

## Jesus the Healer

### REFLECTION THOUGHT

Not where do I want to be healed, but rather ask God where does He want to heal me, where do I need to surrender more to the Lord.

#### There Is a Longing

**Chorus:** There is a longing in our hearts, o Lord for you to reveal yourself to us.

There is a longing in our hearts for love we only find in you, our God.

1. For justice, for freedom, for mercy, hear our prayer. In sorrow, in grief, be near, hear our prayer, o God.

**Chorus:**

2. For wisdom, for courage, for comfort, hear our prayer. In weakness, in fear, be near, hear our prayer, o God.

**Chorus:**

3. For healing, for wholeness, for new life, hear our prayer. In sickness, in death, be near, hear our prayer, o God.

**Chorus:**

4. Lord, save us, take pity, light in our darkness. We call you, we wait. Be near, hear our prayer, o God.

**Chorus:**

### Messiah as Healer in the Old Testament

*“The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; He has sent me to bring good news to the afflicted, to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, release to the prisoners, To announce a year of favor from the LORD and a day of vindication by our God; To comfort all who mourn; to place on those who mourn in Zion a diadem instead of ashes, To give them oil of gladness instead of mourning, a glorious mantle instead of a faint spirit.”* (Isaiah 61:1-3)

The prophet proclaims that he has been anointed by the Lord to bring good news (Isaiah 40:9) to the afflicted and to comfort Zion. In the Gospel of Luke (4:18-19) just after Christ’s Temptation in the desert, Jesus stands up in the Synagogue in Nazareth cites this passage. This becomes the blueprint of His Public Ministry.

Three other passages in the Old Testament paint a similar portrait of the Messiah as the one who encourages, releases, restores and ushers in *“a year of favor”*, a time to forgive debts and to rest in the Lord. They broaden the portrait by including physical healings.

*“On that day the deaf shall hear the words of a scroll; And out of gloom and darkness, the eyes of the blind shall see. The lowly shall again find joy in the LORD, the poorest rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.”* (Isaiah 29:18-19)

*“Strengthen hands that are feeble, make firm knees that are weak, Say to the fearful of heart: Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God, he comes with vindication; With divine recompense he comes to save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall see, and the ears of the deaf be opened; Then the lame shall leap like a stag, and the mute tongue sing for joy.”* (Isaiah 35:3-6)

*“Who keeps faith forever, secures justice for the oppressed, who gives bread to the hungry. The LORD sets prisoners free; the LORD gives sight to the blind.*

*The LORD raises up those who are bowed down; the LORD loves the righteous.”* (Psalm 146:6-8)

In Matthew, Jesus’ response to the query by the disciples of John the Baptist if Jesus is the one draws from this broad depiction of the healing Messiah. *“Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the good news proclaimed to them. And blessed is the one who takes no offense at me.”* (Matthew 11:4-6)

## Modern Approach to Miracles versus the Biblical Approach

The modern approach to miracles would describe them as breaking the natural laws of nature that God made. They are extraordinary. Some people try various ways to explain them away as some sort of fiction, a fable. As believers, we experience a miracle everything the Mass is celebrated when bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ.

The Biblical Approach would view them as *“mighty deeds, wonders, and signs, which God worked”* (Acts 2:22). The God who created the earth had renewed the earth through His healing actions, wonders, miracles. The God who liberated the Israelites from the Egyptians in the Exodus now frees His people through wondrous signs, miracles. They are one of the ways that God interacts with His people.

The Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) used the Greek word *“dynamis”* “act of power” to describe Jesus’ miracles. For wonders Jesus did, John used two Greek words *“erga”* translated as *“works”* and *“sēmeion”* as *“signs”*. *“A large crowd followed him, because they saw the signs he was performing on the sick.”* (John 6:2). For all the Gospels, the healing works done by Jesus flowed from God’s primal creative and redeeming actions.

