

Mark 1:29-45: Jesus' Healing Ministry

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Preacher: Nathan Rambeck

[0 : 00] All right, well, let's jump back into the Scriptures here. We're going to look at, we're in the Gospel of Mark, and we're still in the first chapter, but we're getting to the end of chapter one.

Last week, we talked about Jesus' early on in His ministry. He went into the synagogues, which was a custom of His, going to teach in the synagogue.

And when He went to teach, one of the things that happened is there was some demonic manifestation, and He ended up casting out an evil spirit, and we talked about that last week.

We're going to continue on here in Mark chapter one, in verse 21. We're going to look at Jesus' healing. Well, really, a big focus today is going to be on Jesus' healing ministry.

He's going to heal Peter's mother-in-law of a fever. He's going to heal multitudes, because people find out pretty quick that this Jesus guy is healing people. And then cleansing a leper, which is another record of healing.

[1 : 20] So, today is going to be big on Jesus' healing ministry. Let's start in Mark chapter one. I think I said verse 21, but we're going to start in verse 29. Mark chapter one, verse 29.

Now, as soon as they had come out of the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew with James and John. So, they left this synagogue where Jesus taught and where this demon was cast out.

And after that, they went over to Peter's house, Simon and Andrew. Whenever you read Simon, that's almost always talking about Simon Peter. Simon was his given name.

Peter, how did he get the name Peter? Does anybody remember? Jesus gave him that name.

Jesus gave him that name. And so, the house of Simon and Andrew, they were brothers.

And then James and John. So, Jesus had started calling his disciples. He hadn't called all 12 yet at this point. But right now, he's got four disciples. And two of the brothers of his disciples, he's going to their house.

[2 : 25] Verse 30, but Simon's wife's mother lay sick with a fever. And they told him about her at once. They told him, well, our mother, our mother-in-law, Simon's mother-in-law, she's sick.

So, he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. And immediately, the fever left her. And she served them. So, this is Simon and Andrew's house.

I imagine, right, that this, are these two brothers living together? What's going on? Maybe it's their father's household, right? And people tended to live in communal-type households just because it was, I mean, for different reasons.

Sometimes, it was just more financially feasible. But it sounds like, so, Peter's wife's mother. Today, we call that what?

Your mother-in-law. They didn't have that kind of phraseology back then. So, it was just Peter's wife's mother, which is harder to say. It's a little bit easier to say mother-in-law. Or as my mother-in-law says, mother-in-love.

[3 : 31] Mother-in-law, which is wonderful and true. What another great name, mother-in-love. But they told Jesus, listen, Simon's, or Peter's mother-in-law, she's sick.

And so, Jesus came and he took her by the hand and he just lifted her up. And immediately, the fever left her and she served him. A couple points to note on this part of the passage.

One thing that's really interesting is, one, just simply the fact that Jesus had a mother-in-law. Now, is that really a surprising fact? A lot of people have mother-in-laws, right?

Anybody here have a mother-in-law or have had a mother-in-law? Yeah, a lot of us. When you get married, you typically have a mother-in-law. So, it's not an uncommon thing. But it is surprising because there are some who say, well, Peter was not married.

And this is a teaching of the Catholic Church and something that the Catholics have made a big deal about. It was that Peter was never married. And so, according to Catholic tradition, Jesus was, or excuse me, not Jesus, Peter, was the very first what?

[4 : 48] The very first pope. The very first pope. And so, there's a lineage that goes from Peter all the way until now of succession, of papal succession, starting with Peter.

And also, Catholic teaching is this idea that, well, if you're a pope or a priest or a bishop or any of those things, you have to be celibate. You can't get married.

And to be honest, that kind of teaching has caused no end of trouble and devastation. And so, if this is what the Bible teaches, that Peter had a mother-in-law, why would the Catholics teach otherwise?

Well, some, and I don't know that there's a universal kind of approach to this, but some would teach, well, Peter was married, but that his wife died.

And if you lose your wife, that doesn't mean you lose your mother-in-law. You still have a mother-in-law. You still have your wife's mother and might be a part of your household. And so, that is a possibility, even though that's an argument from silence, right?

[6 : 02] There is nowhere in the Bible that says that Peter's wife had passed away. There's another interesting scripture, just to respond to this whole teaching.

One, that Peter was not married, but two, that it kind of takes it even further and basically says that if you're going to be a full-time minister of the Lord, you need to remain celibate.

