

What We Believe, and Why it Matters

**Part 9: Divine Healing**

COTN Article of Faith 14

*Exodus 15:26; Luke 4:16-21*

1. All healing comes from God

- *James 1:17*

2. We ought always to pray

- *Luke 18:1; James 5:13-16*

3. God always answers:

- If the request is wrong, the answer is no

- *John 14:14; James 4:2-3*

- If you are wrong, the answer is grow

- *Psalms 66:18; James 5:15-16*

- If the timing is wrong, the answer is slow

- *Isaiah 40:31; Psalm 27:14; Romans 12:12*

- If weak, God is strong, so grace can flow

- *2 Corinthians 12:8-9*

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West Valley Church  
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11/11/18

**What We Believe, and Why it Matters<sup>1</sup>**  
**Part Nine – Divine Healing<sup>2</sup>**  
**COTN Articles of Faith 14**

For the fall here on Sundays at West Valley Church we've been exploring our Articles of Faith in a series called, "What We Believe and Why it Matters." There are important truths about the Christian faith that we all need to be sure that we *understand*, and also that we *experience* if we are going to live life-to-the-fullest that God has for us in Christ, and if we are going to carry out our purpose in this world. So far we've looked at the Trinity, Scripture, Sin, Prevenient Grace, Repentance, Atonement, Justification, Regeneration, Adoption, Entire Sanctification, the Church, and Communion. Next week we will have a baptism service, so if you have not been baptized, please give us your name on a connection card so we can get in contact with you and baptize you. If you haven't been with us, I would really encourage you to go to our website and listening to the previous sermons in this series or read the manuscripts because all of these are intended to help you have a *smart* faith – to understand what you believe if you are in fact a Christian, and to know why what you believe matters so much – to experience the difference that it makes.

Today we are looking at our 14<sup>th</sup> Article of Faith, Divine Healing. This is what our church says about that:

"We believe in the biblical doctrine of divine healing and urge our people to offer the prayer of faith for the healing of the sick. We also believe God heals through the means of medical science."

It's made up of just two simple sentences and is the shortest of our Articles of Faith. At first glance, these two short sentences hardly seem to be as important as the other things we've covered, like the Trinity, and Scripture, and Sin, and Atonement.

But not only is it biblical, it touches on several other things that are important to all of our articles of faith.

One is that God cares about our physical bodies. Don't fall into the false belief that our bodies are evil or sinful. God created us as whole beings – body, soul, and spirit.

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<sup>1</sup> Resources: Frank Moore, *Coffee Shop Theology* (Beacon Hill Press, 1998); Frank Moore, *More Coffee Shop Theology* (Beacon Hill Press, 1998); Al Truesdale, Ed., *Global Wesleyan Dictionary of Theology* (Beacon Hill Press, 2013); Gay Leonard, *Articles of Faith: What Nazarenes Believe and Why* (Beacon Hill Press, 1995); *Manual: Church of the Nazarene, 2017-2021* (Nazarene Publishing House, Kansas City, MO, 2017); Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology* (Abingdon Press, Nashville, TN, 1994); Keith Schwanz & Joseph Coleson, *Missio Dei: A Wesleyan Understanding* (Beacon Hill Press, 2011); James Emery White, *Rethinking the Church: a challenge to creative redesign in an age of transition* (Baker Books, 2003); Morris Pelzel, *Ecclesiology: The Church as Communion and Mission* (Loyola Press, 2002)

<sup>2</sup> See notes at the end of the manuscript for Church of the Nazarene articles of faith 14

God created our bodies along with the rest of creation and called it good. And what God created, God cares about. So we also believe that God is concerned about the things that cause us pain and mess up our lives.

We also believe that God hurts over what makes us hurt, no matter what it is. God is moved to compassion and mercy out of his love for us, and will answer prayers on behalf of one another and ourselves. He is a God who acts, intimately engaged in the world and human affairs.

In the Old Testament, when God delivered the Israelites out of slavery to the Egyptians, he began to reveal more of himself and his character to them, and continued throughout the Old Testament, revealing his character by using different self-descriptors, or names for himself. For instance, he called himself “YHWH-Rophe,” which is Hebrew for, “God, the I AM who heals you.” Here’s where he said that:

“If you listen carefully to the Lord your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord, who heals you.” (Exodus 15:26, niv)

He is the God who heals you!

Continuing into the New Testament, one of the convincing proofs of Jesus being the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of God, was how he healed people:

“On the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”” (Luke 4:16-21, niv)

And as you read the Gospels, healing is exactly what Jesus did, time and again. Healing is what it means for Jesus to be the Christ. Let me ask you, do you think Jesus *stopped* doing that? Of course not! He is still Christ! God the Father loves us, and is ready to work on our behalf.

So in just a few minutes, we are going to have a prayer of anointing and healing for anyone who wants to be prayed for. But before we do, let me just clarify a few things for us this morning.

There are some people who believe it shows a lack of faith if you pray for healing and then go to the doctor; that if you really had faith, you wouldn’t need to go to the doctor.

That defies belief and it defies common sense. We believe that...

## **1. All healing comes from God**

All healing, no matter how it comes, originates from the God who heals. In the book of James we are reminded:

“Every good gift, every perfect gift, comes from above. These gifts come down from the Father, the creator of the heavenly lights, in whose character there is no change at all.” (James 1:17, ceb)

God is the source of all good in our lives, and is the source of all healing. God is free to be “miraculous” when he chooses to, but God also works through what some might say is the “unmiraculous” medical science. Not all of God’s works need to be categorized as miracles, but that doesn’t change the fact that God is behind all healing. God gives skills and knowledge to doctors and nurses, he gives people the creative ability to develop new technologies that diagnose, treat, and medicate healing for us.

