***Triumph out of Trouble, No. 4 - PH17-02

Advanced Bible Doctrine - Philippians 1:12-14***

This is the fourth section on triumph out of trouble. We are still on Philippians 1:12-14. Just as a brief review, Paul has been in prison for four years. This imprisonment has been a source of great pressure upon him. It was a suffering for which Paul had to find divine resources in order to meet. What God provided to sustain Paul in this time of suffering is exactly what he has made available for us today. Therefore, we're exploring the business of meeting suffering through the passage of 2 Corinthians 12:1-10. In these verses, Paul has explained how he was able to cope with suffering, and thus how we may cope with our own sufferings.

Paul tells in this passage how he knew a man who 14 years previously had experienced death. As a Christian, he had gone to heaven. This took place in Paul's own experience for he was speaking of himself. This was the man that he was referring to. It was the result of his stoning at Lystra. In heaven, Paul said he heard unspeakable words, and of course he saw glories that no one knows on this side of the grave. Paul however was told that he must not reveal what he saw or what he heard. Furthermore, Paul said that he would not boast in this experience that he had, but rather he would glory in what he calls the truth. This experience gave him some information. It was the same thing as if he had sat in a church service and somebody had explained something to him about heaven, except he had received the information in a different way.

Paul makes a very specific point in these verses of saying, "I will not glory in this experience." That is an important thing that I hope you have understood well. The thing that is plaguing Christianity today is that people are getting up and shouting about experience. Experience doesn't mean a thing. We're not going to get into that here. You can pursue that through other sessions where we've already covered that subject. Experience is disaster land if you are depending on that and if you are using that as a guideline to your walk with the Lord and to your spiritual development.

The whole charismatic movement is in the clutches of Satan and in the manipulation of demons because they depend on experience. It's all built around experience. Paul says that he is going to build his testimony in his spiritual life around the truth. As a matter of fact, he uses strong language. He says that if anybody gets up and glories in his experience of some kind in the Christian life, he is an "aphron" (a mindless fool). If I were to say that, you would feel indignant, hurt, and wounded, and you would have all kinds of things to say about how unloving I was. However, the apostle Paul said it. Therefore, it's going to be a little harder to pass him off as not knowing what he's talking about.

Satan leads Christians to glory in some real or imagined experience, and Satan will very happily provide those Christians with those experiences because, in that way, he can control them. Therefore, Paul says he will glory in the truth of the doctrine which came to him through that visit to heaven. However, he will not glory in the experience itself. In other words, he is not going to start advertising in the newspapers and say, "Come hear me, the apostle Paul, who died; went to heaven; and, came back alive to tell about it. He's not going to do any such thing.

The truth of which he speaks, of course, is the truth which we have here in the covers of the Word of God, and we call it Bible doctrine. This doctrine is what builds the spiritual maturity structure in our soul with its five facets, and that's what the Christian life is built upon. It takes time to build this kind of maturity in your soul, and you have to do it step-by-step. This is something that Satan can never imitate. This is why we say experience is bad, but the spiritual maturity structure in the soul is where the action is. That's where it's at. Satan can give you experiences, but he can never give you the spiritual maturity structure in your soul which is what carries us through in time of suffering and pressure. It is the expression of the grace of God. It is the bulwark against which we can lean. It is the glory of God residing within our souls. Satan can never reproduce this.

In these verses, the apostle Paul also stressed the fact that he does not want anyone to treat him like a star or a Christian celebrity because he had this experience. The reason for this is that there is only one star in the Christian life. There is only one star within the orbit of your life, and that is the Lord Jesus Christ. It is no preacher. I care not what his fame or how great his name is. There is only one celebrity, and that's Jesus Christ. If you don't learn that, Satan has a handle on you. The minute you look upon some man, and he is a celebrity and he is a star of some kind in your eye and he's something special, you're in trouble. Only the Lord Jesus Christ is the celebrity in the Christian life. He is the one who makes that spiritual maturity structure possible through the truth which is His mind which He has delivered to us through the Word of God.

He will use instruments, and He will use agents, and you will be grateful for anybody that the Lord uses to give you information. However, that's all your attachment is to that individual. That is because whatever else is true about that person is none of your business. Whatever else is true about him is of no concern to you. Your only interest is the information of the Word of God that may come through certain individuals. That doesn't make that person a star. Paul says, "I will not have anybody making over me because I went to heaven and came back to tell about it."

