

Luke 4 (Part 3): 31-44 • Demons, Miraculous Healing and Prayer

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Luke chapter 4 is where we are picking it up in verse 31.

“And he went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee. And he was teaching them on the Sabbath, ³² and they were astonished at his teaching, for his word possessed authority. ³³ And in the synagogue, there was a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, ³⁴ “Ha! What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God.”

³⁵ But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent and come out of him!” And when the demon had thrown him down in their midst, he came out of him, having done him no harm. ³⁶ And they were all amazed and said to one another, “What is this word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out!” ³⁷ And reports about him went out into every place in the surrounding region.

³⁸ And he arose and left the synagogue and entered Simon's house. Now Simon's mother-in-law was ill with a high fever, and they appealed to him on her behalf. ³⁹ And he stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her, and immediately she rose and began to serve them. ⁴⁰ Now when the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various diseases brought them to him, and he laid his hands on every one of them and healed them.

⁴¹ And demons also came out of many, crying, “You are the Son of God!” But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ. ⁴² And when it was day, he departed and went into a desolate place. And the people sought him and came to him, and would have kept him from leaving them, ⁴³ but he said to them, “I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose.”

⁴⁴ And he was preaching in the synagogues of Judea.” (ESV)

Let's pray.

Thank you, Father. Your Word is good. Your Word is filling. Now fill us up, Lord God, with wisdom and understanding and teach us that we might know, have insight, be wise unto salvation. We praise you in Jesus' name, amen.

In these, the final verses of Luke chapter 4, you'll notice here that Luke gives us a little bit of a snapshot of the ministry of Jesus as He moves back down to the area of Capernaum, which is where Peter lived and James and John. And so this was kind of a central hub area where Jesus ministered out of.

And it tells us here that as He was teaching in the synagogue they were interrupted by someone yelling in a rather loud voice that spoke up, and I'm sure was a weird interruption for everyone.

But here's this individual who rises up in the midst of the service and immediately begins to cry out to Jesus, Ha! I know who you are! The Holy One of God, and so forth.

And here we have our first reference to Jesus being confronted with a demoniac, meaning an individual who was invested with a demonic spirit. And it's something that happens so often throughout the Gospels that we just can't ignore it. Even though we may want to. It's not particularly a comfortable subject, and I know that there are Christians who go through periods of time where they get freaked out about demons and stuff, and I did. I did.

When I was, I'll admit, when I was a new believer, I got a little whacked out about demons because I didn't understand. I didn't, there was a lot I didn't know about who they are and what they do and what they're able to do and what they're not able to do, and I think the enemy capitalized on my ignorance, and I went through a period of time, as I was just learning the Word, where I was looking over my shoulder.

And I've come to know and understand that even though demons are very real, and they are essentially fallen angels who followed Satan's stupid rebellion against the throne of God, and although they can cause some real hassles in our lives, certainly oppression and temptation and many, many challenges in our lives.

I've come to learn and understand that they are very limited in what they can do to a believer particularly. I mean, we have to literally open our hearts to things. But even if we do, you're still not going to be possessed. And I know that there are Christians who disagree with me and there have been whole books written about it. But I've said to you before, and I'll say it again, I do not believe that a

born-again Christian can be invested with the demonic presence. I just don't believe it. I don't see it in the Word. That would mean that they had the Spirit of God and the spirit of the enemy in them at the same time. That doesn't work. And even though there've been a lot of books written and a lot of things said about it I just want to comfort your heart with that fact that as a believer, you have been taken over in a good way. You've been set apart for the Lord. We don't call it possessed by the Holy Spirit because that just sounds a little weird. We say you're indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and it's a completely different sort of a situation because the enemy comes to steal, kill and destroy.