In 1 Corinthians 9, chapter 5, Paul is writing to the Corinthians, and he's talking about how much he's given up in order to serve the Corinthians.

And he's talking about all the things that he doesn't have, liberties that he could take, but that he doesn't. And so, in this list of things that he says, these are liberties I could take, but I don't, all for my service to you, one of the things that he brings up is some of the other apostles.

And so, in 1 Corinthians 9, verse 5, he says this, Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas?

[7 : 19] Now, who is Cephas? Cephas is another rendering of the name for Peter. He's talking about Peter. He says, Don't I have the right, though I don't take it, don't I have the right to take along in my travels, my ministry travels, to take along a believing wife, just like the other apostles, and specifically Peter does?

And so, it seems pretty clear that Peter was married, and his wife remained with him, even to this point, anyway, in 1 Corinthians, where Peter was continuing to minister and travel around, and he was taking with him his wife, which is a good idea.

I highly recommend it. If you do a lot of traveling and can take your wife with you, it makes things a lot better. Now, there is a Catholic kind of response to this, and it really has to do with kind of language.

You know, in the Greek, there is no word for wife. I don't know if you knew that. When you have, when you're kind of reading in the scriptures, and you just read the word wife, it doesn't actually have a specific word for wife.

There's just a word for a woman. And so, typically, you know that it's a wife because it'll say something like, you know, Jacob's woman, Rachel.

[8 : 48] Well, what does that mean, Jacob's woman? Well, it means his wife. When it's your woman, that's your wife, right? Same way with a man. If it's a woman's man, that is her husband.

And so, when you get married, you belong to one another. And so, if you, in certain translations, in fact, there's a kind of specifically Catholic translation that actually renders this.

Have we not power to carry about a woman, a sister, as well as the rest of the apostles and the brethren of the Lord and Cephas? So, if you did translate it very literally, it would read like that.

Have we not the power or the authority to carry about or to bring with us a woman, a sister, as well as the rest of the apostles? So, the argument goes that, well, Peter or Paul was just saying, hey, don't we have the right to bring women with us on our ministry travels?

Believing women? And I don't think that that argument holds a lot of water. One, because we actually know that there were women that traveled with Paul, right? Think of, oh, I'm trying to remember the name of the couple, the famous couple.

[10 : 08] Priscilla and Aquila, right? They traveled with Paul. And so, he had believing women, part of his traveling group, at least at times, that we know of.

And also, it would seem unwise, right, for especially an unmarried woman to travel with just a bunch of men.

Doesn't that seem like an unwise idea? And so, it seems to me that that's kind of not a very great, really a defense of this whole proposition, trying to ultimately prove, one, that Peter was not married, but ultimately to push this point that it's important for full-time ministers of the Lord to remain celibate.

That's certainly not the case. And like I said, it ends up causing a lot of problems and a lot of trouble. In fact, the Bible warns against this whole idea of teaching people that they must be celibate, teaching against marriage.

The Bible says that it is a gift, and there are some people that have that gift of celibacy. But otherwise, it's good to get married. The other thing I wanted to point out in this specific passage is that when Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law, she had a fever.

[11 : 41] And it says that he took her by the hand and he lifted her up. One of the things to notice, he did not pray. Jesus didn't pray.

He didn't pray to the father and said, Lord, will you please heal her? He just actually grabbed her by the hand. He didn't even say anything. Did you notice that?

He came, he took her by the hand, and he lifted her up. That was it. He didn't even say anything. Now, there are other times when he healed people where he actually said something.

He said, be healed, or stand up and walk, or something like that. But in this case, he said not a word, but simply just lifted her up.

One of the things that's interesting to note is, do you know that Jesus never prayed for anyone to be healed? Never said a single prayer to ask for somebody to be healed.

[12 : 41] That's because Jesus' healing ministry was because of power that he received in order to heal. In Acts 10, verse 38, Paul is talking, or I think this is Paul, talking about Jesus.

But he says, talking about Jesus' ministry, he says, Acts 10, 38, Jesus, who is from Nazareth, how God did anoint him with the Holy Spirit and power, who went through doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil, because God was with him.

Jesus received the Holy Spirit on that day in which he was baptized by John at the Jordan River. And the Holy Spirit came upon him.

And he received this power. Now, you might ask, well, did Jesus really need power? Because, well, he was God himself.

He's God the Son. He already has power. But the Bible indicates that when God the Son condescended to become like us, he came in weakness.