Furthermore, the apostle Paul is not saying this in some phony humble routine that the image-making professional preacher likes to do. There are plenty of preachers who like to speak about how humble they are, and they speak in such a way that you think they had just returned from heaven itself too. That's a phony humble routine in order to impress you. Any preacher that impresses you via anything about himself is a preacher who is out of line with the Word of God. The only thing you should be impressed with is the Word of God. Anytime some preacher starts talking in a way that you recognize he's trying to impress you with something about himself, just check your mind out for a few minutes. When he gets through talking about it and gets back to the Word, then plug yourself back in. Just be very objective and very relaxed about the whole thing. That's the Christian life. Image-making and experiences don't count at all with the Lord. It's only the spiritual maturity structure that impresses God in us, and that's because He is the one who builds that.

**A Thorn in the Flesh**

So we found that because Paul was sent to heaven and given this great reality to what he was preaching and to what he was telling people, he was now confronted with the temptation of coming back and sharing this information. God said, "Paul, you must never tell what you saw. You must never tell what you heard. You will be tempted to have a slip of the tongue. You will be tempted to be explaining the Word of God, and to start drawing on what you know about heaven. You will be tempted to reveal what came to you through that revelation--that direct experience in heaven. Therefore, Paul, I have released Satan to assign a demon to you. This demon is going to be a thorn in your flesh. I am going to cause something physically in the way of an ailment that you will experience. You will constantly have this thing jabbing at you, especially anytime that you are tempted to reveal what you saw in heaven. This was in the form of something like a splinter in the flesh. It just hurt, and he never got over it. It just stayed there.

As a child, I broke a bottle, and unbeknownst to me I got a sliver of glass in my hand. For years into adulthood, I noticed that when I would drive a car, I'd have a little sharp pain in my hand. I would see a little bump, and then it would go away. Then it would come back, and it would go away again. I had no idea what it was. One day I saw a little red spot and I squeezed it, and out popped a little quarter-inch sliver of glass. It had been there for years as a little splinter and an irritant. I didn't know what it was, but I was just conscious of it. Then all of a sudden out it popped, and it was gone. This is what Paul experienced. It was a splinter that would not leave. It was a physical ailment. We don't know what it was. However, he was deeply conscious of it. The point was "lest," meaning in order that you do not have a slip and reveal what you have seen.

**Satanic Power**

Therefore, Satan has power over the human body. This power is usually exercised through demon angels. We have this in Matthew 9:32-33. Here you have demons affecting a person's body: "As they went out, behold they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a demon. And when the demon was cast out, the dumb spoke and the multitudes marveled saying, 'It was never so seen in Israel.'" Demons are used to affect Satan's purposes. Notice verse 34: "But the Pharisees said, 'He casts out demons through the prince of demons.'" Verse 34 recognizes that Satan has the practice and the ability to remove demons. Did you get that? The Pharisees were wrong about how Jesus was casting out demons, but they were right about the principle that Satan has control over his demons. He can tell a demon to attack a person, and he can tell a demon to stop attacking. He can tell a demon to make a person sick, and he can tell a demon to stop making a person sick.

We have this fully confirmed to you in Matthew 7:21-22 where the Lord declares to a certain group of people that they are not going to go to heaven. They are not part of the born again regenerate group: "Not everyone that says unto me, 'Lord, Lord' shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that does the will of My Father who is in heaven" (which is believing in the Lord Jesus Christ--salvation--that is the will of God).

Verse 22 says, "Many will say to me that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, and in Your name have cast out demons?'" This is what the Pharisees observed. Here these people are going to say, "Lord, we did cast out demons. We pointed to this person who was demon possessed and we said, 'In the name of Jesus Christ, I command you to leave.' And the demon left. Lord, You were doing that." Jesus says, "No, I wasn't." "And in Your name we have done many wonderful works," and the Greek means "miracles." They're going to say, "Lord, don't you remember that person that came in--that little old lady bent up with that back problem for years? We went up and said, 'In the name of Jesus I command you to be healed.' That woman stood up on the auditorium screens and clapped and the people rushed up with their $20 bills. They were so excited and happy to see you working, Lord. Don't you remember you healed that lady when we commanded? Jesus Christ is going to say, "No, I didn't heal her." They will say, "Well, Lord, if you didn't heal her, there's only one other person in the universe who can heal--who has this kind of miracle working power--and that's Satan." Jesus will say, "That's right."