The Lord comes into our life that we might be set free and have joy and have peace. He comes to give us freedom. The enemy comes to bind us and enslave us. Completely different scenario. Please understand, and so don't get weirded out. Don't let the enemy whisper things in your ear that aren't true. There are a lot of people, however, who will try to minimize the whole demonic sort of thing in the Scriptures, and some even claim that what was happening back during the time of the Gospels was really just cultural superstition.

There's actually one Bible commentator that I have on my laptop that that's the way he explains it. But I think that the demons are very real. I think that what happens in the Gospels is very real, and frankly, I think the conversation that Luke records for us between Jesus and this demoniac proves that out from the standpoint of what they're saying.

You'll notice that this loud yelling begins and notice what the demoniac begins to say as this demon takes over the vocal cords of this individual. He says, "*what do you have to do with us, Jesus,*" and loosely translated, that's like why the interference? Why are you here?

Which gives us a sense that, apparently, demons feel entitled at some particular level to do what they're doing, and to be doing, accomplishing what they're accomplishing, which is death and destruction. And it's like, why the interference?

And then he goes on to say, "*have you come to destroy us?*" Demons know that Jesus, their time is short, and they know that Jesus is the One who is going to completely take them out in the final sort of analysis of the thing.

And in fact, some of the demons would even say to Jesus, "*have you come to torment us before our time,*" which, which tells you that they know their time is coming, right?

Then he goes on, and the very next thing he says there at the end of verse 34 is, *“I know who you are, the Holy One of God.”* And that tells us for sure that we know that the demon is speaking through the man because none of the people knew who Jesus was. They questioned who He was. They wondered who was this man who had all this power, but they didn't know.

And for anybody to say out, who was in their right mind, in the synagogue, you are the Holy one of God. They probably would have pulled that person out of the room, taking them behind the synagogue and left them under a pile of rocks because that was essentially speaking blasphemy. To say that you are the Holy One of God. So anyway, you get it, and by the way this whole idea of a demon speaking through an individual. These are extreme cases. It happens and it happened to Jesus, and it happened to Paul.

But this is one of the more extreme sort of a situation where they actually manifest in such a way as to speak. And this happened to Jesus a lot because the demons wanted to speak and reveal who He was.

Skip down to verse 41 here in our passage, you'll notice it happens again. It says, *“And demons also came out of many, crying, “You are the Son of God!” But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, (look at this) because they knew that he was the Christ.”* Look at this, because they knew He was the Messiah, they knew He was the Anointed One of God.

They knew he was the Christ so, they wanted to reveal that in a way that was apart from God's timing, and so, Jesus was constantly telling them to be quiet. To withhold that information because there was a time when that was to become more public information. But, by the way, this whole thing about demons trying to expose Him was a very common thing. Look at a couple of other passages here. Luke chapter 8 up on the screen. It says here, in a situation,

Luke 8:28 (ESV)

When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell before him and said with a loud voice, *“What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me.”*

When he (and that's a demoniac or a demon, if you will) saw Jesus, he cried out and fell before him and said with a loud voice, “What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me.”

Now, again, that's not the kind of statement that a human being would say. They didn't refer to Him as Jesus, Son of the Most High God. Demons did because

they knew who He was, right? And the Bible says that. In James, we're told that demons believe in God and they tremble, right? They shudder. Okay?

And then from Matthew chapter 8, verse 29,

Mathew 8:29 (ESV)

And behold, they cried out, "What have you to do with us, O Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?"

And behold, they cried out, "What have you to do with us, O Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?"

There's that reference I spoke of earlier. And then from Mark chapter 3, verse 11,

Mark 3:11 (ESV)

And whenever the unclean spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, "You are the Son of God."

And whenever the unclean spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, "You are the Son of God."

See, the demons knew who He was. People didn't, but the demons did, and they were freaked out about it. And so, Jesus was constantly telling these demons, to be quiet, and He would respond just as he did here in verse 35. Look with me in your Bible there.

