illness represents that the person is unbelieving, or weak in faith, or is being judged by God.
 3. Illness in many cases is a form of the child of God’s training in which they are brought to maturity in the grace of the Lord.
- D. God places this provision for healing in His name: “I Am the Lord that heals you.”
Exodus 15:26
- E. Jehovah is the name above all other names that identifies the God of Israel. This name carries in it the willingness of God to heal and the power to heal – Yahweh – Rapha.

- F. God Himself made the statement: “I Am Yahweh, your healer.” It is this covenantal relationship with His people to believe and obey. The obedience to God relates to the healing that God provides and to the Atonement.
- G. God reveals His nature to heal by the character of His Word. Psalm 107:20 “He sent His Word and healed them.”
 - 1. The character of the Word that heals is the character of the God who heals. It is appropriate to understand that the Word of God is the instrument of divine healing.
 - 2. The quoting of certain healing scriptures to bring about healing is not the appropriate use of the Word as though it is a magic formula.
- H. God revealed His willingness to heal in the Old Testament scriptures by divine intervention.
 - 1. Abraham prayed to God for Abimelech and his wife and the maidservants so that they could bear children. God healed them at Abraham’s intercession.
 - 2. God healed Sarah of a barren womb – Genesis 18:10
- I. God made specific promises of healing associated with the coming of the Messiah.
 - 1. Recorded in the prophecy of Isaiah 53:4-5 Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. ⁵ But He *was* wounded for our transgressions, *He was* bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace *was* upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.
 - 2. In Matthew 11 and Luke 7, Jesus, in response to John the Baptizer, said the sick are healed, the demons are cast out, and sight is restored to the blind.

VI. Healing in the Ministry of Jesus

- A. John was specific in recording miracles of all kinds performed by Jesus. John 20:30-31 And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.
- B. Healing goes along with and is central to the understanding of the larger doctrine of salvation.
It is not just a matter of whether God can do miracles, but that God is redeeming the world.

- C. The gospel is not only a gospel of salvation but is also a gospel of healing.
- D. The Bible does not fragment emotional, spiritual, and physical healing: it deals with health, wholeness and healing as the restoration of wholeness.
- E. The healing of the Lord is provided in the gospel of Jesus Christ.
 1. Christ not only sought to affirm His authority with God, but He also ministers to the needs of people in a ministerial role.
 2. Acts 10:38 declares the ministry of Jesus: “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him.”
 3. The ministry of doing good, healing, and relief for suffering were all a part of Christ’s ministry, which He now passes on to His disciples.

VII. Special Ministerial Roles Ascribed to Christ

- A. Christ responded to the intercession of others on behalf of those who were ill.
 1. The Nobleman who came seeking for his servant
 2. Peter’s mother-in-law
 3. Jairus’ daughter. He responded with healings at Gennesaret
 4. The healing of the blind man at Bethsaida, and at the Mt. of Transfiguration
 5. The Syrophenician woman
- B. Acting from compassion is a reason for healing in a number of instances.
 1. When the multitudes came to Jesus in the evening, He healed them because He had compassion upon them – Mark 1:30-34
 2. When the woman, sick with infirmities for a long length of time, came to Jesus, He healed her out of His great compassion for her.
- C. Jesus’ healing acts are specifically related to the act of faith on the part of the believer.
 1. The woman with the issue of blood had faith to touch the hem of His garment and believed she would be made whole – Luke 8:43.
 2. The faith that developed in the Syrophenician woman.
- D. The mercy of Christ is also involved in His ministry and is a constant in the character of the gospel of Christ.
 1. Two unnamed blind men – Matthew 9:27
 2. The man with the withered hand – Matthew 12:10-13
 3. The Syrophenician woman’s daughter – Matthew 15:21-28
 4. The epileptic boy – Matthew 17:14-18
 5. The ten lepers – Luke 17:11-14

- E. There were times Jesus responded to a need He saw. When multitudes came to Him, He responded to the need that was evident – John 5:1-8 The man at the pool in Bethesda.
- F. There is a relationship between healing and the proclamation of the Kingdom of God.
1. Miracles of divine intervention are part of the Kingdom of God.
 2. There is no indication that divine intervention as miracles is to cease until the Kingdom of God is fulfilled.
 3. As long as the Kingdom is in formation, the Lord will continue to minister by His power through the agency of Holy Spirit.
- G. There are miracles of healing and other miracles through the ministry of Holy Spirit after Christ's ascension.
1. We are commissioned to continue to work in the power of Holy Spirit seeing the signs, wonders, and miracles in the heavens.
 2. It is a characteristic of the Book of Acts that preaching, signs, and wonders go hand in hand.
 3. Joel promised the outpouring of Holy Spirit as well as the signs, wonders, and miracles.
 4. Present among these signs and wonders are miracles of healing.
 5. Mark 16:18 is a promise to heal the sick and that it is expected in the fulfillment of Christ's commission to His church.
 6. Christ promised His presence which the Father would provide for the church by the continuance of His ministry in the world by the presence and power of Holy Spirit.
 7. James 5:13-14 assures us that the healing of the sick will continue as a ministry of Jesus Christ in the church.

Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. ¹⁴Is anyone among you sick? 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.

 - a. This passage also instructs the church on the way it should conduct its ministry of healing.
 - b. The sick should call for the elders of the church v. 14 – not the only way.
 - c. In the community of the church and the body of believers it is appropriate that elders be used in the fulfillment of this particular ministry.
 - d. Praying for them, anointing them with oil, and the prayer of faith and they will recover. (vv. 13-15)

- H. In response to those who claim that healing has ceased, the following questions need to be dealt with:
1. Why does the Holy Spirit give regulation regarding healing for that which He is removing? Why are there guidelines in the Bible of how to believe when healing is removed?
 2. Why does He give instructions as to how healing is to be conducted, if He is removing it from the character of the church?
 - a. You do not regulate that which is prohibited.
 - b. You do not regulate that which does not exist.
 - c. You regulate that which continues because you want it to be conducted in a way which glorifies the Lord and fulfills the purpose of the church and its commission.

Hebrews 2:3-4 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard *Him*, ⁴ God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?

Four observations about Hebrews 2:3-4

1. There is a direct line of witness from the Lord Himself to the believers addressed in the epistle to the Hebrews.
 2. God continued in this manner to witness to those who heard Christ with signs and wonders and miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit.
 3. Among these witnesses are the gifts of Holy Spirit which include the various forms of healing.
 4. These signs, wonders, and miracles are bound together with the message of the gospel. Wherever the gospel story has gone and will go, the sick are healed, the blind see, the deaf hear, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. This continues until there is no longer any need for healing.
- I. Healing is a ministry in the mortal condition.
- The one infirmity that God is not going to heal us from is our mortality.
 - He will heal us, but through death and the resurrection.
 - Even Lazarus and others who were raised from the dead had to face death again.
 - Mortality is a condition that will prevail until the Resurrection.