Verse 23 says, "Then will I profess unto them, 'I never knew you. Depart from me, you that work iniquity.'" Isn't that a shocker? You that work iniquity. You that work evil. They say, "Here I am, making people well, in a wonderful meeting where I'm praising the Lord for it and speaking in tongues, and this is the Lord doing this." Jesus Christ says, "That's an evil thing you're doing." They say, "Here I am: making people well; healing their bodies; and, giving them their physical well-being." Jesus says, "That's an evil thing you've done." They say, "Here I am, telling the future and predicting what's coming." He says, "That's an evil thing you've done."

**Demon Angels**

So, the first point is that Satan usually exercises his power through demon angels. He has power to tell a demon what to do, and what not to do; and, to attach him to a person, and to detach him. That's good Bible doctrine, and it's just as clear as it can be. It is self-evident to anybody who is a thinking person that you have to have something more than experience to prove whether what you are doing is of God, or if it's of Satan. You have to have something more than experience to confirm that, because experience is what Satan can handle, and he will deceive you.

In Matthew 12:22, we have another example of this demonic control over people: "Then was brought unto him one possessed with a demon--blind and dumb. And He healed him inasmuch as the blind and dumb both spoke and saw." The healing was done (verse 24) as the result of the removal of the demon. However, "When the Pharisees heard it, they said, 'This fellow does not cast out demons but by Beelzebub, the prince of the demons.'" Here again these people were saying, "Well, Jesus is doing this by using Satan. Satan is casting out demons." This shows us that they understood that the reason this man had these physical ailments upon him was because a demon had caused it. When the demon was removed, the man was healed.

Of course, you can see that for the charismatics, to the extent that they do have real healings, Satan is in control. Anytime a charismatic performs a real healing it is because Satan has come onto the scene and told his demon agent who is causing the illness to get out. Thus, the person was healed. However, Satan only does that when it will advance the cause of Satan. He will even have people attribute this to God, as long as people are tied in emotionally, and as long as the souls of people are dominated by emotion rather than the knowledge of the Word of God. Satan will give them their way. He will give God the credit because he still has control over the individual, and that's what he wants. He doesn't care who gets the credit. He's out to try to create a millennium on this earth, and he needs the wills; the subjection; and, the souls of people which he can only control through emotion. That's the only way Satan can control your soul.

So here these people are saying, "He's doing it; He cast out a demon; and, that made the man well, but it was Satan who did it." I want you to also notice in verses 25-26 where the Lord points out something--that Satan will cast out demons, but only under a certain condition: "And Jesus knew their thoughts and said unto them, 'Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation. And every city or house divided against itself shall not stand. If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself. How shall then his kingdom stand?'" The point that the Lord is making here is that, "The kind of healing I'm doing, and the kind of casting out of demons that I am doing is hurting the cause of Satan. It is destroying. It is collapsing Satan's house on his head, and you know that Satan is not going to do that kind of healing. Satan is going to do the kind of healing that advances his cause." Therefore, the Lord points out that there is a difference. He was telling them that, "If you were a discerning man, you would see that the kind of healing I am doing in a non-emotional demonstrating of my credentials for what I claim to be as the God man, you would recognize that my healings, to that extent, are destructive to Satan; whereas, the healings that Satan does are not destructive to himself. Therefore you would recognize that I am not casting out by the power of Satan." Jesus cast out demons by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Please remember that when the Lord Jesus moved on this earth, He did not move in the power of His deity. He moved as a man. That's why we look at the life of Jesus Christ, and we see that the life that He lived and the capacities that he demonstrated are available to us. He operated as a man who was functioning under the power of the Holy Spirit. It is very important that you recognize that Christ, in His ministry, operated in His humanity. He did not call upon His deity. That's why when He was hungry, He could have just created the food. Instead, He goes and gets the food. He sends the disciples out to where they find the fish. He sends them out to where they'll find the little boy with the food that He can multiply from. However, He worked on the basis of His humanity. He Himself did not create a miracle to feed Himself or to rest Himself or anything of that nature. He operated as a man.