It says, "*Jesus rebuked him saying, be silent and come out of him.*" And so when the demon had thrown him down in their midst, he had to have one last control, sort of a spaz, sort of a thing it says, "*he came out of him,*" and then Luke tells, Luke's the doctor you know, he's a physician, and Luke tells us there at the end of that verse, "*...but he did him no harm,*" just wanted you guys to know that and so "*everybody was amazed.*"

I mean, wouldn't you be? Do you know that other people were doing exorcisms during this time? Jesus wasn't the only one casting out demons or at least trying to. The other ones tried; they weren't always successful. But the Jews had a very specific way of going about exorcisms and it involved incantations and things they would say and do and, they would invoke all these various names and this and that and the other thing. Jesus just used His power. He used His own authority because He had authority over the demons.

He just would say, if a demoniac would show up where He was teaching or whatever, He'd say, get out of him, and it would happen because He had authority to do that sort of a thing, and everybody realized it. They would see it and they would go, wow, that is not what we've seen before. This man has authority. He just talks to the demons and says, leave and they leave and there's no fight. There's no this, there's no that. They just leave. The people were pretty impressed, and as you can well imagine, that kind of stuff is going to get people to talking, and we'll see that here at the very end of the chapter as people start to inundate Jesus.

But we don't really know why the demonic activity was so prevalent in Israel during this time of when the Gospels were recorded. We don't really, I mean, we can guess, we can speculate, but we're not really sure but all we know is that whenever Jesus was confronted with an individual invested with a demonic spirit, He always exercised His authority. He always cast it out and set the person free.

Verse 37 tells us that people were talking. It says that reports about Him just absolutely went out everywhere into every place of the surrounding region, people were chatting, talking about what was going on.

And then it says in verse 38 that, "*he arose and left the synagogue and entered Simon's house.*" Now, this is Simon Peter okay, because as we said, Peter lived there in Capernaum. And when He got there, it says that Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a high fever, and they came to Jesus, and they asked Him to heal her. And He stood over her, and this is interesting.

In verse 39 Luke tells us, "*He rebuked the fever.*" Now in Matthew's account, it says He simply took her hand, but Luke tells us that He actually rebuked the fever.

Now that's not something that you would normally hear because a rebuke is like if you're talking to your child when they're spazzing out around you or something and you want them to be quiet you go hey, stop it! Be quiet. That's a rebuke. You would imagine that you do that to your child, but can you imagine saying that to a fever, talking to a fever, stop it! Knock it off! That's what Jesus, He talked to things like that. He talked to wind and waves too. I have never talked to the waves. I wouldn't want to, I mean, I don't think they'd listen.

But remember when He was in the boat and the disciples are freaking out because they're taking on water and they're afraid they're going to die. Jesus

stands up and He rebukes the wind and the waves, just like you would rebuke a child. Stop it! Be quiet! Wouldn't that have been a trip to see that happen?

Yeah, here, *“Jesus stands over Peter's mother-in-law and He rebukes the fever and it says it left her. And immediately she rose and began to serve them,”* which is another interesting statement telling you that this woman had a complete healing.

Have you ever had a high fever? Yeah, me too. Remember what happens after your fever breaks? It takes about 24 to 48 hours before you have enough energy to get up and go to the bathroom, right? Let alone get up and just start serving people. You ever been that way after a fever? You get up to use the bathroom and you come back and go, you're out of breath. You're like, I'm wrecked. I've got to take a nap. I walked 30 feet for heaven's sakes. This woman just gets up and begins to serve, and so, there's just this complete work that the Lord has done to heal this woman.

Verse 40 goes on and it says that *“when the sun was setting,”* and that's about the time you and I, we're getting ready to kick back, right? It's the end of the day. We put in a day, and it's been a day for Jesus, and it's time to just kind of kick back, but not so because it says here that, *“all those who had any who were sick with various diseases brought them to him and he laid his hands on every one of them and healed them.”* And we're told also, *“the demons came out of many (as we've already read) crying, you are the son of God because they knew who He was.”*

And I really love this section in Luke's account because Luke is projecting, he's communicating to you and I, this, the servant heart of our Lord. As exhausted as you and I may be toward the end of the day, and Jesus was subject to exhaustion in His human body, and yet these people are coming, and He goes out and He doesn't stop until every single person has been touched and healed.