## Need for Humility in Healing

The Pharisees raised an objection to Jesus’ disciples that Jesus was eating with tax collectors and sinners, the unclean outcasts. *“Jesus heard this and said, ‘Those who are well do not need a physician, but the sick do. Go and learn the meaning of the words, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ I did not come to call the righteous but sinners.’”* (Matthew 9:12-13; Hosea 6:6) This maxim of Jesus with its implied irony was uttered to silence his adversaries who objected that he ate with tax collectors and sinners.

What underlies this passage of scripture is that the humble would know and accept their weaknesses. They would know that they needed the divine Physician. They would be more open to His healing touch.

On the other hand, pride blinded the arrogant, like the Pharisees, from seeing where they needed to be healed. Because the Pharisees were self-righteous that is they thought they were morally superior to others with a holier-than-thou attitude, they were not capable of responding to Jesus’ call to repentance and faith in the Gospel. God still works with those who are smug, but it might take time for them to realize that and change their lives. Think of Saul, he spent a few years persecuting the Church. During his conversion (Acts 9:1-9) he became aware of who he was persecuting, Jesus. He repented, believed and became Paul the Apostle.

## Healing Was an Essential Element in Jesus’ Ministry

Healing was essential to the ministry of Jesus as an expression of His love for us. Jesus’ entire ministry was directed toward restoring human beings to proper relationship with God. *“When he disembarked and saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity for them, and he cured their sick.”*

(Matthew 14:14)

Healing also showed His success in the spiritual warfare between Himself and Satan. He had to dismantle the apparatus of illness, disease, and demon-possession by which Satan exercised control over creation.

*“The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work. . .”* (1John 3:8).

*“When it was evening, they brought him many who were possessed by demons, and he drove out the spirits by a word and cured all the sick, to fulfill what had been said by Isaiah the prophet: ‘He took away our infirmities and bore our diseases.’”* (Matthew 8:16-17 Isaiah 53:4)

In other words, healing showed that God reigns. Evil forces cannot conquer or destroy His reign. *“But if it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.”*

(Matthew 12:28)

Healing further provided evidence that He is the Messiah, the Son of God *“Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of [his] disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written that*

*you may [come to] believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name.*" (John 21:30-31).

Most of those that Jesus healed went forth to share how Jesus healed them. They evangelized. Others came to believe in Jesus through them.

He would not heal to show off. Thus, when the Pharisees wanted to see a miraculous sign (Matthew 12:38), He instead figuratively preached His death and resurrection. During His second visit to Nazareth, He performed but a few miracles because the people doubted Him (Mark 6:5). He turned a cold eye on Herod's hope for a miracle (Luke 23:9).

## **Jesus healing in the Synoptic Gospels**

There are twenty-two stories of healing recorded in the synoptic Gospels. Fifteen of these healing accounts told stories of Jesus' ministry to the marginalized. The majority of the healing narratives addressed issues that transcend physical aspects. They pointed to Jesus' attempt to restore the whole person and not focus on a single dimension of healing. He healed demon-possessed persons, beggars, lepers, women suffering from incurable diseases, and those who were racially discriminated against by the Jews.

Other healing narratives dealt with the understanding of faith. Healings for Jesus became a call to have faith and life in Him or a way to deepen and strengthen one's faith. For some, faith or belief in Jesus came gradually as evident in the cure of the blind man in Mark 8:22-26. The blind man initially saw only stick figures for there was more blindness to be cured. Gradually, his sight returned fully. On the other hand, in Mark 10:46-52, the blind man was cured instantaneously. *"Go your way; your faith has saved you."* *Immediately he received his sight and followed him on the way (to Jerusalem).*" (Mark 10:52) When Jesus walked on water in Matthew 14:22-33, Jesus chided Peter for having *"little faith"* when he began to sink to doubt.