So, he cast out demons not by the power of Satan, but any exorcisms that the Lord Jesus performed were exorcisms which were destructive to the powers of Satan over people. Verses 28-29: "But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God has come unto you." This "if means "if, and I do." "Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house and spoil his goods except he first bind the strong man, and then he will spoil his house." The Lord says, "I, as a man, could not cast out demons unless Satan said, 'OK, I'll cooperate with you.'" This is just as you cannot cast out demons; and, you can cast out demons. You, as an unbeliever, could cast out demons providing you hook yourself into Satan. "Unless Satan agrees," Jesus said, "I would not, as a man, be able to cast out demons. But I am casting out demons in a way that is destructive to Satan, and he disagrees. Therefore, that demonstrates to you that I am casting out by the power of the Spirit of God. It is not beyond you and me, under certain circumstances, to cast out demons by the power of the Spirit of God. There are plenty of missionaries who have done that. They have learned how to go about doing it, and they are doing it under the direction of the power of the Spirit of God. So Matthew 12:22 is another example of Satan exercising controls over people through demons.

We have this in Mark 5:2-5. There we have the story of the demonic at Gadara: "And when he was come out of the boat (that is, Jesus) immediately there met him one out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit." This word "unclean" is the Greed word for "filthy" or "dirty." This was a dirty demon. Some demons apparently are extremely vile, and people who are demon possessed reflect the nature of the demon. They reflect his vileness and his filthiness of speech, ideas, conduct, and so on. This man was indwelt by a certain loathsome demon. Obviously, he must have been a very gruesome gross kind of demon because he had the man living with the dead bodies back in the tombs. For all we know, he may have been eating the flesh of those bodies.

This man was also so vile that he was self-destructive. He was extremely destructive upon himself, and he had great strength. This is why the missionaries say that if you are ever up against a real demon-possessed person, the one thing you don't want to do is touch that person because demons have superhuman strength. If you touch that person, as many a missionary has found out, you'll be slammed up against the wall and halfway through it. Therefore, this demon was of such strength that they couldn't put chains on this man. Every time they put chains on this man, the demon who possessed this man just laughed, and he took those chains and tore them to shreds. He went screaming up and down the countryside so that people no longer went through there.

This man was clearly under Satan's harassment, but through a demon agent. Verse 5 says, "And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones." You can read the rest of the story--the marvelous results that when the demon was removed, the man lost his supernatural strength. He lost his madness. He lost his filthiness, and he was sitting there fully clothed, in his right mind. He was no longer naked. Incidentally, it's interesting that nudity is promoted by demonism. Sensuality is promoted by demonism. This man with a filthy demon indwelling him was running around nude, as well as the self-destructive things that he was doing to himself. When the demon was removed, the violence ceased, and furthermore, so did he put his clothes back on. He sat there fully clothed, the Bible says, "and in his right mind." He was now in a mind which was not controlled by another being.

In Mark 9:17-18, we have an expression of the rage and the hatred which characterizes Satan. You must always remember that Satan is selfish. Satan is self-centered. This is why Satan can never be true to you. He can never be true to his promises. Satan is always out for himself. Therefore, Satan will present a front of friendliness and of camaraderie until such time as you are no longer useful to him. Then he turns upon you in rage. You will also find this reflected in people. People who are influenced and dominated by Satan or his demons are people who are very cordial and very sweetness-and-light on the surface. They're very phony, but they will put on a front. They are front people. Then, when it no longer serves their purpose, they become a raging beast. They snarl and scratch and claw, and they will tear you to shreds. This is demonism in operation.

Here we have it in Mark 9:17-18: "And one of the multitude answered and said, 'Master, I have brought unto you my son who has a dumb spirit.'" This was a demon spirit that has caused the boy not to be able to talk. "And wherever he takes him, he tears him, and he foams, and gnashes with his teeth and pines away. And I spoke to Your disciples that they should cast him out, and they could not." We have the description here of the rage of the demon which indwelt this boy. It tore him. It caused him to foam at the mouth. It caused him to gnash his teeth, and it was causing him to physically waste away because the demon was moving him toward death.

So, we live in a realistic rough world relative to Satan and his demons. If you are an unbeliever, things are really bad. As an unbeliever, you can bring demon possession upon yourself in various ways. The best way is to start fooling around with demonism; with fortune telling; with all of the things that deal with the other side; and, with spiritism. By the way, that is the greatest growing cult of our day. The cult of talking with the dead. It is amazing how many people high in government reflect the fact that they are in the habit of consulting mediums, and they are in the habit of participating in meetings of spiritism. We'll get into that a little more later. However, spiritism is Satan's prime expression today. People who play with that game find themselves not talking to the dead (which, of course, you can't do), but they find themselves talking to demon beings. If you are a Christian, you cannot be indwelt, for God the Holy Spirit indwells you, but you can be so fully dominated by a satanic (demon) being, that you can be a destructive force completely out of control of yourself. Therefore, even you and I as believers are faced with a real problem here.