And I love that, frankly, about Him and Matthew tells the same story, the same event of going to Capernaum, going to Peter's house, healing his mother in law and then healing all of the people, but Matthew makes a comment that Luke doesn't make, because Matthew, you see, was very concerned with showing that Jesus was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy.

Matthew does that more than any other Gospel writer. Luke had a different agenda in terms of the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit for him to convey certain things about Jesus. But Matthew talked a lot about the fact that Jesus fulfilled Scripture and I want to share that with you because I think it's germane to the

conversation we're having here. Up on the screen for Matthew chapter 8 verses 14 and following it says,

Mathew 8:14-17 (ESV)

And when Jesus entered Peter's house, he saw his mother-in-law lying sick with a fever. He touched her hand, and the fever left her, and she rose and began to serve him. That evening they brought to him many who were oppressed by demons, and he cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick. This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: "He took our illnesses and bore our diseases."

And when Jesus entered Peter's house, he saw his mother-in-law lying sick with a fever. He touched her hand, and the fever left her, and she rose and began to serve him. That evening they brought to him many who were oppressed by demons, and he cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick. (And then look at this last line, very interesting. It says) This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: "He took our illnesses and bore our diseases."

So, what do you see here in this passage? Well, it's very similar to Luke's, as you can see. And yet at the very end of this passage, Matthew quotes Isaiah and he says that the healing ministry of Jesus was a fulfillment of what Isaiah said okay? Read that last part again. *"This was to fulfill."* You got that? *"What was spoken by the prophet Isaiah."* And then he quotes that part from Isaiah 53. *"He took our illnesses and he bore our diseases."* Matthew tells us Jesus fulfilled that. He fulfilled it. I'm emphasizing that for a reason.

And the reason that I'm doing that is because there are a good many Christians who really ignore what Matthew said there, and they interpret that passage from Isaiah 53 differently than Matthew did under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And rather than saying that Jesus' ministry fulfilled that prophetic statement, they say something quite different, and they speak of the healing work of God today through the Church as an ongoing fulfillment of that. Let me explain why I don't think that's correct. But in order to do that, I want to show you the whole passage in Isaiah that they're actually quoting. It's from Isaiah chapter 53, and this is how it goes,

Isaiah 53:4-5 (ESV)

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

Surely he has borne (By the way, this is one of the most incredible chapters in the whole Bible. Pinpoint accuracy about the life and ministry of the Messiah) *Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions;* (even speaking pinpoint about the fact that he was nailed to a cross) *he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,* (and then here's probably a statement you're familiar with hearing) *and with his wounds we are healed."*

Some people like to quote that out of the King James, "*by his stripes we are healed.*" Lovely passage. Lovely passage but let me just say something to you. Matthew told you that was fulfilled during the ministry of Jesus when He reached out and touched people and healed them of their diseases. But as I said before, it is regularly taught in many Christian fellowships across the United States and also around the world, that that final statement, "*by his wounds we are healed*" is a promise that healing is guaranteed to us by what Jesus did on the cross.

By the way, I'll just tell you ahead of time, whenever I share this, I make people really mad at me and I get it. I want to believe that physical healing is a guarantee of what Jesus did on the cross. I would love to believe that. I mean, I would just love to. I don't like being sick any more than anybody else, and the kind of things that happen to us in this life with diseases and all that other junk.

Oh, I would love to tell you that there is a guarantee, in the work of Jesus on the cross, that you and I never have to experience that. Here's what people, let me highlight just a couple of sections in this. See, I made them yellow on the top and bottom. This is what people do. They take the top part.