Some healing narratives focused on what is important on the Sabbath care and concern for others rather than mere obligation. Jesus cured the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath much to the chagrin of the Pharisees (Mark 3:1-6; Matthew 12:9-14; Luke 6:6-11). *"Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath rather than to do evil, to save life rather than to destroy it?"* (Mark 3:4)

It is important to note that in Jesus' healings death was not excluded. His healing ministry consisted of not only the sick, but also those who were dead. In His resurrection, he overcame death itself, the ultimate affront to humanity. He raised Peter's mother-in-law (Mark 1:29-34; Luke 4:38-39; Matthew 8:14-15), Jairus' daughter (Luke 8:49-56), the widow of Nain's son (Luke 7:11-17), and Lazarus (John 11:38-44). The miracle of the large catch of fish in Luke 5:1-11 became a call to be evangelizing disciples who would bring many people to believe and follow Jesus.

## **Three Aspects of Jesus' Ministry to the Sick and Dying**

### *Value of Touch*

First, Jesus recognized the need for touch as part of caring for and healing the vulnerable sick. Jesus touched those who were sick both physically and spiritually. He touched the leper (Mark 1:41), laid hands on the blind man (Mark 8:22), and took the hand of the daughter of Jairus (Luke 8:54).

### *Welcoming the Outcasts back into the Community*

Second, Jesus brought *"outcasts"* back into the community through His healing word and touch. Recall the healing of the ten lepers (Luke 17:11-19), they were the unclean outcasts, just outside the village. Rather than the lepers warning Jesus to stay away because of their affliction, they sought healing from Jesus, *"Jesus, Master! Have pity on us!"* He healed them so they could be once again part of the community. Only one returned to praise and thank God, a Samaritan. He carried a double burden that of being a leper and that of a hated enemy, an impure heretic for the Jews. His extreme isolation helped him see who Jesus

was. He became a disciple. Jesus said to him, *“Stand up and go; your faith has saved you.”* In other words, the leper gratefully submitted, surrendered to Christ. He was raised (stood up) anew as a believer. In the Healing of the Gerasene Demoniac (Mark 5:1–20; Matthew 8:28–34; Luke 8:26–39), the Demoniac lived among the tombs away from others because of his behavior. Jesus cured him. Jesus sent him back to the community to proclaim that Jesus had power over evil.

### *Need for Spiritual Healing*

Jesus reaffirmed the need for spiritual healing. The paralytic lowered through the roof was first healed of his sins (Mark 2:5). The man by the pool at Bethesda was warned, *“Give up your sins so that something worse may not overtake you”* (John 5:24).

## **Jesus healing in John**

The seven signs in John can be divided into two groups: life-giving works and meaning-restoring works. Life-giving works include restoring to life the son of a royal official in Capernaum (4:46–54), feeding the huge crowd (6:1–14), and raising Lazarus from the dead (11:1–44). In these signs, Jesus brought life, not only our mortal life, but also life eternal that began now. For John, eternal life began as soon as we attach ourselves in total trust to Jesus and to his Way.

Meaning-restoring works included providing exquisite wine for a wedding at the height of its celebration (2:1–11), restoring a lame man to mobility (5:1–18), calming a stormy sea (6:16–21), and restoring sight to the man born blind (9:1–41).

The wedding feast at Cana coupled with the cleansing of the Temple (2:13–22) pointed to Jesus ushering in a new healing age, beginning a new redemptive order. For the healing of the lame man in John, Jesus continued the work of the Father even on the Sabbath (John 5:17), much to the ire of the Jewish authorities. In the calming of the sea, Jesus restored order and harmony to nature and calmed the sea. Only God can control the natural world. For the man born blind, healing became holistic incorporating the physical with the spiritual. In the physical realm, Jesus tried to dispel the notion that sin directly causes physical ailments. *“There is no health in my bones because of my sin.”* (Psalm 38:4) *“Some fell sick from their wicked ways, afflicted because of their sins. In their distress, they cried to the LORD, who saved them in their peril, sent forth his word to heal them.”* (Psalm 107:17, 19–20) The diseased were thought of as unclean, punished by God and cut off from God's holy people. *“His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “Neither he nor his parents sinned; it is so that the works of God might be made visible through him.”*