[13 : 56] And so his life, just like ours, in his earthly ministry, in his earthly life, he came in weakness and had to depend on the Lord in many of the same ways that we do.

Another verse to point out as far as this healing power, in Luke chapter 8, verse 46, there's this story of this woman with this issue of blood, they called it.

She had kind of a blood condition. And she just said in her heart or her mind or something like that, she said, I just touch him. I know I'll be healed. And so she ended up kind of, there was a crowd of people, and she ended up touching him.

And when she did, Jesus stopped and he said, who touched me? And, well, his disciples said, well, what do you mean, Jesus?

There's like a crowd of everybody's touching you. He said, yeah, but somebody touched me in a different way. Luke chapter 8, verse 46, goes into detail on this.

[15 : 07] And in that verse, it says, but Jesus said, somebody touched me, for I perceived power going out from me. There was power that left his body and went into hers.

Healing power. Also in Luke chapter 9, the next chapter over, when Jesus, he has this ministry where he's going out and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and also healing and casting out demons, and he gives that same ministry to his disciples.

And it says in Luke chapter 9, verse 1, Then he called his 12 disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases.

So the healing ministry of Jesus and his disciples was not just a matter of prayer, not just a matter of praying for the sick, but this was a power ministry, a ministry of power, of miraculous power.

And also the disciples, just like we said with Jesus, they also didn't pray. They also did the same thing where they would command people to be healed because they had been given a power and

an authority to heal and to cast out demons.

[16:42] We'll continue on. Verse 32, At evening when the sun had set, they brought to him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed, and the whole city was gathered together at the door.

Then he healed many who were sick with various diseases and cast out many demons, and he did not allow the demons to speak because they knew him. So Jesus, the word is starting to spread very, very quickly here in Capernaum.

And so he's at Peter's house. He heals his mother-in-law. And then by the end of the day, this huge crowd descends on their home. One of the things to point out here, it says, The whole city was gathered.

And do we think that it's really literally true that the entire city came to their house? Probably not. But this is just a simple example of hyperbole, a figure of speech that's used very commonly in the scriptures, and that we, of course, use every day in our speech.

But it means something. It means that there was a huge crowd. It seemed like the whole city had come out to Peter's house in order to be healed by Jesus.

[18:02] Also, it says here that Jesus did not allow the demons to speak. And it says why. It says because they knew him. So we notice this with the first story that we talked about last week.

The demons spoke up, and Jesus commanded it to be silent. And there are many reasons that are possible that he told it to be silent. But here in this case, he said he didn't allow them to speak because they knew him.

He did not want these demons to reveal too much about his life and his ministry. In Luke 4, verse 41, this is a parallel passage in Luke about this same event.

And it gives a little bit more detail, and it says this, And demons also came out of many, crying and saying, You are the Christ, the Son of God. And he, rebuking them, did not allow them to speak, for they knew that he was the Christ.

Christ means Messiah. They knew that he was the Messiah. And he didn't want them to reveal that too soon. Now, there was a plan for him to reveal that, and he, at opportune times, did reveal that, first to his own disciples, and then eventually to everyone towards the end of his ministry.

[19:21] But he didn't, he didn't at least want it to be totally clear up front. There's a lot of things going on. One, risks to his life, things that he would have to deal with early on in his ministry that he dealt with later, because the leaders knew that he was claiming to be the Messiah.

And what did that cause them to want to do? Well, to kill him. And so, letting this information out too quickly would cause all kinds of problems.

There was actually another passage in which the people wanted to make him king right then and there. And he said, No, not now. So, I wanted to ask this question.

Why is it that Jesus healed? Why did Jesus have a healing ministry? Well, the first, I came up with three reasons.

You know, you can always come up with more probably. But three reasons that I wrote down. One, to fulfill what was prophesied about him.

[20:32] There's another parallel passage of these same events here in the book of Matthew, chapter 8. And in Matthew, chapter 8, verse 16, it says this.

When evening had come, they brought to him many who were demon-possessed, and he cast out the spirits with the word, and he healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, He himself took our infirmities, and he bore our sicknesses. This was Isaiah the prophet speaking of one who was to come. And so, Jesus, in his healing ministry, fulfilled that prophecy. The other, the second reason, I think, was to be a testimony, or to bear witness, to use kind of a biblical phrase.

Jesus' miracles, just like I think is common with many of the miracles that we see in Scripture, were a sign to testify to the authority and the legitimacy of those who were doing the miracles.