Isaiah 53:4-5 (ESV)

*Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, **and with his wounds we are healed.***

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; (And they think, well that's Jesus on the cross. That's what He did. And then they skip over the rest, and they go right to the bottom part) *yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, **and with his wounds we are healed.***

And they put the thing together, and they say, you see, Jesus carried these things on the cross, and so now by His wounds there is a perpetual healing that is ours through the death of Jesus Christ, and that's the claim that is made. And as I said before, I wish we could make that claim, but I don't believe that it's biblical, although I hear it all the time. I hear it all the time. I hear it all the time. Some of you know that this last year in 2018, I went through surgery and I'm fine, don't worry about it. I'm getting at that age where they start taking things out, and there's less of me than there was before.

We had a lot of opportunity during the last year to contact our insurance company, which isn't really an insurance company, it's one of those Christian sharing organizations that help pay your bills when you have something going on like that, and because we had a lot of them, we had to call several times and talk about things, and one of the cool parts about it is that it's run by Christians and when you get done talking to them on the phone, they ask you, they'll say, hey, before we hang up, can we pray with you? Which is cool.

And, last year when I was going through that time, I wasn't turning anybody down on that request, and so I'd say, yeah, sure, and it wasn't that uncommon to hear one of the people on the other end praying for me and actually quoting that statement in Isaiah 53, *"by his wounds, we are healed."*

And they would say that in a way of saying, Lord we claim your promise that by your wounds, we are healed, and they'd even put my name in there by your wounds, Lord, Paul is healed and so forth. And I never said anything, of course, to anybody on the phone. I didn't stop him and say, now wait a minute. I'm not going to do that. I'm just going to accept it for what it is.

But I can tell that when I hear that, obviously they've been through some teaching on that particular topic, and they have come to the conclusion that physical healing is guaranteed to us or comes to us as a result of what Jesus accomplished for us on the cross, and here's the deal. God didn't guarantee us that, and that's where I really make people upset with me. But you've got to remember something about the Covenants that God did with, first of all, the Jews, and then with the Church.

The Covenant he made with the Church. He meant to say Israel. That was a physical covenant. We've said this many times. It involved land, families, crops, herds, and even their physical bodies. It was a physical covenant. God said, follow the Law, keep my commands and I will bless you in the land. I'll bless your crops. I'll bless your home. I'll bless your children. I'll bless even your

bodies. Let me show you a passage from Exodus where the Lord lines this out. Moses is the one crying to the Lord here.

Exodus 15:25-26 (ESV)

And he cried to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a log, and he threw it into the water, and the water became sweet. There the Lord made for them a statute and a rule, and there he tested them, saying, "If you will diligently listen to the voice of the Lord your God, and do that which is right in his eyes, and give ear to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you that I put on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD, your healer."

And (Moses) he cried to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a log, and he threw it into the water, and the water became sweet. There the Lord (It tells us) made for them a statute and a rule, and there he tested them, saying, "If you will diligently listen to the voice of the Lord your God, and do that which is right in his eyes, and give ear to his commandments and keep all his statutes, (Look at this) I will put none of the diseases on you that I put on the Egyptians, for I am (YAHWEH) the LORD, your healer."

"I am the Lord, your healer." That is a statement that God made, and basically, He lined out the deal. If you keep my commandments, okay? This is a Covenant thing, it's a two-way street there. If you keep my commandments, if you follow my Word, then all the diseases that you guys saw that the Egyptians they'd been in Egypt for over 400 years, they saw the diseases that came upon the Egyptians. He says none of those will touch you if you keep my commandments because I am the Lord your Healer. Israel had a physical Covenant with God. What do we have? We have a Spiritual Covenant.

Let me show you this. Once again, from Ephesians chapter 1, verse 3,

Ephesians 1:3 (ESV)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us (the Church) in Christ with every spiritual blessing in heavenly (or in the heavenly) places.