Satan is a killer. He has the power of death. We read about this in Hebrews 2:14-15. He was restrained from killing Job (Job 1:12). We are told that he killed Job's children (Job 1:18-19). God allowed Satan to exercise suffering against Job. Part of that was to take the lives of all of his seven children. He motivated Cain to murder Abel (John 8:44, 1 John 3:12). He had charge of applying the sin unto death on the Corinthian church member who was guilty of incest (1 Corinthians 5:5). Satan also is a source of disease. He causes physiological, psychosomatic, and psychological illnesses. Satan gave Paul, as we are reading here, some kind of physical ailment (2 Corinthians 12:7). He also gave an ailment to Job (Job2:6-8).

However, this is always only as permitted by God. Jesus healed many with satanic-induced illnesses (Acts 10:38). Luke 13:11-16 speaks about a woman's disease which was induced by Satan. The doctors were unable to cure her because her illness was demonic. Doctors are confronted with this same problem today. Doctors, when they come up against the cases of people with illnesses that are demonic-induced, are not able to cure it. The doctor will come up against a blank wall because he can't find anything physically wrong with the person. Yet, there is the illness. There is the evidence. The doctor comes up against something that is beyond any human capacity to deal with. It's a demonic-induced illness.

James lists two ways to get well when you are confronted with illness. One is prayer, and the other is medicine. Medicine if it's physical, and prayer if it's a demonic-induced illness. The casting out of demons cures the illness as we have seen. You have this many places in the Bible: Matthew 10:1; Mark 1:32-34; Mark 6:13; Acts 8:7; and, Acts 19:12. All these are examples of people who were sick because of a demon; the demon was removed; and, they were healed.

However, I also want to remind you once more that Satan can also heal you. Satan can heal people. We looked at that in Matthew 7:21-23 in the previous session. You also find this in 2 Thessalonians 2:9. You find this in Revelation 13:3 and Revelation 13:12-15. Satan is able to heal people. Therefore, a healing in itself does not tell us where the source of that healing comes from.

**Miraculous Healings**

So, where do sources of miraculous healings come from? Sometimes there are indeed miraculous healings. I'm talking about the kind of thing where a doctor looks at you and says, "That's it. We can't do anything." However, then you are healed. That's miraculous healing. This is a person who's in a terminal situation, and a person who has something that no medicine has been able to help, like some of these people in the Bible. Along comes someone who does something, and there is a miraculous healing. There is such a thing that does take place. People have healings which are miracles.

They are caused directly by God. Deuteronomy 32:39 declares to us the sovereignty of God. God is in complete control of all of our illnesses. Deuteronomy 32:39: "See now that I, even I, am He, and there is no God with Me. I kill, and I make alive. I wound, and I heal. Neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand." God says, "I heal, or I don't heal. No one can deliver you out of my hand. That is why it is important at this point in our lives, when we are fairly healthy, to not only understand the grace of God as it deals in our lives in our day-by-day living through spiritual maturity which we develop through the Word of God. It is also important to understand the grace of God relative to dying.

Now is the time for you to prepare for the moment when they tell you, "That's it. We have nothing more we can do for you. It is a matter of time, and your physical body will die." Then you need something more than grace for living. At that point, you need grace for dying. This is exactly what God has provided. We're going to get to the key that the apostle Paul found in his situation. God said, "Here's the key for you to meet what you have." However, the thing about that is that unless Paul had made some preparation, the key wouldn't have worked. We're going to learn what the key is, but unless we've made proper preparation, the key won't work. Unless you have made preparation to exercise dying grace, the time will come and you will not be able to die with grace. You will not be able to leave this life in the full controls of your understanding of what God is doing with your life.

God is sovereign. He has made provision for our lives. He has made provision for the number of your days; He has made provision for everything you need in those days; He has made provision for the termination of those days; and, He has made provision for you to enter this world in grace, to live in grace, and to die in grace. So, miraculous healings are under the control of a sovereign God. God alone is the divine healer. He is the miracle healer. God heals sovereignly, and He does this on the basis of His essence--of what He is. He does not heal today through the temporary gift of healing. Do not go to a healer.