We see it with Moses. We see it with many of the prophets who spoke on behalf of the Lord. And we see it also in the ministry of Jesus.

[21:51] We also see it in the ministry of Paul, who comes later on. Many of these people who spoke on behalf of the Lord, who spoke especially with new revelation from God, part of the testimony, part of the witness that what they said was true, was that they had these miraculous signs that followed in their path.

And we say, well, why would Jesus need that? Well, you know, Jesus was the Son of God, God the Son, but why should people believe him?

In fact, he even asked that question and says, you shouldn't just believe me and just my testimony. He said, look at these other witnesses, these other testimonies.

Look at the prophets who spoke about me. There's another testimony. In John 5, verse 36, he says this, but I have the testimony that is greater than John's.

He's talking about John the Baptist. John the Baptist spoke of Jesus, right? And he testified of Jesus. But he said, I have a testimony that is greater than John's. For the works that the Father gave me, that I might finish them, the works themselves that I do, they testify concerning me that the Father has sent me.

[23 : 21] And so the miraculous works that he did were to be a testimony so that the people would believe that what he was saying was true.

Not the only testimony, but an important one. In Acts 2, verse 22, as Peter is preaching to his brethren, other Jews, on the day of Pentecost, this is after Jesus had died and rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, and there's this day of Pentecost, all these Jewish believers, disciples of Jesus, were in an upper room, and they had tongues of fire come on their head, and they all spoke in these different languages of the people who were in Jerusalem at the time, and they heard them, and they're like, what in the world is going on?

I hear these people who I know are not native to my land, but they're speaking my language, and they're praising God in my language. This is amazing.

And so Peter preaches to them a sermon, and part of that sermon, part of that message, he says, men, Israelites, hear these words. Acts 2, verse 22.

Jesus the Nazarene, a man approved of God among you by mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in the midst of you, according as also ye yourselves have known.

[24 : 53] He's saying, listen, you guys heard about Jesus. You knew about all the things going on, all these miraculous events, these people who were healed, who had been blind from birth, who had been lame from birth, who had diseases that are incurable.

You knew about these people, and this man Jesus healed them. And that was a testimony that he was who he said he was. So fulfilling prophecy one.

Two, bearing witness, or these healings were a testimony. And then the last one is actually described a little later on, here in Mark chapter one, when he heals the leper.

It says when that leper came to him and said, are you willing to heal me? And we'll read more about that in a second. It says this, then Jesus moved with compassion, stretched out his hand, and he touched him.

And he said to him, I'm willing, be cleansed. There's another passage in Matthew chapter 14, verse 14. It says when Jesus went out and he saw a great multitude, and he was moved with compassion for them, and he healed their sick.

[26 : 12] Another reason that Jesus healed was because he loved people. He was compassionate. He felt burdened by their pain and their suffering. And he wanted to see them healed.

And he had the ability and the power, and in that season of time, to do that. We're going to actually skip a few verses.

I'm going to come back. We're going to skip a few verses here on Jesus praying in private. Maybe we'll address that next week. But we're going to go to verse 40 to kind of stay focused here on the healing ministry of Jesus.

Mark, again, chapter 1, verse 40. And we'll look at this account of the leper. Now, a leper came to him, imploring him, kneeling down to him and saying to him, if you are willing, you can make me clean.

Then Jesus moved with compassion, stretched out his hand, and he touched him, and he said to him, I am willing to be cleansed. As soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed.

[27 : 23] Just something to point out here. How long did it take for this healing to take place? Zero time. It happened immediately. We actually see this.

And leprosy is not something that typically heals immediately. You know, sometimes you can have a headache, and within 30 seconds, it's gone, right? With leprosy, when you have these, and it depends on how severe it is, but it can be anywhere from white flakes to, I mean, really, skin that's

almost falling off.

Leprosy. But it's very noticeable. And immediately it was gone. And he strictly warned him, and he sent him away at once.

And he said to him, See that you say nothing to anyone, but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing those things which Moses commanded as a testimony to them. However, he went out, and he began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the matter, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter the city, but was outside in deserted places, and they came to him from every direction.

So, one thing to talk about is this leprosy. And I don't know how common leprosy was at that time, but there was enough commonality that it was something that was actually written about in the law. [28 : 44] There's a whole two chapters, at least, in Leviticus chapter 13 and 14. In fact, when Jesus mentions going to the priest, that's part of those two chapters.

And so, there was this whole practice described in the law of Moses, Leviticus, again, Leviticus chapter 13 and 14, on what to do with people who are lepers, or who have leprosy, or who are suspected of having leprosy.