You and I have been given spiritual blessings. We even know where those blessings are kept. They're kept in heavenly places, which is a very good thing because that's where they can't be lost. If He gave them all to me now and put

them in my hands, I would lose them, right? But they're kept for us. They're kept in heavenly places. But what are they? They're spiritual blessings. In fact, every spiritual blessing, I mean, that was pretty exciting when we went through that in the book of Ephesians, not that long ago. We talked about what those spiritual blessings are all about now. So, you can see here that in the Old Testament, there was a physical covenant that even included healing if they kept the Law.

Under the covenant, we are under in the Church, it is not physical. It's spiritual. Now, having said that, some of you might be wondering if I believe that God still heals people today. I absolutely do. I absolutely do, and I've prayed for people many times. We anoint people with oil around here according to the Word of God, like we're told to do, and we pray that God would heal them.

I'm not saying I don't believe in supernatural healing of the Lord. I'm not saying that. All I'm saying is it's not a guarantee of the Covenant which is what people are saying when they quote Isaiah 53 because Isaiah 53 is talking about what Jesus did on the cross.

I don't believe healing comes to us because of what Jesus did on the cross. I don't, that's spiritual healing you guys. That's what we get because of Jesus's death on the cross. In fact, Peter actually quotes Isaiah 53 later.

I didn't put this one on my slides, but Peter actually quotes it in a spiritual way. He says, *"all we like sheep have gone astray."* And then he talks about the Shepherd of our souls, who has saved us. And he says, *"by his wounds, we are healed."* Then he quotes that same line, but it's all about salvation, which is, I think, the proper way to quote it.

We've been healed from our sinful condition through the death of Jesus Christ. Now physical healing? Yeah, God still does that. Does He do it all the time? No. Why not? I don't know. I mean, the Word gives us some hints sometimes about why physical healing may not happen. But although some Christians claim to always know why you're not, but you haven't been healed, you don't and neither do I. We just don't know. There are some hints that are given to us and one of them in the Word is that a lack of faith can be involved.

You guys remember when Jesus was up on the mountain of the transfiguration with Peter, James and John? Well, while they were up there doing some pretty cool stuff there was a father who was very desperate to see his son healed from a demonic situation and he brought him to the disciples that they would heal

him, and the disciples couldn't do it. Jesus finally comes down the hill, says, what's going on here?

And the man walks up to him and says, I brought my son to your disciples to have, to, for they could heal him, and they couldn't do it. And so, Jesus took the boy, cast the demon out and gave him back to his father. And of course, the disciples were smarting after that a little bit because they realized they kind of got an F on that particular report card. So here in Matthew 17, let me show you this. It says this,

Mathew 17:19-20 (ESV)

Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" He said to them, "Because of your little faith..."

Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, (Uh, how come we couldn't cast it out?) "Why could we not cast it out?" He said to them, "Because of your little faith..."

You see, Jesus knew that. Jesus knew they had a lack of faith. Do you and I always know whether that's the case? No, we don't. And it's arrogant presumption to say that we do. Unless you've gotten a word from the Lord, and I mean a word from the Lord, a word of knowledge, that that is what's going on, you and I are guessing. Or the other favorite thing is, you must have some kind of sin in your life that you haven't confessed. You don't know that.

Now, when there has been prayer, and healing hasn't been forthcoming, I think that we can go to an individual and we can say, well, let me tell you what the Word has to say as to what might be a blockade but that's between you and God.

I'm not claiming that this is, this or that or the other thing. But hey, let's just keep praying. We'll just keep praying, you know. Have you ever seen anybody healed? Because I have. It's amazing. A number of years ago when Sue and I were up in Washington, we were living up there and I was working in Christian radio and Sue had a job, and we were on Sundays, we would just, we'd pick up people that we gathered up over the course of our time there and we'd take them to church.

