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WE THE CHURCH: Part Two  
“A Place of Healing”

1. We the Church - So Far:

The church is a community of people filled by the Holy Spirit.

Remember, the church is also called the body of Christ, it is a body full of many members, and though they seem wildly different, they are all necessary, import parts.

Learning to work together is not optional, it is a requirement.

A social club dependants on personal interests, or personality types. But the Spirit of God brings all kinds of people together.

Scot McKnight - "The church is a fellowship of differents"

Matthew 14:13-14 says: *Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them **and healed their sick.***

**HEALING** can mean a lot of different things (you likely think of doctors – medical or psychotherapy, perhaps you think of counselling)

- one of the earliest references to healing in the Bible, Exodus 15:26

Context: The people of Israel is just left Egypt and they are in trouble, there is no clean water for them to drink. People are getting sick. They are freaking out on Moses and blaming him for leading them out to die in the wilderness, but then GOD intervenes and we read:

*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 statues, I will put none of the diseases on you that I put on the Egyptians (think of the plagues), for I am the LORD, your healer.*

**We needed to be healed from our lack of trust:**

In this moment of Israel's Exodus, God is at work doing a huge rescue plan, yet they can hardly see past the end of their own noses. Their perspective is small.

We have the same problem

Like Israel, we **grumble** rather than **trust**, we **complain** rather than **listen**. We look for someone to **blame**.

God has us on track for something great, and yet we get off course and doubt that he will carry us through.

### **We Need to be healed from our isolation:**

- our modern individualistic culture has conditioned us to hear the words in this passage about obedience to God's commands as oppressive, as infringing on our individual rights and freedoms. We may hear the statements in this verse as a restrictive life

-Israel really became the people of God at Sinai when he gave them the 10 commandments.

Deuteronomy 8:5 says:

*So know in your heart that just as a man disciplines his son, so the LORD your God disciplines you.*

Far from being oppressive, this passage is showing that that healing comes through accepting the call to live and act according to our new title, our new position

### **WE NEED GOD**

God says "I am the Lord, your healer."

In this passage God could have said, "I'm the one who heals your water."

No, the water is not the root problem. The physical ailment is not the root, it is a symptom.

Think of it like this – in your life you have some "bitter water" right now. Something hard, something serious, - your health, your family member, a relationship struggle? **The greatest danger is not what can happen to the body, but that which can happen to the soul as the enemy seeks to throw us off course from following God.** Satan, the accuser, seeks to bring out our fleshly nature to mistrust, doubt, get angry, blame to the surface, however he can.

Emotional, physical, financial problems are trace down to a deeper issue - the weakness and illness of sin that plagues all creation.

Here is the **good news** that we can see shining through Exodus 15:26

1. Though the human condition since the fall is a story of doubts and fears and blaming,
2. God's disposition and plan is to swallow up and destroy these things in his loving, Fatherly, healing presence.

## **PT 2: The CHURCH as a PLACE of Healing**

Some of you have not seen the physical healing you have prayed for.

I have prayed for a lot of people and not seen immediate physical healing. Maybe you have, too. Does that mean God can't heal in that way any more?

We wonder, "God, where is the healing that I prayed for?" This doesn't look like the early church I see in scripture!

Acts 2:42-43 says:

42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awe[a] came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.

This has led people to interpret passages about healing in different ways:

1. Disregarding scripture – (this is a bad way of dealing with scripture!) But it's a natural response "because this doesn't fix my pre-existing expectations and understanding, so I reject it"

a. rejecting scripture, or claiming these are stories illustrating points and not meant to be taken as history - but that's not what the gospels and Acts present. They are reporting real things Jesus and the apostles did, and how people were really healed.

2. Explaining it away - saying this was only for the early church - this is called cessationism - - except scripture never speaks that way about miracles and the direction of scripture doesn't lead us to conclude these gifts are short term.

a. Explaining healing away also looks like many so-called **faith-healing** movements – the subculture of much faith healing **is actually a denial of biblical healing**, because it puts an unbiblical emphasis on a person (It only comes through certain people who are anointed) or on faith (as a type of leverage to get what you want).

The former here has led to a whole system of spiritual extortion, where people who claim to have a unique gift lord it over others for power, money, and prestige, and in the latter case people have been horribly spiritually abused when they are told it's their lack of faith, hidden sin, or insincerity that is preventing healing.

So the biblical way forward is to trust God, trust his Word, and accept that God can do what he wants, where he wants, when he wants.

Bias: We almost all see true healing with our modern eyes as merely a physical phenomenon.

Challenge 1:

1. **We must remember that healing is, and always has been holistic.** That means it changes a person physically, socially, and spiritually. Jesus says in Matthew 9:5 "Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk?'" The point is that healing involved more than mere physicality - In those few brief words from Matthew 9:5 we realize that the healing that Jesus is about to perform is going to have deep social ripples in this community

2. **We must remember that healing is a sign** - when Jesus healed Lazarus in John 11:42 he prayed " "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. 42I knew that You always hear Me, but I say this for the benefit of the people standing here, so they may believe that You sent Me."

a. Jesus prays to the Father and receives what he asks for all as a sign for the people standing there, that they may believe. Healing in the present age is a sign of something better to come in the future age.

**Their perfect healing that you prayed for is still coming.**

3. **We must remember healing Changes people's LIVES - not just their bodies.**

- it means that we the church must be constantly on the look out to see who God is calling. No body shows up at this church by accident. God is at work. No body mentions to you a struggle by accident. If you are a follower of Jesus and someone shares a burden with you, be it physical, emotional, or spiritual that is not an accident. You are part of the church, and where ever you are the healing can begin for people. In you, church, people encounter Christ. We are his body.

– wherever you are, church, is where Christ can heal. No building, no anointed healer needs to be there. Just you and Jesus.

-Remember the church is a family, and as a place of healing we are interested in healing the whole person – physical, social, and spiritual.

-And remember, while we are eager to see signs of new creation, we are also content to wait for the real and perfect healing in the age to come.