And if you read those two chapters, there's a lot of detail, but it's basically requiring the priest, if somebody is suspected of having leprosy, they have signs of leprosy on their skin. You go to the priest, and the priest will verify, well, is this really leprosy, or is it maybe some other skin condition? And you look at the color, and how it's impacting the hair on your arms, or wherever it is on your body. And then, whether it persists, or not, and you have to put somebody in isolation for a week, and then come back, and if they're all better, then, you know, it's not leprosy, because leprosy isn't something that goes away.

And so, there was this whole practice in the Jewish law. So, it seems, based on that, that this is a pretty common thing. But leprosy is a horrific disease.

[30 : 07] We don't really have leprosy today. Through modern medicine, we actually have ways to cure leprosy. And it's always been more of a thing in the Middle East.

In fact, I'm going to read this description of a case of leprosy in the West. But it was a rare case, because it's not something that was typically found in the Americas, or even in Europe, from what I've read.

So, this is a description of leprosy from Albert Barnes. He says this, who's a Bible commentator. Albert Barnes, the Bible commentator. He says this, it is a matter of profound gratitude to God that this scourge has been permitted, but once, to visit the New World.

That awful calamity was on the island of Guadalupe in the West Indies about the year 1730, and is thus described by an eyewitness. Its commencement is imperceptible.

So, when it starts, you barely can notice. There appear only some few white spots on the skin. At first, they are attended with no pain or inconvenience, but no means whatever will remove them.

[31 : 23] The disease imperceptibly increases for many years. The spots become larger and spread over the whole body. When the disease advances, the upper part of the nose swells, the nostrils become enlarged, and the nose itself grows soft.

Tumors appear on the jaws, the eyebrows swell, the ears become thick, the points of the fingers as well as also the feet and toes swell, the nails become scaly, the joints of the hands and the feet separate and drop off.

In the last stages of the disease, the patient becomes a hideous spectacle and falls to pieces. A horrific, horrific disease that starts off fairly slight, but over many, many years grows worse and worse and worse.

Sometimes, they say that the progression of the disease might be 10 or 20 years, but even up to 50 years can take a long time. So, in the beginning, it might be more of a nuisance, but as time goes on, it becomes more and more severe, eventually leading to death.

Lepers were, as far as, and this is described in Leviticus 13 and 14, were put out of the camp. They had to go outside of the camp that was established there out in the desert to be separated.

[32 : 50] And what purpose was that for? Because leprosy was contagious. And so, you had ways in which you kept the people separated.

And it says there in Leviticus that if you went about and you traveled and you got near people, you had to do something. You were required, as you went through town or wherever it was that you needed to go and there were people around, to say, unclean, unclean, to declare yourself as

unclean.

Leprosy would lead to a difficult life. But you can imagine having this condition at whatever stage, early on or later on, is devastating.

And you would do anything to be healed of this. And so this leper came to Jesus and imploring, it says, he kneeled down and he said to him, if you are willing, you can make me clean.

He says, I know you can. You've done it for others and I know you can do it for me. And did Jesus say, well, I'll think about it.

[34 : 05] Is that what Jesus said? No, he said, of course, I'm willing. He had compassion on him. His heart went out to him. Be cleansed.

And the leprosy immediately went away. Kind of the final thing to point out before we, I'm going to want to talk about just healing in general.

And, well, what about today? Can Jesus heal me today? Is he willing to? But Jesus told him to go do this mosaic ritual for those who had been cleansed of leprosy.

They were required to go to the priests and to actually offer an offering. And so, Jesus, who was under the law, the Bible specifically teaches that Jesus came and he himself was under the law.

And Jesus was careful to make sure that the law was fulfilled and obeyed. So he says, go to the police, not the police, go to the priests. And show yourself to them.

[35 : 12] And part of this was the priests. How many times do you think a priest had seen somebody come to them who they had before looked at and they verified, yep, you've got leprosy and so you've got to, you live outside of town, you've got to do all these things, you've got to say unclean, unclean, and we're going to probably write this down, you know, to make sure that you do the right thing.

You're marked as a leper. How many times do you think these priests had somebody come to them and say, hey, I'm healed now? Probably never.

In fact, I'm imagining that people reading in the law about the laws of the lepers, you know, a lot of it makes sense, but then there's this whole thing about what to do if you're cured of leprosy because that basically never happened.