We put them all in our little minivan one Sunday and I said, hey let's go down to Kirkland and there's a church down there I want to try out, never been there before, and so, we drove down and when it is a good size church, probably 400

to 500 people maybe in the room that day, and they had a guest speaker, and he did a great job.

Now, the people that we brought there, it was just a bunch of folks, but there was a gal among us. Her name was Wendy, and she was a nurse. And a few years earlier, while moving a patient from a bed to another bed she did something to her back that just created this debilitating injury and she was in just a lot of pain, most of the time, to the point where she couldn't really work, and she was greatly affected by this back pain, and it made her cranky too, to be completely honest with you, which I could totally understand. Living with chronic pain is a very, very, very challenging thing.

So here we are in this church service and we're all sitting there and the guy, I don't remember exactly what he taught, but it was good. And then he got done at the end of the service and he had us all stand and we're doing a little worship and stuff, and he stopped us all, and he said, I sense that the Lord wants to touch some people physically and bring healing to their bodies. And he said, so I want you, those of you who feel like you need a touch from the Lord, I want you just to walk out and stand in the aisles. Cool. So, I noticed that Wendy went out into the aisle, and they were filled, I mean, the aisles were filled with people.

We continued to pray and worship and then they closed out the service and I was pretty much oblivious, and I just was like, okay, let's go. So, we got everybody up and we're walking out to the car, and talking about what happened and Wendy was walking on my left and as we're walking along, she just, she got my attention and I turned and looked at her and she had tears in her eyes and she said, Paul, I'm healed. I am healed. It's gone. The pain is gone. And we stayed in touch with her for a long time after that and God healed her back, and she didn't, she never dealt with that kind of debilitating back pain again.

Now I'll tell you right here and now, I don't see that every day. I wish I did. Why don't I? I don't know. I'm not really sure. There, are times when you and I pray and nothing happens, or at least we don't see anything happen, and we don't know why, and we ultimately have to chalk it up to the mystery of God that He holds within His own heart and His own purpose for the lives of believers. And can I just say, Christians when you're dealing with God, make room for mystery, right?

Don't think that you have to have every last detail figured out about God or you can't move on. Leave room for mystery. There's a great deal that goes on in life, and when we pray and the things that even happen when we pray that you and I just, we don't get, we don't understand, we're, but we just, people, that's what

faith is about. Faith is about trusting the Lord, even when you don't know what's going on. We think that faith is having a particular object right here, and I'm going to pray, and faith is I'm going to get that thing, sort of a thing. And if I don't get that thing, then maybe I didn't have enough faith. Faith is trusting God when you can't see the road in front of you.

Faith is trusting in God when you've prayed and you haven't gotten an answer, but you still believe that God's purpose is right there. This is real and good and delightful. Faith is when you pray, and you still have pain. And I know it stinks. I get that, but that's where faith really comes into play. So just remember that most of the time when we pray and we don't get the answer that we think we should, the reason is bound up in the heart of God, and if He shares it with you, wonderful. If He doesn't, keep trusting Him.

Keep trusting that His purpose in your life is going to be fulfilled because He has promised that nothing is going to stand in the way of His purpose being born out in your life, and that includes whatever happens to be going on in your body.

Now, meanwhile, we're going to keep praying. You've got issues going on physically, we'll pray for you. And we'll pray the prayer of faith, and we will anoint you with oil, and we will pray believing that God is able to do exceedingly and abundantly beyond what we could ask or think. (Ephesians 3:20) And we're going to trust the Lord.

As we finish out the chapter, it tells us here that in verse 42, "*when it was day*" and it probably means when it was very early day, it says, "*that Jesus departed and went into a desolate place* (but even then people found) *and they found him*" and wanted to keep him around.

There's no doubt in my mind that when it says here that, "*Jesus went into a desolate place,*" that He went to spend some time in prayer. And it's interesting because that really bothers some people to hear that Jesus prayed.