So no matter what the diagnosis, no matter what the circumstance, no matter what we need to be healed of...

## **2. We ought always to pray**

As you know, Jesus taught in parables, and in Luke 18 he taught a parable on prayer, about a widow who relentlessly went to a judge to get help. But what’s interesting is the phrase at the beginning of that parable:

“Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.” (Luke 18:1, niv)

Very clearly, Jesus expects us to pray. Because we believe God loves us, and because we believe he is the source of all healing, we ought to always pray, no matter what.

James again tells us:

“Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.” (James 5:13-16, niv)

There is never a good time not to pray! My friends, we ought always to pray!

And we are going to do that together today in a few minutes.

But there’s still one unanswered question; there’s an elephant in this room! The question is, what do we do when it seems that God is not answering our prayer?

What happens when we come forward, get prayed for, but it seems that our prayer isn't answered?

Well keep in mind first that...

### **3. God always answers**

God always answers the prayers of his people. But know, too, that the answer may not be what we are asking for. Faith in God means that we trust him – no matter what; even if the answer is not what we asked for, or even if the answer doesn't seem to come at all.

So let me give you some quick advice about God's answers to prayer.

First...

#### **- If the request is wrong, the answer is no**

There can be all kinds of reasons that the request is wrong. It could be that we are not asking "in Jesus' name." That is not some magical phrase. Jesus told us to pray that way in John 14:14:

"You may ask me for anything in my name and I will do it." (John 14:14, nlt)

Asking in Jesus' name means that our request is according to his character and his nature. So it could be that we're asking from the wrong motives. While it's always best to pray, submit yourself to God no matter what, including being willing to allow him to answer in a way that is beyond what we ask, but still best for you.

Again, James says:

"You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you don't receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures." (James 4:2-3, niv)

James points out another principal in prayer:

#### **- If you are wrong, the answer is grow**

It could be that you are asking from wrong motives, as James said. Or it could be that you are not ready for the answer that you are asking for. In either case, God will want you to grow, which is the more important answer. God wants you to be Christ-like in all things, and if in your particular request you are not entirely Christ-like, or you need to become more so. Then when he's not giving you what you ask, there is always room for growth.

And keep in mind what the Psalmist said:

"If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened."  
(Psalm 66:18, niv)

So it will be important to make sure your heart and conscience are clear when you come pray. That's why James said what we saw earlier:

“And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.”  
(James 5:15-16, niv)

Perhaps you need to grow to be more mature to handle the answer you ask for, or you need to grow out of your sin.

But there is another reason that you may not get the answer you are asking for:

### **- If the timing is wrong, the answer is slow**

The Bible talks a great deal about waiting; it seems to do a lot of good for us. Isaiah said:

“But those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.” (Isaiah 40:31, niv)

If we do not get the answer we are looking for, it very well could be that the timing isn't right, and the best thing we can do is simply be patient and trust the Lord that the answer will come at the right time.

The writer of Psalm 27 reminds us:

“Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.”  
(Psalm 27:14, niv)

There is strength in waiting.

If you are praying for healing, there is good reason – you are struggling, you might be in pain, and your life feels diminished or hindered in some way. But if God knows the timing isn't best, you'll need to follow the Apostle Paul's counsel from Scripture:

“Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.” (Romans 12:12, niv)

If you can do this, you will realize the last principal to seemingly unanswered prayer:

### **- If weak, God is strong, so grace can flow**

The Apostle Paul had great advice for us in this as well. Paul talked about some sort of significant ailment that he was dealing with that was so bad that, to him, it was like a massive “thorn in the flesh.” Imagine a thorn from a rose that is always stuck in your skin; it gets painful, irritated, possibly infected, and every time you hit it, it causes even more pain. Now imagine that thorn is the size of an axe head! Although we don't really know what it was, that is what Paul described it felt like.

Nevertheless, Paul prayed and prayed and prayed that God would remove it from him, but to no avail. This is what Paul said:

“Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away. Each time he said, “My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.” So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me.” (2 Corinthians 12:8-9, niv)

When you are praying for healing, and the answer doesn't seem to come, and you are feeling weak, remember that God is strong. He will work in you in ways that will perfect your faith, expand God's strength in you, increase his grace to you, and allow him to work powerfully *through* you to the lives of others around you.

If healing comes to you, people can praise God *through* you. If healing doesn't come, people can see God at work *in* you. Either way, that's not a bad thing, is it? Wouldn't it be worth it if others come to Christ through you, either way? After all, it's only pain and all pain is temporary.

*My story, my pain.*

So finally, let me just remind you: Healing always comes to Christians. Always. If not here, it will come when Christ comes back, or when we pass from this life. Either way, pain is only temporary. God always, always, answers the believer's prayer for healing – if not here, then without a doubt, there at heaven.

**13.** We believe in the biblical doctrine of divine healing and urge our people to offer the prayer of faith for the healing of the sick. We also believe God heals through the means of medical science.

(2 Kings 5:1-19; Psalm 103:1-5; Matthew 4:23-24; 9:18-35; John 4:46-54; Acts 5:12-16; 9:32-42; 14:8-15; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 2 Corinthians 12:7-10; James 5:13-16)