**Bible Study Sept.14th 2023 – The Gifts of the Holy Spirit part 10 – gifts of healing**

Read **1 Cor. 12.4-11**Last week we looked at the gift of Faith - the first of three gifts of power.
One of the things that I mentioned last week was that some people may have faith in one particular area but not in others. For example, Smith Wigglesworth had great faith when it came to praying for the sick but he was aware of his own limitations when it came to believing God for provision. For some people the gift of faith may be for provision (as with Rees Howells and George Muller) for others it may be for protection (as with Jesus in the storm, Daniel in the lions’ den and the missionaries in the Congo) and for others it may be to remove the mountain of a demon that is causing an illness.

June Simcox made a very interesting observation regarding this:
“I never thought about people having the gift of faith for financial provision but not for healing and vice versa but I remember reading about George Muller’s baby boy, Elijah. When he was seriously ill, Mr. Muller apparently had no sense of faith for the baby’s healing. He therefore prayed only that, if he were to die, the end would come quickly with minimal suffering, and that his wife Mary would be given strength to bear the loss. Both these prayers God answered.”

This evening were are going to look at gifts of healing. In the Old Testament there were many amazing miracles but only a few of them were healing miracles. Naaman was healed of leprosy when he dipped himself in the Jordan in obedience to the word of Elisha (2 Kings 5.14). Hezekiah was healed after having a cake of figs placed on the boil and he lived another 15 years (2 Kings 20.1-7). David was healed when he cried to the Lord (Psalm 30.2) and he blessed the Lord “who heals all your diseases” (Psalm 103.3)

There were also four incidents of healings which took place after God had first caused the sickness: In Genesis 20.17 God healed Abimelech and also his wife and female slaves in answer to Abraham’s prayer (God had made them sick because Abimelech had taken Abraham’s wife, Sarah, to be his wife). In Numbers 21.9 there were people who were healed from snake bites when they looked in faith at the bronze serpent on a pole that Moses made but it was God who had sent the snakes to bite the people (v6). Miriam became leprous after she had spoken against Moses but Moses cried to the Lord to heal her (Numbers 12.1-15) and there was also the time when the Syrians, who had been blinded at the word of Elisha had their eyes opened again at the word of Elisha (2 Kings 18-20).

So, miraculous healings were quite rare in the Old Testament; in fact, there are more instances in the Old Testament of God afflicting people with various sicknesses than there are of people being healed. For example: the plague of boils and sores on the Egyptians (Exodus 9.8-10), 14,700 Israelites who died of a plague because they murmured against Moses (Numbers 16.41-49), 70,000 died from a pestilence sent by God because David had numbered the people of Israel (1 Chron. 21.1-14), King Uzziah who God struck with leprosy (2 Chron. 26.16-21), King Jeroboam whose hand withered (1 Kings 13.1-6), King Nebuchadnezzar who was afflicted with mental illness until he acknowledged God’s sovereignty (Dan. 4.28-37).

In view of the fact that in the Old Testament there were very few healing miracles, it makes the healing ministry of Jesus even more remarkable. The Gospels record seven “non-healing/resurrection/exorcism” miracles: water into wine, feeding the 5,000, feeding the 4,000, walking on water, calming the storm, coin in the fish’s mouth and cursing the fig tree. However, the Gospels are full of accounts of people who Jesus healed as well as general statements about His healing ministry (**Matthew 4.23-24; 12.15; 15.29-31; 19.2**). During Jesus’ ministry He must have healed thousands of people!

Jesus didn’t have one set way of healing people. For example, we are told about five occasions when Jesus healed someone from blindness and each time He did it in a different way:
**Matthew 9.27-31** – two blind men - Jesus asks if they believe that He is able to heal them and when they say “Yes Lord” He touches their eyes.
**Matthew 12.22 – 24** – a blind and dumb demoniac – Jesus casts the demon out
**Mark 8.22-26** – the blind man at Bethsaida – Jesus led him out of the village, spat on his eyes and laid hands on him. He was then able to see but not clearly so Jesus laid His hands upon his eyes.
**Mark 10.46-52** – Blind Bartimaeus – Jesus asked Bartimaeus what he wanted Him to do for him. Bartimaeus said “Master let me receive my sight” and Jesus said “Go your way; your faith has made you well.”
**John 9.1-7** – the man born blind – Jesus spat on the ground, made clay and put it on the man’s eyes. He then told him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam.

Not only was healing an important part of Jesus’ ministry but when He sent out His disciples it was not only to preach but He said “Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons.” (**Matthew 10.8**) and in **Mark 16.15-18** after His resurrection Jesus told His disciples to “Go into all the world and preach the Gospel…and these signs will accompany those who believe…they will lay hands on the sick and they will recover.”

Again, there is not only one way of healing the sick for Jesus’ disciples . From **Mark 16.18** it would seem that the normal way of healing the sick when preaching the Gospel is through the laying on of hands. However, **Mark 6.13** tells us that when the twelve were sent out to preach they “anointed with oil many that were sick and healed them” and **James 5.14-16** speaks about if a Christian brother who is seriously ill calling for the elders, who go to his house and anoint with oil and pray over him.
There were also extraordinary healing miracles that took place as Peter’s shadow fell on the sick (**Acts 5.15-16)** and handkerchiefs were taken from Paul’s body to the sick (**Acts 19.11-12**).

As with the other spiritual gifts, healing is a supernatural gift given by the Holy Spirit and this gift, like the others, is not just for Bible times but for today. It is a gift that may be used for the benefit of other believers who are sick but this gift can also be a sign to confirm the preaching of the Gospel by apostles and evangelists. We’ll have a look in future weeks at those two different uses of this gift but we are going to conclude this evening with two examples of people in recent history to show that this gift did not cease with the Apostles but is for today.

Smith Wigglesworth was a plumber from Bradford who was baptised in the Holy Spirit in 1907 when he attended a meeting led by William J Seymour (from the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles).
His world-wide ministry was characterised by miraculous healings including deafness, blindness, paralysis and even raising the dead.
Wherever he went people were saved, filled with the Holy Spirit and healed and he became known as “the apostle of faith”.
Read “Smith Wigglesworth, apostle of faith” by Stanley Howard Frodsham, p.40-41 about a crippled man who was healed and hundreds of others who were healed in Sweden.

John Leese to speak about Douglas Scott. 