I've actually had people ask me the question, if Jesus is God, why did He have to pray? And I'm thinking to myself, why wouldn't He pray? I mean, for all eternity, He is the Word of God, right made flesh. You guys know that, right? Jesus is a human name. Joshua. Yeshua. And that name was given to Him when He was incarnate as a human being. Where was Jesus before He was born as a baby?

John tells us, *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning,”* right? So, from all eternity, Jesus, the Word of God, is with the Father and the Spirit, and those three persons make up the triune Godhead, and from all eternity, they have communed, they have talked, they have fellowshiped. We even hear them talking in the book of Genesis, right before they get ready to create man. We hear the Godhead speaking, *“let us make man in our image and in our likeness.”*

Who's God talking to? Some people say, He's talking to the angels. There's no Scripture in the Bible that says that man was created in the image of angels. It goes on to say that He created them, male and female, He created them in His own image. In His own image.

Here we have this beautiful picture of this communion going on between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, even before the Son was the Son. So why in the world would Jesus come to earth and stop doing what He's been doing from all eternity? Communing with the Father. I have no doubt in my mind that Jesus would get away as often as He could, and we know that from the Gospels, just to spend time with the Father.

Just to hang out with Him. Just to be in His presence. And doesn't that speak to you and I about our own prayer life sometimes because we tend to treat God and prayer like he's like a, I don't know, a complaint box or something or a place where we put our requests, you know. And we come to Him and we offer a little praise because, we're told to do that when we come into prayer, enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise. Okay, all right. Okay, God thank you. You're really cool. All right, here's what I need.

And then we just start naming off our things, it's like, okay, God, I need this, I need that and then we usually give Him advice. Here's what I want you to do about that, because God, I figure you probably weren't sure how to handle that particular thing, so this is what you do. Are you taking notes? All right, here we go. And then we're done. All right, amen. I'm going to go ahead and do my day. All right. When's the last time you went and just sat in His presence? When's the last time you went before the Lord and didn't say a word and just communed with Him, just felt His presence?

Do you know the Bible says in the presence of the Lord is joy and great pleasure. It's in the presence of the Lord. It isn't in the world. That's where we spend the majority of our time. And even when we do pray, we really don't spend time in the presence of the Lord. We come in to do our business and then

we leave, and we wonder why we're lacking joy. We wonder why it is I don't get pleasure out of life. In the presence of the Lord is pleasure and joy everlasting.

It's funny, I've read books about the prayer life of certain individuals who understood what it meant to tarry in the presence of God to a point where they experienced His presence in a way that was so dynamic and so real, they didn't ever want to come away. They didn't ever want to leave. I just want to stay here. They'd get up at, you know, three o'clock in the morning. Hudson Taylor, you know that? He'd get up in the middle of the night, light a candle, He'd make a little tent out of his blanket, and he'd light a candle and he would just start praying in the middle of the night just because he wanted to spend time with the Lord.

And George Mueller and so many other individuals who just, prayer for them was breathing. It was life itself, and they wanted nothing more than just to be enveloped in His presence to know the joy that comes, not from talking to God and saying, here's what I need, but just from sitting and receiving and communing with Him. I hope that during our worship time, I hope some of that gets communicated. You know, that you know we put the lyrics up here on the thing. I'd love it if we got to the point where we didn't have to use it, or at least you didn't have to look at it very often because it can be a distraction, you know what I mean?

Especially when a kid's number comes up and they need their mommy or something like that and we all wonder who that is. And we're pulled away from communing with the Lord. Have you ever noticed during worship that our worship leaders never talk to you? They might start off at the very beginning before they begin and just exhort you but then once they start playing that first song, have you ever noticed they never talked to you?

They only talked to the Lord. That's by design. I tell the worship leaders; you may not address the people. You only address God. You know why? We don't want to pull your attention this way. We want it to stay this way because that communion is what you need. You need to be connected and drawing your life from Him. Ah, but we fail to do that so often.