

**NOTE:** The following sermon is a synthesis of two different healing sermons delivered by Fr. Ward (the first was preached at the Saturday service of the *Rock, Rods, and Relationships* Outreach Event and the second was given at the two Sunday services the following day).

*"It's All About WHO You Know?"*

**WELCOME!**

Well, I think it is great that so many have come out today to our RR & R event. I would like to welcome everyone, especially our visitors. We are so glad you could come and be a part of this second annual event.

What a great day to gather together to see sharp looking cars, taste good food, and hear uplifting music. Yes, we have come together for a wonderful day of fellowship. We even have President Abraham Lincoln with us! (note: a reanactor) Can you imagine? Wouldn't you buy a car from that man? He's huge and he's honest!

But there's another reason why we've come together today. There is another reason why there is this event we call, *Rock, Rods and Relationships*. We're here to worship the Lord God Almighty and to thank Him for all that He has done and continues to do. We're here to seek the Lord afresh and to ask Him to pour out His Holy Spirit upon us, that we might experience healing in our hearts, bodies, and minds.

**WE ALL NEED HEALING**

The word the Bible uses for healed doesn't just mean to cure someone who is sick, it also means to "*mend that which is torn,*" and "*to repair that which is damaged.*" In other words, healing involves restoring that which is broken. Now I don't know about you, but when I turn on the television, when I read the papers, when I listen to the radio, I see a whole lot of brokenness out there in our world. But it isn't just out there in the world, we have all experienced disappointment, grief, and heartache. Everything may be going fine one moment but like those cars out there, sooner or later something is going to break down. The truth is we live in a world of broken relationships, broken bodies, and broken hearts. There is something intrinsically wrong with life and even worse it eventually leads to the grave. So we've got a major problem on our hands.

**LOST!**

I am reminded of that TV show, *LOST!* Some of you may have seen it. It is about the ongoing struggle of people who are stranded on an island. They don't know where they are, they don't know how they're going to get off, and so in the meantime, they have to deal with one another and learn to cooperate with one another. What they desperately need is leadership and direction, they need someone to show them how to live, when help will come and how to survive until that help arrives.

Life on planet earth is a lot like that. I mean look around, to the naked eye earth is an island in the vast sea of space. There is nothing close to earth that has life. And when we're born, we're, for the most part, lost; helpless on our own. Oh yes, we have parents and family, but even our relationship with them will be imperfect. And ultimately our relationship with God is imperfect. The Bible has a word for this imperfection, this brokenness – it's called sin.

The Bible says in **Romans 3:23** that "*all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.*" "*There is none righteous, no not one.*" We all fall short. We are separated from God. And it is because of this broken relationship that every man, woman and child needs healing.

### **CHRIST IS THE KEY TO OUR HEALING**

The good news is that God has sent someone to restore that which is broken. His name is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. God the Father sent God the Son to earth to show us not only how to live on the island but how to get off the island. And because He sent Jesus Christ to restore our broken relationship, we don't have to remain lost, we don't have to be like people stranded on a remote island not knowing where they are, how they will survive or when they will get off.

But it begins by knowing the Lord Jesus Christ. Because you see if we are going to be healed, then we need to go to the One who made us, the One who knows the number of hairs on our heads, the One who knows the thoughts of our innermost being. We need to go to the One who has the power to restore that which is broken. We need to go to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now we heard in our Gospel lesson from **Mark 6:56** that all those who were sick and brought to Jesus, were healed.

### **THE FOUNDATION – A RESTORED RELATIONSHIP**

But there's another passage that we find that is the foundation for all healing. Do you remember what happened when some men brought their paralyzed friend to Jesus in **Mark 2**? What did Jesus say to the crippled man, first? He didn't say, "Be healed." He said, "*Son, your sins are forgiven.*" Some of the religious leaders standing by accused Jesus of committing blasphemy. They knew that by declaring the man's sins forgiven, Jesus was saying that He was God. But then Jesus said, "*So that you know that the Son of Man has authority to forgive sins, I say to you rise and walk.*" And the man got up and walked.

So let me ask you, what do you think is more important to God? A broken body or a broken relationship? A broken relationship. God wants first and foremost that our relationship with Him be restored. How is our relationship with God restored? The sin problem has to be dealt with. How is the sin problem dealt with? Repentance and forgiveness. And there can be no forgiveness without repentance (Lk. 17:3-4).