Why would that be in there? But here is this opportunity. Was it just this leper? There were many lepers. And you imagine you're the priest in charge of the lepers.

And here, one after another after another, all these lepers are coming to you because they've been healed. And you look at your register and, yeah, you were registered as a leper ten years ago.

[36 : 33] And you're healed? Well, I guess we need to do these steps in the law and offer these sacrifices and do these things. But this was a witness, a direct witness to the priests at the time that there is somebody going around who is healing people.

And you cannot deny it as much as many of them wanted to. but that denial, that opportunity to deny what was right in their face was taken away.

And of course, the guy didn't listen to him and started talking to everybody and it just made it more difficult for Jesus because he had to go back out into the wilderness because it was too difficult in the population centers to try to move and do things.

All right, so after reading all this, I want to ask this question. What about today? Jesus healed all these people.

In fact, it seems like everyone that came to Jesus who asked, he healed them. Every single one.

There were a few cases, and I'm not sure if we'll read about these in Mark, but there was one or two cases where it says that Jesus could not heal someone.

[37 : 57] It doesn't say that he didn't, wouldn't. It says that he couldn't because of their unbelief. So there's some kind of thing going on there with their faith that had a part to play, at least in those specific circumstances.

But there's nowhere, well, there is one case with a Gentile woman where Jesus at first refused, but then she persisted, and he said, finally, yes, I'll help you out.

But this is one of the most difficult things, I think, for Christian believers who we have some kind of sickness or disease that we're dealing with, or maybe a loved one, and we pray and we ask the Lord, you know, I want some relief from my own suffering or suffering that my child has experienced, and it's good.

We ought to pray, and I certainly don't want to say that we shouldn't, but how many of us have experienced, we've prayed and prayed, and the sickness remained, and it's difficult.

It's difficult when we suffer, it's difficult when our loved ones suffer. I think actually, many times, it's more difficult when we see those that we love and care for, especially our children, suffer in any kind of way.

[39 : 31] But when we look at the ministry of Jesus, I think we need to keep in context what was going on. Jesus had a three-year ministry where he was getting the word out and needed to let people know that he was who he says he was.

You know, when we read through the scriptures, we actually see lots of miracles, and when we read all those miracles, miracles, we can assume that that is a common thing.

But if we read more carefully, I think we'll realize that miracles are actually not common, really in any era of biblical history. Now, during the time of Jesus and his specific ministries, it became very, very common.

But outside of that, and, you know, a few things with the Israelites going through the wilderness where actually they experienced some miracles and then some, you know, misery and all kinds of afflictions.

But for most of the history of the Bible, you read that people were afflicted with different things and they just suffered. And they weren't healed. You know, Paul himself was given power.

[40 : 48] Just like Jesus had. Just like Jesus gave to his apostles, his disciples. He gave them power to heal. And Paul was given that same power.

It says that he did many miraculous signs, amazing miracles. But did you know that Paul suffered? He was afflicted with some kind of affliction.

In 2 Corinthians chapter 12, Paul describes it. 2 Corinthians chapter 12 verse 7 and 10. And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations. Paul, he was God, whether through appearance or he said, you know, sometimes it seemed like I was taken into heaven and I'm not sure if that was real or if it was just a vision or what.

But the Lord revealed many things to Paul. So because of the abundance of that revelation, he said, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.

Concerning this thing, I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And he said to me, my grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.

[41 : 59] Therefore, most gladly, I will rather boast in my infirmities. Infirmities means weakness or many times it's sickness. That the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

We see others who were part of Paul's ministry, and I'm sure they were there when Paul when there were miracles done at the hands of Paul.

Paul says to his compatriot Timothy, his son in the faith, he gives him a recommendation at the end of one of his letters to Timothy. He says, no longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities.

Timothy experienced frequent ailments, it sounds like, of his stomach. In his second letter to Timothy, chapter 4, verse 20, he mentions one of his other companions, Erastus stayed in Corinth, but Trophimus I have left in Miletus because he was sick.

[43 : 19] Even though he had this miraculous power as a witness to his ministry, it wasn't applied to everyone.

Philippians chapter 2, verse 25, Paul says this, yet I consider it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker and fellow soldier, but your messenger and the one who ministered to my need, since he was longing for you all and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick.

For indeed, he was sick almost unto death. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.

So, Epaphroditus was deathly ill, and it sounds like whether he was healed miraculously or just recovered, kind of naturally he ultimately did recover, but you can imagine, well, how come Paul had this miraculous power?

