

## “Faith That Moves Mountains: Faith to Heal”

Scripture: Luke 17:11-19

Graphics: mountains

Big Truth: Faith is the bedrock of our relationship with God and with others. Faith impacts every part of our lives - or should. Jesus repeatedly calls his disciples to understand faith in the context of the mission to make disciples and transform the world. In this series, the people of Panama UMC we'll hear Jesus instruct the disciples about forgiveness, about being healed...faith to persist in prayer, and faith to humble ourselves before the Lord. Faith small enough to do incredible things but all we need to allow God to do them through us.

Focus Phrase: Faith heals.

### 1. Introduction

#### A. PRAY!

- B. Last week, we began a journey through the middle of Luke's gospel in our series called **Faith That Moves Mountains**. “You gotta have faith!”
- C. The scripture passage that launched this series is from Matthew 17:20 which says (in the NIV translation): [Jesus] replied (to the disciples), “Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.”
- D. The first message was called **Faith to Forgive**. If you missed that, you can go back and see that on the website. But basically, Jesus assures us that, because we have faith in the power and truth of his life, death, resurrection, ascension, and return one day, we have everything it takes to repent to God and others when we sin. We have what it takes to forgive others and ourselves when we've been caused to stumble...AND we can grow in faith in Him TODAY and EVERYDAY. This past week, we spent time with the breath prayer - “I have faith to forgive.”
- E. The second second message today is called **Faith to Heal**.
- F. Throughout my ministry, there've been many times when the church has gathered around someone who was sick or injured, and we prayed, “Lord, heal him!” or “In Jesus' name, heal her.” And, we have witnessed people be healed physically...and at other times, people have not been healed. SO what gives?
- G. Some might be very tempted to say (you've heard this) that if someone didn't receive healing, then we obviously didn't have enough faith.
- H. But yet Jesus said if I have faith the size of a tiny mustard seed, then NOTHING will be impossible for you. What's the deal?
- I. Well, that's what we're going to dive into today as we're bystanders to a scene in Luke 17 where 10 lepers cry out to Jesus for healing.

- J. See, whenever Jesus is around, healing occurs...perfectly. Yet, physical healing isn't always the point, as we'll see. Physical healing might just be the least important healing a person can receive.
- K. So the question is: what does it mean when we say *Faith Heals*, which is our focus for today.
- L. Let's open our bibles to Luke 17...starting in verse 11. Jesus (and we presume the disciples, although they aren't mentioned in this scene nor do they speak) ...Jesus was walking toward Jerusalem and was on the border of Samaria when he gets detoured for a moment...let's read...

## 2. Scripture

### A. READ Luke 17:11-19

- B. "Your faith has made you well." - Jesus
- C. Jesus said that like it was the easiest thing ever. "No problem...you're healed." (and remember, this isn't a parable...this really happened)
- D. But if we dive into the life of a leper in the first century AD, we see that Jesus' simple statement has incredible implications.
  - i. At the very beginning of this passage, we read that Jesus was walking toward Jerusalem...but was right on the border of Samaria. Samaria was that country that the Jews just couldn't stand...half-breeds and dirty people (or so they were convinced).
  - ii. And just outside a town, there were ten lepers. The lepers were just outside the town because lepers were not allowed IN the town. They were unclean and they were to let everyone know it. They were cut off from society. They were cut off from the church. They were cut off from their families. They were alone and had to fend for themselves.
  - iii. So, they kept their distance from Jesus...as they did with everyone.
  - iv. Yet, it's interesting that they knew who Jesus was. Had they seen him before? Had they heard of him or seen him heal people? We don't know. But what we DO know is that they cried out in one, loud voice, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" "Pity us!"
  - v. But what they were really asking for was to be healed, right?
  - vi. Well, yes...but, listen, if you were a leper cut off from society, church, family, friends, and everyone else, you want to be healed. But, even more, you want to be healed SO THAT you could go home again. To go to church again. To go to Passover meal or the festivals. Oh, to be able to walk down the street and not have to declare, "Unclean, Unclean!" and have people move to the other side of the road.

- E. This healing is not just about curing these 10 lepers of their physical ailment. It's about restoring wholeness to 10 people who have lost every bit of connection to others.
- F. Jesus began to heal them by sending them away from him. Seems like a strange thing. But remember Jesus' desire was to do more than simply heal them physically. He could've done that without hesitation. But, He wanted them to be restored. First, through the priest, to be declared clean, which was the method by which someone was deemed clean again after a disease.
- G. And Jesus healed them, for sure...on the way to the priest! They were walking to the synagogue, thinking, "Why didn't he just heal us like the other times?" But then one may have looked down at his hands and they were restored. Another took off the cloth that covered her face, and touched a restored cheek. And they began to look at each other with amazement. We're healed!!!
- H. Then, the priest looked them over and said, "You're clean! Go!"
- I. All 10 went...where? The pub? Home? To the synagogue or marketplace? We don't know. Except for one - a Samaritan, even, who came back to Jesus to throw himself on the ground, prostrate before him, and praised God and thanked Jesus.
- J. And it's this scene that Luke wants us to see. 10 lepers cleansed, but only one made whole in every way. 10 lepers healed, but only one who got everything he ever wanted...to not only be restored to his family and friends, his church and community, but, by faith in Jesus, restored forever to the God who loves him and gave him, in that moment, salvation.
- K. He had faith to heal.