**Now look for a moment at James 5:13-16.** James tells us that when we are sick we are to call for the elders of the Church to come and anoint us with oil for healing, but then look at what he also says? "*And the person who confesses their sins will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to one another, that you may be healed.*"

What is emphasized here? Confession of sin. Again do you see what always take precedent? A broken body or a broken relationship? A broken relationship. Can God heal us? Most definitely. But He wants our relationship with Him to always be restored above all else. All that is wrong is the result of the curse of sin and death. And the beauty of God sending Jesus, the Son, to earth is that not only does Jesus have the power and authority to forgive us, **He is the means of our forgiveness.** He takes our place. He not only heals us, He is the instrument of our healing. He demonstrates God's love and He satisfies God's justice. The Prophet Isaiah said 700 years before Christ came to earth, "*He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, and by His stripes we are healed.*" **Is. 53:5.**

## **IS JESUS YOUR LORD AND SAVIOR?**

How do we get on the road that leads to healing? We acknowledge Jesus as Lord. He is Lord of the universe. Does He take first place in all that you are and in all that you do? In other words, is He the One to whom you ask for direction and guidance, is He the one you follow as Your example? Do you give Him the glory? Do people know that He is your Lord?

But not only does Jesus need to be our Lord, we need to accept Him as our Savior. If we accept Jesus as our Savior, it means that we recognize that we need to be saved from our sin. Jesus said, ***“I didn’t come to call the righteous, but sinners.”*** (Mk. 2:17).

Of course, Jesus doesn’t only save us from sin, He saves us from physical and eternal death. Jesus is the only one who has said, ***“I am the resurrection and I am the life, whoever believes in Me, shall live even if He die.”*** (Jn. 11:25). And Jesus rose again to back those words up and He promised that He would give life to all those who put their trust in Him.

## **JESUS WANTS US WHOLE**

So make no mistake, God does want us to be healed, but it begins by recognizing Jesus as the Lord of the universe and accepting Him as the Savior of the world. That’s the foundation. And then we are called to follow.

Recall Jesus’ invitation to all people, ***“Come to Me all you who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart , and you will find rest for your souls, for My yoke is easy and My burden is light.***” (Mt. 11:28-30).

In other words, Jesus is not a burden, He is the greatest help that we could ever have. Does that mean we won’t have trials and hardship or that there won’t be times of pain and suffering? No. But it does mean that the Lord will be there to help us to get us through the storms of life. Why do you think He let His disciples go through that storm on the sea of Galilee?

The disciples find themselves in a storm, the waves are getting high, the winds are picking up, it is a terrifying experience. And what tends to happen when we’re in such a storm? The more we look at the sky and the waves and feel the wind beating on us, the more anxious and worried we become. Life is a lot like that. The storms of life will come, not a question of if, but when. And Jesus lets us go through the storms. But I will tell you why He lets us go through the storms, so that we might learn to trust Him, to follow and obey Him.

Look at what happened to the disciples? They were worried, they became fearful, but what did Jesus say? ***“Take heart, do not be afraid, it is I.”*** (Mk. 6:50). In other words, do you find yourself overwhelmed by worry and doubt? Take heart, Jesus is with you. Jesus is with us through the storm. We must never forget that.

And equally important, He isn’t with us just as a spectator, He is there to help us, and He does it through His Holy Spirit. The Spirit of Jesus who lives in us if we know Jesus as Lord. And the power of Jesus is released through faith, trusting in Him. And if I trust someone I will follow them, and if I follow someone I will obey them. I will do what they say. You see faith is more than belief. Faith is belief that acts. And so we can’t expect to experience the healing power of God unless we are listening, trusting and obeying God.

## A MEANS TO AN END

Healing is never an end, it's only a means. It's a means to lead us to Christ, and it is a result of following Christ. Healing is a life long journey and it is a process. The truth is we need healing every day of our lives. We need healing from unforgiveness, bitterness, laziness, addictions, painful memories, involvement in the occult, physical sickness, spiritual apathy. And we may be healed one day only to face something else the next day. As long as we walk this planet of ours, cursed by sin and separation from God, we will need healing

I want to close by highlighting nine key principles that help us experience Christ's healing power. They are as follows:

### **1. Know the Word of God**

This must be the foundation. **Romans 10:17** says: "*Faith comes from hearing and hearing by the word of God.*" The longest Psalm and chapter in the Bible (**Psalm 119**) deals with one recurring theme - study, meditate, memorize, and KNOW God's Word. In **Dt. 6:6-9** - God says, "*And these words which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently....*" **Proverbs 4:20-27** begins, "*My son give attention to my words; incline your ear to my sayings.*" Knowledge of God's will, purposes, plans, and promises is a must if we are to know how to come against all forms of sickness - mind, body, and soul. What is the progression of true discipleship? Knowledge of the truth (the WORD) ----- Response of FAITH ----- Obedient ACTION.

### **2. Confess Your Sin (as noted above)**

**James 5:13-16** - confession of sin is always linked to the prayer for healing. On many occasions, Jesus touched those who admitted their sin and asked for mercy - the adulterous woman and the blind beggar Bartimaeus. Jesus came to heal the sick - first spiritually and then physically. Why? Sickness is inextricably linked to sin - whether directly or indirectly. It is part of the fall. God is always calling us to Himself and this means dealing with the sin in our lives through confession and change in behavior and thought patterns. John reminds us that God will be faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness if we confess them to Him (**1 Jn.1:9**).