(John 9:2–3) Spiritually speaking, the blindness of the heart healed gradually for this man. This spiritual healing began at his first retelling with his neighbors of how he could physically see. He claimed *“the man”* Jesus cured him (John 9:11). When brought before the Pharisees, he stated that Jesus was *“a prophet”* (John 9:17). The fullness of his spiritual healing came upon seeing Jesus again. He professed his belief and worshiped Jesus (John 9:36–38).

## **HEALING SERVICE**

### **Thanksgiving**

Heavenly Father, we thank you for sending Your Son Jesus into the world to heal us and to destroy the works of the devil. Lord Jesus Christ, we thank you for all the healing you have done and continue to do in our lives. Opening our eyes to see where we need to be healed. Open our eyes to see the ways the devil has been influencing our lives. Holy Spirit, we thank you for healing and freeing us to live under the lordship of Jesus our Savior. Holy Spirit, we thank you for the outpouring of your love as you heal us. We praise you Holy Trinity for your victory this day in our lives. Help us to surrender ourselves more to you. We pray all of this through Christ our Lord. Amen

### **Litany of Trust by Sr. Faustina Maria Pia**

From the belief that I have to earn Your love  
From the fear that I am unlovable

**Deliver me, Jesus.**  
**Deliver me, Jesus.**

From the false security that I have what it takes  
From the fear that trusting You will leave me more destitute  
From all suspicion of Your words and promises  
From the rebellion against childlike dependency on You  
From refusals and reluctances in accepting Your will  
From anxiety about the future  
From resentment or excessive preoccupation with the past  
From restless self-seeking in the present moment  
From disbelief in Your love and presence  
From the fear of being asked to give more than I have  
From the belief that my life has no meaning or worth  
From the fear of what love demands  
From discouragement

Deliver me, Jesus.  
Deliver me, Jesus.

That You are continually holding me, sustaining me, loving me  
That Your love goes deeper than my sins and failings, and transforms me  
That not knowing what tomorrow brings is an invitation to lean on You  
That you are with me in my suffering  
That my suffering, united to Your own, will bear fruit in this life and the next  
That You will not leave me orphan, that You are present in Your Church  
That Your plan is better than anything else  
That You always hear me and in Your goodness always respond to me  
That You give me the grace to accept forgiveness and to forgive others  
That You give me all the strength I need for what is asked  
That my life is a gift  
That You will teach me to trust You  
That You are my Lord and my God  
That I am Your beloved one  
Amen.

Jesus, I trust in you.  
Jesus, I trust in you.

### Renunciation

Pause now to think of areas where Satan may have a hold over you. Look over this partial list: **pride, anger, envy, fear, lust, doubt, self-righteousness, abandonment, depression, marital infidelity, slander, impurity, gossip, judgment, prejudice, control, self-sufficiency, disunity, occult practices, insecurity, hatred, addiction such as with alcohol, drugs, gambling, pornography, etc.**

**All:** I renounce Satan and all his works, and all of his empty promises, in the name of Jesus. I renounce a spirit of **[Silently insert an area in your life that the devil has control over you]** in the name of Jesus.

### Forgiveness

Pause now to think of those we need to forgive and where we need forgiveness

**Father:** Forgiveness brings healing, not only to the body, but also to broken communities.

**All:** Lord, make us ambassadors of reconciliation.

**Father:** Forgiveness brings those who are cut off by sin back into communities of healing.

**All:** Lord, make us ambassadors of reconciliation.

**Father:** Forgiveness brings us to examine and release our debts and debtors.

**All:** Lord, make us ambassadors of reconciliation.

**Reader #2:** Forgiveness brings us wholeness by breaking down the walls that divide us.

**All:** Lord, make us ambassadors of reconciliation.

Father, I choose to forgive [INSERT NAME HERE] I lay down my judgment at your cross. Lord Jesus, I give [INSERT NAME HERE] a free gift of forgiveness. I forgive them just as you forgave me. I choose to live in the freedom Jesus has given me. Thank you, Father, for your mercy. Amen.