### **3. Application**

- A. See, faith to heal is not about having a big enough faith to go out into the street and lay hands on someone to heal them physically. Sometimes that happens and we praise God in amazement and gratitude when it does. But, if that doesn't, it's not about you at all. Faith to heal isn't having a required amount of faith to be cured of your ailment or distress.
- B. Faith to heal is what the Holy Spirit puts into the heart of every follower of Jesus. It's the faith to know that Jesus WILL right every wrong, carry you through any trial, and restore wholeness to your life and others!
- C. If that begins with physical healing, you can be 100% assured that it's only the beginning...and maybe the least important to Jesus.
- D. 9 lepers were running around a small town outside of Jerusalem with a partial healing. Did they have faith? Yes...they had faith that Jesus had the power to cure them. Were they physically healed? Indeed!

- E. Did they have faith to heal what was truly wrong in their lives? No. Only the one who comes to Jesus for gratitude and salvation is the one who truly receives healing.
- F. So, where do you need healing today? Is there a disease? Is there a family breakdown? Is there an addiction that no one knows about? Are you mad at God...or a neighbor? Are you causing someone else to stumble, like we talked about last week?
- G. Any of those things would cause you to be cut off from others - family, church, community, God. And you know what that feels like. You know how much pain that causes. You understand that life is never perfect. And whether it's sin or pride or miscommunication or leprosy...we get cut off.
- H. This is exactly the place where Jesus stands before you ready to heal you. But not just in one area or one ailment...completely!
- I. Your faith in HIM heals it all IF and WHEN you fall down before Him and give EVERY part of your life to Him.
- J. This is not something you deserve to receive...but it's something Jesus, in God's incredible mercy, WANTS to give those who respond in faith and gratitude to His sovereignty and love.
- K. Your faith can heal because your faith in Jesus is the only pathway to wholeness. Jesus is THE healing because Jesus paid the price to have the authority to heal you in every way.
- L. Now, you might say, "I have faith...why am I still estranged or cut off or bitter or diseased?"
- M. Take that to Jesus and He will show the next step in your healing process. The lepers needed to go to the priest so that the community knew...and the church knew...and the lepers could be convinced.
- N. When you go to Jesus to be healed...follow His plan. Maybe it means going to someone who's hurt you to reconcile after repentance and forgiveness. You have the faith to heal.
- O. Or it's recommitting your life to following Jesus in a more serious and consistent way...to live into your salvation. You have the faith to heal. And Jesus doesn't want you to live in your condition any longer.
- P. Be healed emotionally as you allow the Holy Spirit's grace to allow you to forgive yourself for something you said or did. You have the faith to heal.
- Q. And, yes, even physically, Jesus gives us process to follow. Laying on of hands by praying people as commanded in scripture...seeking good and godly counsel...finding good doctors and nurses and treatments and being healthy. Let the Spirit guide you as you pray fervently about it. You have the faith to heal because Jesus is the Healer!

- R. Faith heals.
- S. Will you let Jesus finally and completely heal you of it all? All your sin and shame? All your control and failures? Your body, mind, and heart...and your soul?
- T. You don't have faith to simply believe in Jesus...you have faith to forgive others and to be healed...and in YOUR healing, comes healing for your family, your church, your workplace, your community, and this world...one person at a time.

#### **4. Conclusion**

- A. Barbara was 31 and a mother of three children. And she was staring at possible thyroid cancer.

As she awaited the results of the tests, she revisited what she knew of her faith and found that she had more than a "little faith" in God. Dale Matthews tells the story: "Given her intimate familiarity with the Gospels, it is not surprising that Barbara found a metaphor for her personal healing in a Bible passage. One Sunday, as she was praying in church, the gospel story of the woman with a hemorrhage kept coming into her mind .... "[The woman] wanted to be healed but she didn't want to bother Jesus, so she approached him in a crowd and touched his robe," Barbara explained. "Of course, Jesus knew what happened and praised the woman for her faith. I wanted to be like that woman."

"As Barbara prepared to go up to the altar for Communion, she suddenly thought, "I could be like her.' An Episcopalian, Barbara viewed the priest who was presiding at the Holy Eucharist as a "stand-in' for Jesus during the service. She decided she would touch the priest's robe when he gave her the Communion wafer.

"I touched his robe, and he couldn't have known that I did, though he did know about my cancer," she remembered. "He did something in that moment that I had never seen him do before: He put down the paten with the Communion wafers and came over to me; laying both hands on my head, he prayed for my healing."

"After receiving the Communion wine, Barbara stood up at the altar. "I was so overwhelmed with God's love that I knew I was healed," she said. "My healing wasn't physical at that point, but my heart was healed. I wasn't anxious or afraid or doubtful or sad at all. I had complete trust in God and his love, something he knew I needed far more than any other kind of healing at that moment."

"A few weeks after her healing at the altar rail, Barbara's surgery revealed that the lump [on her neck] was indeed thyroid cancer. She went through treatments then, and six months later for a recurrence. Somehow the medical treatments, too, seemed to be directly from God: "I felt that God had simply completed a healing he had started at the altar at church."

"Today, Barbara is healthy and leads a full and prayerful life. Her youngest child is in college; the God-given sense of assurance she received in 1979 as the mother of three young children has been borne out in her life."

--Dale A. Matthews, *The Faith Factor* (New York: Viking, 1998), 62-63.

- B. Jesus cares about every part of your healing...but he cares most about your eternal decision to bow before him in obedience as Lord and Savior.
- C. Salvation is the healing that leads to all the rest.
- D. And when healing comes into your life, return to Jesus over and over again to give thanks and praise God.
- E. Faith heals.
- F. As we close this message and time of worship, I want to invite you to come kneel or stand at the front for healing. It might be something small like a nagging sadness or a hurt. It might be something much greater and deeper. Jesus said our faith heals...and so as you come know that it's by FAITH that you come and by FAITH that Jesus meets you right here. Any reason. We all need healing and so may today be a faithful step into healing. Will you come let Jesus do some healing work in you?
- G. Let's pray...