### **3. Cast Your Cares upon the LORD**

**1 Peter 5:7** says "*...cast all your anxiety upon God, because He cares for you.*" Worry, anxiety, and fear can plague the Christian who is sick. **2 Tim. 1:7** says: "*For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and love and a sound mind.*" The devil attacks with fear. God says to cast your cares upon Him. That means that we are to give every need, fear, worry to Him. When that fear or worry returns, don't pray again simply to remove it but pray against Satan. Take every thought captive (see **2 Cor. 10:3-5**) Focusing on God's love can alleviate all fear and worry. **1 Jn. 4:18** reminds us that "*perfect love casteth out fear.*" The key? **Ps. 46:10**: "*Be still and know that I am God.*"

### **4. Pray and Petition**

Read **Philippians 4:4-7**. When His disciples couldn't drive out the demons or heal the sick, Jesus replied, this does not come except by much prayer and fasting. There must be a focused effort through prayer directed at the specific problem. The more specific the better. Jesus usually asked what the problem was before He displayed His power.

## 5. Be in Agreement with Other Believers

**Hebrews 10:18** reminds us not to forsake the fellowshiping with other believers in worship. This includes begin in prayer with other believers for your sickness. In **Mt. 18:19**, Jesus said: “*Again I say that if two of you agree on anything on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.*” There is not only power in the prayer of the individual but there is even greater power when many believers come together in prayer. Before the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the disciples were all together in prayer (**Acts 2:1-4**)

## 6. Ask for the Discernment and Power of the Holy Spirit

The following questions should be raised whenever we get sick. What is the purpose of the illness? Remember it comes from the realm of darkness. What is God trying to tell me in this? What is the best course of action that should be taken in regards to this sickness? For more serious illnesses: What type of treatment should be administered? Should you get a second opinion? Getting the best medical advice and attention is vitally important and we need God’s help in getting the best professionals and diagnosis.

**Acts 14:27** “*And when they arrived and gathered in the church together, they began to report all the things that God had done with them and how He opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.*” **Acts 16:6** “*Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden to preach the word in Asia...*” The Holy Spirit opens and closes doors in our lives. The Holy Spirit knows what is best, so we need His discernment. Jesus said in **Jn. 16:13** that “*the Holy Spirit would guide us into all truth.*”

## 7. Speak out in Faith against Your Mountain – that illness, depression, or bitterness

1. **Hebrews 11:1** “*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.*” Faith is a total confidence and trust in the Lord. And it is a faith that acts. We are to use the name of Jesus. We are to speak out the oracles of God. We are to sing the praises to God and we are to speak out healing in faith!

2. **Mark 11:23-24**: When we have the discernment of the Holy Spirit, we must not only cast our cares upon the Lord and pray, but we also need to speak against whatever it is that is making us sick. And we should be specific. Not to just simply say, “Lord heal me,” but for example, “Lord, in Jesus name, I come against the cells that are causing illness in my body. I ask that you stimulate my immune system and cause my white blood cells to kill off this infection.”

3. **James 5:13-16** - we are to call for the elders (clergy) of the church to anoint us and pray for healing. This is to be done outloud, in agreement with, and with specificity.

## 8. Persist and Persevere

1. **Christ in the Garden and on the Road to Golgotha** - On the way to Calvary, Jesus could have quit, He could have “called it a day.” But He didn’t. He continued to hold fast, He continued to keep His focus. He did not give up. So too we must not throw in the towel in the face of adversity, but rather keep our eyes fixed on Christ every step of the way.

2. **Luke 18:1-8** - the widow and the judge

3. **Mark 10:46-52** - blind Bartemaeus said, “*Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me*” several times before Jesus heard him.

4. **Daniel 10** - Daniel in prayer for 21 days before the angel Gabriel was able to break through the prince (demon) of Persia’s stronghold.

**5. James 5:17-18** - the example of Elijah who prayed *earnestly* that it would not rain and it didn't for over three years.

**9. Stand Firm against Spiritual Evil**

**1. Eph. 6:10-18** - we don't wrestle against flesh and blood but spiritual evil.

**2. Matthew 11:12** - *“And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence and violent men take it by force.”*

**3. 2 Kings 7:3-5** - the example of the 4 lepers

You know many of us have heard the expression, that life is not about what you know but it's about who you know. It may not always be true in the natural realm, but it is true in the supernatural realm – in the Kingdom of God, when it comes to our spiritual life and eternal life. It doesn't matter what you know, doesn't matter where you're from, doesn't matter who you are, what matters in life is who you know? Do you know Jesus Christ? Is He your Lord? Is He your Savior?

Do you want to be healed? Come to Jesus.

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, AMEN!