How come he didn't just immediately heal him as soon as he came down with something? So, as much as we, I think, would love to have this miraculous power constantly active in our lives and constantly working to heal every affliction that we might experience, that's just not the way that God

has intended things to be.

[44 : 47] So, why do people get sick? Why is there sickness and affliction and suffering in the world? And the reason is because the world is broken.

We broke it, and we're continuing to break it. From the very beginning with Adam and Eve, the Bible says that sin came through Adam, sin came into the world, its entrance came through the sin of Adam, and since then, it has only compounded.

Did sin just stop there? It didn't. It continues to compound. So much of our suffering, so much actually, even sickness and illness and disease actually can be traced directly to somebody sinning, to somebody doing something that they shouldn't be doing.

Sometimes it's things that we do to ourselves. We don't eat right, or we get involved in behavior that we shouldn't, that ends up bringing disease or some kind of suffering on our own lives.

Sometimes we can do things that will cause somebody else to suffer. One of the hardest things that I saw when I lived in, I was a missionary in Cambodia, was going and visiting an orphanage, and this was an HIV orphanage, full of children who were HIV positive, not because of anything that they had done, but because of the impact that was made upon them almost always by their parents and the poor decisions of their parents.

[46 : 30] And so we can see, we can see very starkly, very clearly, that sin causes suffering. We don't always see those lines and how they all connect, but every bit of suffering that we experience can be traced back to sin.

Sickness and disease are not part of God's original plan. In fact, going back to a verse that we read earlier in Acts chapter 10, it says this, Jesus, who is from Nazareth, how God did anoint him with the Holy Spirit and power who went through doing good and healing all those who were afflicted by God.

Is that what it says? No. Healing all those who were oppressed by the devil. This sickness, this disease, this doesn't come from God, though in his wisdom he has allowed us to experience this suffering that comes ultimately from the evil one.

So, affliction comes through sin and because of the prince of darkness we'll call him. You know, the Bible says that the whole creation groans.

Paul says this in Romans chapter 8. Romans 8, 18 says this, For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory, which shall be revealed in us.

[48 : 10] For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it in hope, because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. From the very beginning, when that first sin entered the world, pain and suffering, it comes with the groanings, and he's describing it as if the whole earth itself is groaning, and it labors with those birth pangs even until now.

In verse 23, Romans 8, 23, not only that, but we also who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our bodies.

So he says, even us believers, we trust in Christ, we're believers, we're part of God's family, but even we continue to experience the sufferings of the body, and we're eagerly waiting for a day that will come when those sufferings will end.

And it is coming. You know, the number, I think the number one criticism that you will hear of Christianity or the ideas that Christianity presents is what is typically called the problem of pain.

[49 : 50] Why is there pain and suffering in the world? If God is good, why does he allow people to suffer? And in that criticism, is an assumption that a good God would never allow pain.

Because, well, there's no purpose in pain. It's just completely meaningless. It's purposeless. But is that true? It seems true when you're going through it.

It seems true what possible good could come from this pain, suffering. But I think if we think about it, pain certainly can have value.

You know, I think about we discipline our children. Children get into trouble, and sometimes they need discipline. We need to inflict a little bit of pain in order to bring that correction, in order to realign them towards what is good and what is true.

value. I think that's just one little hint at how pain, at least for a season, can provide value.

[51 : 06] And I don't know that we know the answers to all the different ways in which these things that we experience, through sickness, disease, and other affliction, can have value.

But Paul talks about it a little bit more clearly in 2 Corinthians chapter 4, verse 16. He says this, Therefore, we do not lose heart, even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.

For our light affliction, and man, sometimes our affliction does not feel light at all. It feels like the heaviest of burdens.

But he calls it this, for our light affliction, which is but for a moment. It's but for a moment. How can he say that?

These afflictions sometimes that we deal with, sometimes, you know, you get sick for a week, and then it's gone. Sometimes you get sick for months. Some people deal with affliction their entire life.

[52 : 20] But Paul's talking about even that. for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

For why we do not look at the things which are seen, but the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

there is an invisible and eternal value that comes with this momentary suffering. If you think about eternity, this life that we have, it's like a vapor.

Paul uses that phrase. It's like this vapor, it's like a mist that's here and then it's gone. It's just there for a short while. You see this little vapor, it's a puff of smoke, and then it dissipates and it's gone.

That's what our lives are like in light of eternity. And so we know a little bit now in how suffering through these sicknesses, illnesses, disease can be of value, but I think we will know even more clearly in the future.