We had a doctor in Dallas who was a fine Christian doctor that many of us knew for many years. He got himself involved, when his wife was dying, in the desperation of saving her life, when he as a doctor recognized that it was beyond medical capacity. He got himself involved in calling upon healers to come in. He got into the charismatic movement. Well, his wife had one of those terrible terminal diseases that no charismatic can cure. Consequently, his wife died. In the process, he got himself involved very deeply, and now is out completely enmeshed in the charismatic movement--completely enmeshed in a demonic system.

There is no such thing as the gift of healing today. That was a temporary miraculous gift, and it does not exist. If you go to a healer, you have contacted the demonic world, so understand that. Anybody who goes to a church service that is conducting a healing meeting is entering the demonic world. If you don't think that's true, you might attend a meeting or two. I hesitate to suggest this to you, but I have learned by experience. You do have to be careful with it. It will open your eyes, and if you know anything about doctrine, the demonic presence will be quite evident to you in what is taking place. Therefore, there is no such thing as someone who heals.

Furthermore, I want to tell you there is no such thing as someone who has a special gift of prayer for healing of people. I am aware of the fact that Oral Roberts is not going to get up and say, "I can heal your body." In fact, one of the favorite expressions of all the charismatics is that fake phony front, "I don't do the healing. God does the healing." Well, any fool would know that without being told that. If there was any miraculous healing, only God could do it.

However, the reason they love to say that is to put on a phony spiritual front, and to take the pressure off of themselves. This relieves them of pressure when someone comes up and says, "Well, OK. Listen. You say you can heal? In the New Testament, anytime an apostle proceeded to heal, and anytime a healing was performed, it was performed no matter what the case was and no matter what the person had. As a matter of fact, they even took people who were dead and raised them from the dead." That's about the ultimate healing a person could ask for. You can hardly be healed better than that--when you are dead, and they raise you to life. Now, that is healing. They were doing that in the New Testament. No charismatics today are trying to raise people from the dead.

Every now and then, halfway around the world, the charismatics will bring information back and say, "Oh, down here in the jungle, in this little hut there was this dead man; I prayed over him; and, he rose up and walked out there playing his fife, and we all followed him." You don't know whether he did or not. You don't know how he's faking you out. It's always out there someplace. I know that the professional healers like Oral Roberts are very careful. They're not going to put themselves in a position where you say, "OK, in the New Testament, they really healed people, dead or alive, terminal or not. I want to see you do it. Here's my grandmother she's dying of cancer. They give her five days. Heal her."

When we had a famous charismatic from the West Coast here a few years ago, the Dallas Morning News came out with a full-page ad that a pastor from one of the churches put in. It said, "I will hereby give (something like) $10,000 to the ministry of this evangelist (and that's what they call themselves) if he will take five people with terminal cancer and heal them." It was jiving and jumping down there at the Fair Park Auditorium. I went to a few of the meetings. This man said, "I will be on this platform, and I will have medical doctors who will verify that these people are terminal cases. Then you will heal them, and these same medical doctors will then examine them to declare that they have been healed." He never took up the offer. Oral Roberts would never in the world think of having you walk in and say, "Look, I just broke my arm. Please heal it. I had this terrible cavity and toothache. The doctor says that I'm going to lose this tooth. Heal it." He would never in the world touch you.

If you listen to the television programs, you'll notice that Oral Roberts loves to relate the story how Billy Graham one time said to him, "Oral, God has giving you a great gift of praying for the healing of people. Oral Roberts, of course, has gone to prominence on the back of Billy Graham, and Dr. Graham has been happy to accommodate him to step him up into such prominence. Oral Roberts is constantly conveying to you the impression that he has some great gift for prayer to heal. I want to tell you that that is a fraud. There is no such spiritual gift as the gift of prayer. Every believer is on equal ground. Every believer who is in fellowship with the Lord and who is functioning according to the proper techniques of prayer has just as much effectiveness and audience with the Lord relative to His healing somebody in your family or some friend or anybody as Oral Roberts does. He just makes scads of money by conning people into the impression that he has some special power, and because some super evangelist condones it and gives some public credence, that he has something special. You have all the capacity in prayer that anybody does. Don't be taken in.

