

Text: Luke 7:1-10

Theme: Mysteries and Miracles

May 29, 2016

How many of you have witnessed a miracle of healing? How many of you have seen God do His amazing work of restoring health? Now, how many of you have witnessed a time where God didn't provide healing, a time when you or others asked for a miracle but it didn't arrive, at least not as intended? Within the topic of healing, we find both miracles and mysteries. In today's text, we see God's miracle of healing as we consider our theme: Mysteries and Miracles.

I. By God's design, healing is both miraculous and mysterious. A. As we consider the mysterious side, we ask, "Why some and not others?" 1. Some lack healing because they have deserted Christ. Paul makes the statement in our Epistle, "I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you in the grace of Christ." In the realm of healing, some are lacking because they have stopped asking, stopped believing, stopped expecting, stopped acknowledging God. Once they believed, but for a host of reasons, some have gone their own way. When they needed Him most, they've turned their back because they believe God has turned His back on them.

2. Others lack healing because they have distorted God's Word. Paul described these people as those who were distorting the gospel of Christ, the good news. How many of you have ever stood in front of a mirror that created distorted reflections? It sort of resembles you, but it's not the real you. Some lack healing because they have distorted God and His promises by turning God into a magic genie. Whenever they need Him, they expect Him to act, to do their bidding, to fix whatever is broken and the rest of the time? The rest of the time, they have no interest in God, no use for God, and no time to offer Him praise for all He does in their lives day after day.

3. Still other lack healing for reasons beyond our understanding. Some reasons are clear and understandable, but, when we look at the hard facts, we realize that the majority of the time, we don't have an answer. Why did God heal here and not there? Why did He heal them and not me? We've all asked, but we all find ourselves in the same place. We simply don't have an answer. Why do some get cancer and others do not? I don't know. Why do some face daily pain and others almost never have to deal with pain? Again, I don't know and neither do you. Although we don't know why some and not others, that doesn't give us good reason to do nothing.

B. Aware of the mysteries, what do we do to prepare for God's next miracle of healing? 1. We acknowledge our unworthiness. In our Gospel, the centurion, acknowledged his unworthiness. Like that centurion, God waits for us to admit we are unworthy, to acknowledge daily that we are undeserving, to stand before Him at His Supper fully aware that we deserve nothing we are about to receive. "Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to the cross I cling" - that's what Jesus wants from us, not some magical idea that admitting our unworthiness automatically leads to healing, but the realization that everything, including our health, is a gift for which we are unworthy.

2. We acknowledge the power of God. The centurion's confidence in Jesus' power is incredible! "But say the word and let my servant be healed." Could we, would we do that? As we acknowledge God's power, we look at God's creative act at the

beginning of time, “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” Do you know anyone who could do that, anyone who can even create a flower out of a handful of dirt, or a bird from a pile of sand? Add to that all the other recorded miracles. As we prepare for God’s next healing miracle, we reflect on His past miracles; we acknowledge that God can do it, that God has the power if it be His will.

3. We ask without doubting. The first part is easy. It’s the second part that’s not as simple. We’re good at asking, but we struggle with our doubts. Reflect back to Easter. Who had the most difficult time believing Jesus had risen? Doubt interrupts faith; doubt has the power to kill faith. Because we want to experience more of God’s miracles, God says, “Ask and it shall be given to you. Don’t ask and doubt or ask and analyze. Just ask in faith. Push doubt out of your mind and keep pushing it so that it cannot reenter.” Doubt and faith cannot co-exist in the same place at the same time. One must go and we know which one must be sent on its way.

4. We trust God with all our heart. We know the words, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding,” but, once again, it’s easier said than done. The centurion in our text, did he trust? Did he believe Jesus had the power to heal without even seeing his servant? Absolutely! Did that trust develop overnight? Absolutely not! Trust is a process; it’s developed over time. You don’t wake up one morning in pain and suddenly decide, “I think I’ll trust God today because then He will heal me!” That’s not how it works. God waits for us to trust Him in the midst of our pain and health issues, and even when the miracles don’t occur.

5. We continue growing in faith. Near the end of our Gospel, Jesus speaks those impressive words, “Not even in Israel have I found such faith.” Had the centurion earned the right to healing because of faith? No. Was his great faith evidence of his belief in Jesus’ power? Yes. As we await God’s next miracle, we continue to grow our faith, to build our mountain of faith, not because we’re attempting to earn God’s healing, but because God desires faith and God praises great faith. Great faith isn’t the magic formula for healing because there isn’t a magic formula. Yet, when we are people of great faith, we set ourselves into a proper place for God to do His next miracle.

6. We press on no matter what. If Jesus hadn’t healed the centurion’s servant, would the centurion have given up on Jesus and merely relied on his own power? In his unworthiness, the centurion was prepared for Jesus to heal and for Jesus not to heal. Either way, the centurion would have remained the same person of great faith. Because health issues interfere with life, we want God to fix what’s broken, but whether He does or He doesn’t for reasons beyond our understanding, He still encourages us, prompts us, and expects us to press on, to step into each new day prepared for His miracle, but also prepared to say, “Maybe tomorrow, Lord. Maybe tomorrow!”

7. Mysteries and miracles - in the realm of healing, both will continue and both will baffle our minds and test our faith. Yet, as all those things occur, Jesus says to us, “Be prepared for My next mystery which may be your miraculous healing!” Amen.