[53 : 40] Just a few other thoughts on how there can be value in suffering. And again, this is just kind of grasping it. You know, in 1 Corinthians chapter 12, verse 26, Paul says this.

He's talking about the body of Christ and how this body of believers works together. He says this, and if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it.

Or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. And that's a beautiful picture of a family, the body of Christ.

When there are those who are suffering, we have an opportunity. We don't always take it. We have an opportunity to suffer with other people, to sit with them, to care for them, to hold their hand, to provide medical care.

People have built hospitals. In fact, if you look at the history of the whole hospital industry, it's basically as Christian beginnings.

[54 : 53] We have this opportunity to love one another, and these are opportunities we will not have in the future state. we won't have those opportunities.

We'll have other ways to love one another, but today is an opportunity where we can love, we can suffer with those who suffer. And it's something that can change us, that can have a tremendous impact on us.

we'll end with this. In the book of Revelation, verse 21, and we'll get the mic ready, we can take questions if you want to go back there, but we'll finish with this verse.

Revelation 21, the second to last chapter of the Bible, verse 4, it's talking about the future state. after everything is said and done. We'll start with verse 3, and I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people.

God himself will be with them and be their God, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying.

[56 : 20] There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away. And then he who sat on the throne said, behold, I make all things new, and we'll end there.

That's God's promise to us. And when that future is ultimately fulfilled, that will be as Paul described in that other verse.

It's like today we have these birth pangs. It's like we're going through this groaning, like a pregnant woman, and ultimately at the end comes this eternal weight of glory.

It's like this new baby, and it brings so much joy. And that's something that we will get to experience.

There will be an eternal satisfaction with God having made things new. And I don't think that that satisfaction will just be ours. the Bible says that Jesus is the express image of the Father.

[57 : 29] Jesus, when he came across people who were ill, sick, during his earthly ministry, he had this opportunity to have compassion on them because he loved them and he wanted to see them made whole.

And when that day in the future comes, not only will we be satisfied, but the compassion that is in his heart will ultimately also be satisfied.

God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, they will all have a fulfillment, a satisfaction of the compassion that they have for each one of us.

You know, God really is good to us, and sometimes we have to, it's a walk of faith, right? It doesn't always feel like life is good, but we need to continue like Job did, right?

Even through his suffering, and sometimes going back to the book of Job is good for us. To trust him, the way that he set up things to allow the devil to have a playground down here on earth.

[58 : 47] And to, you know, not just the devil, but all kinds of sin to happen here on earth. That God has, that he has a purpose and a reason behind it. A little bit that we know, and I'm sure a lot that we don't know.

But God is good, isn't he? Amen. All right, let's take some comments or questions if there's any, and then we'll end with a word of prayer.

I thought it was interesting that Jesus wouldn't let the demons speak because they knew who he was.

And brought to mind the other verse where Satan takes Jesus up on the top of the temple, says, if thou be the son of God.

it's like, are you or aren't you? So, you know, just the if would be conditional. So, you're saying Satan, when he tempted, he says, hey, if you're really the son of God, you would do this.

[59 : 52] Right, as opposed to the demons knew who he was. Right. Yeah, and it seems like they were not shy about declaring it either.

I think, I would imagine, and this is, you know, we don't know for sure, but I'm pretty certain Satan knew who he was, but through his temptation, hey, if you were really, you know, we've done that, right?

Well, if you really, you know, could do this, you know, you would do such and such. And the person who's saying that, they know. They're just kind of taunting you.

So, anyway, that's kind of how I would, I imagine I would read that. And just one more comment about the laying on of hands. Yeah. I think most nurses today who have worked in a hospital or clinic or doctor's office know the value of the human touch, you know, with a sick person or patient or someone who's having difficulty, you know, they haven't really done anything, but, you know, been there with them, touched them, held their hand, and they feel better.

Yeah. There's a lot to that. There's a lot to that. In fact, maybe I'll tell a story next week related to that.

[61 : 23] All right. Anything else before we wrap it up? All right, let's pray. Father, you are so good to us we see your love, your compassion through the life and ministry of Jesus, which you ultimately want for each one of us.

We, in many cases, have to just trust you. Ultimately, there's a purpose behind the things that we still deal with in this life, but we know that ultimately you have plans to take care of it all, and we're so grateful.

We're so grateful for that. Thank you for your love and care for us through it all. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Amen. Thanks.