Just listen to these people, and notice how they cover themselves that it is prayer. It's the Lord who does it. Well, if it's the Lord who does it, and if it's prayer that does it, then why are you running these healing meetings? Why are you running these mass meetings with people coming down front to be healed? Why are you going through all the dramatics of casting out demons and commanding people to be healed in Jesus name, and then making such a big public display over it, and then advertising yourself as a great and marvelous healer, and promoting yourself. You can be sure that the charismatics are not in the habit of failing to keep their name up before the public, and keeping the impression that they have some special commanding powers in prayer. God, when He heals, does not heal through any man. He does not heal through miraculous gifts of healing through any man. Anybody who claims that He does is a liar, and spiritually disoriented to the Word of God. He may really believe he has it. If he is doing any real healings, he is doing it on the power of Satan. As Kurt Koch stated in the recent article concerning Oral Roberts, he is a mediumistic healer. He is healing through demonic agencies, not through God.

God does not heal through sanctified oil--even olive oil. He does not heal through handkerchiefs which someone has blessed for you. He does not heal because someone shouts, "I command you in the name of Jesus to be healed." He does not heal because you've had a jumping emotional meeting where you had a lot of things going, nor rituals of any kind. The reason I'm hitting this so hard is because in this final age of apostasy, all of the sympathy is going to the other side. Those of us who are hanging onto the truth of the Word of God and insisting that experience is not the thing, but doctrine is the thing, are being squeezed into the minority group. Even our fellow Bible churches are beating our brains out because they will not stand up and sound off and call Oral Roberts for what he is. They will not point out where Dr. Graham steps out of line in dignifying something he should not, which is not to say that God is not using him in a marvelous way in the winning of souls and in the meetings that he runs. We're only saying, at this particular point, that this is not right, and this is contrary to the Word of God. Evangelists have a way of being often very disoriented to doctrine when it gets outside of the gospel area.

I'm hitting this because you are going to be overwhelmed. You're going to be in doubt. It's going to be terribly hard for you to watch these beautiful television programs coming out of Tulsa, and for you to say, "Those people are wrong." They've got all those hot shot singers and all those big time entertainers, and they are wrong. What I have from doctrine--the truth--is right." It's going to be hard for you to stand on that. You're going to have questions and doubts in your mind because the masses of people are rushing there. However, remember that's where they would go in an age of apostasy. That's where they would go in an age that is just about ready to step into the tribulation in Satan's finest hour. That's exactly where they would go because this is the kind of a world it's going to be when Satan is fully running it without the believers here.

What God does, dear friend, is He heals on the basis of His character and on the basis of His plan. People are not healed because they're good Christians, or because they deserve it. It's a grace act. People are not healed by some act of super faith on the part of the patient or on the part of a healer. Sometimes people are healed without having any faith whatsoever. The charismatic healers love to say that if you're not healed, it's because you don't have faith. You don't have to have faith to be healed.

There is no healing to be claimed in the atonement either. The charismatics say that Isaiah 53:4 says that Christ died for our sicknesses also. Christ healed during his earthly ministry, and the healing spoken of in Isaiah 53:4 was performed during his earthly ministry. Healing is also caused by application of research through a doctor. A doctor who has been trained and who knows how to deal with chemicals heals.

**What are the Sources of Miraculous Healing?**

1. Healing is caused directly by God.
2. Healing is caused by medical research, and often it looks like a miracle.
3. Healing is caused by Satan in cases of demon possession of unbelievers and in cases of demon effects upon believers. We're going to get to that--what Satan can do to you as a believer with illness. That's coming up. Healing is also caused in cooperation with healers of the charismatic movement who call Satan Jesus, as in Matthew 7:22-23, commanding the demons to leave.
4. Miraculous healings are caused by a change in mental attitude--psychosomatic. The brain is disoriented in terms of reality, so it signals to the body certain effects that cause certain symptoms of illness--an illness which is not really there. Therefore, a faith healer can create a change in the mental attitude, and a change in the mental attitude results in the removal of the symptoms, and the person thinks he has been healed. He never was sick in the first place. Hysteria--that high expectation meeting climate--is the technique whereby this is brought about. Medical doctors tell us that well over 50% of the people who come to them have mental hangups, and symptoms with those mental hangups, but no organic problem. I said that to a doctor some time ago, "I understand from doctors that 50% of the people who come to you as doctors don't really have anything wrong with them." He said, "It's a lot more than 50%, I'll tell you."

All of this is leading up to the climax that we have not yet reached--a very tremendous climax in verse 10 of this 2 Corinthians passage. That is how Satan is used to discipline believers, and how Satan is used to attack us, and the defense mechanism that we have. We have a fantastic defense mechanism, and we'll move on with that next time.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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