## FYI

### Origin of the Word Miracle

The English word for miracle comes from the Latin *“miraculum”*. It means *“something to be wondered or marveled at”*. This Latin word is not used in the New Testament of the Vulgate, the Latin translation of the Bible. Only six times in the Old Testament does the Vulgate use that word to describe a symbolic act and sign.

### Five Keys to Freedom

**Five Keys to Freedom** are found in **Unbound** by Neal Lozano

**First Key: There is a need for repentance and faith.** Repentance and faith is a change of mind that results in a changed life. Jesus said, *“The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!”* (Mark 1:15). Repentance involves turning from sin by expressing sorrow, asking for God’s forgiveness, and surrendering to His mercy and His reign. This is an ongoing process of changing our mind and heart. Faith is expressing confidence in God and His Word. Repentance and faith enables you to enter a new way of life in God’s kingdom.

**Second Key: We need to forgive.** Freedom is found in forgiveness. If you want to be like Jesus, you need to forgive others from the heart. The cross of Jesus reveals to us the greatness of God’s love: *“God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”* (Romans 5:8). The power of the cross is the power of God’s forgiveness. You can receive the fullness of God’s forgiveness when you allow it to flow through you to others. Unforgiveness leaves us open to Satan. When you forgive by faith, the chains of resentment and bitterness can no longer hold you.

*“Forgiveness heals us by allowing us to set down old pain and helps us to open to love. In order to be free, we have to forgive. Forgiveness frees us from indictments, recriminations, and judgments that cause so much suffering. The refusal to forgive is a way we resist life. Forgiveness allows us to let go of the pain not by sugarcoating it but by allowing our experience to come forward so that we can touch our pain with mercy. We do not have to let old hurts to define who we are in the here and now. Forgiveness has the power to overcome what divides us. Forgiveness melts the armor of fear and resentment around our hearts that keeps us separate from others, from ourselves and from life itself. Forgiveness is often a long difficult process. Usually, people are waylaid by the circumstances surrounding the wound, the relationship with the perpetrator, a lack of motivation or simply the passage of time. Forgiveness takes real strength, a willingness to be with what is difficult. It requires absolute honesty. We must see things as they are, bearing witness to painful acts that happened to us or the harm we may have done to others. It can be difficult to mercifully move toward our own or another’s ugliness. The beauty of forgiveness is how the investigation of our feelings of disconnection, fear and bitterness allow us to feel these painful emotions with kindness and to rediscover our common humanity. We all have darkness within us and we all have the capacity to forgive.”* **THE FIVE INVITATIONS** by Frank Ostaseski

**Third Key: We have to renounce Satan.** Renunciation is like saying, *“I’m done with that!”* I renounce this sin. I rather be a son or daughter of God. Renunciation means you are taking your life back, and you make no place for sin, deception, or the power of darkness. Paul wrote, *“We have renounced secret and shameful ways, we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God”* (2Corinthians 4:2). Many Christians begin renewing the vows of their baptism by saying, *“I renounce Satan and all his works and all his empty promises.”* Renunciation is a declaration that you no longer agree with the lies that have been buried in your heart. When you specifically renounce our enemies and their deceptions in the name of Jesus, you gain victory over them.

**Fourth Key: Take authority through Jesus.** Every child of God carries the authority of the Father in the name of Jesus. In Luke 1:71, we learn that in Christ, you have “*salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us.*” You do have enemies that have sought to rob you of your freedom. In the authority of Jesus, you can take our stand against them through repentance, forgiveness, and renunciation. Declare victory by saying, “*In the name of Jesus Christ, I command every spirit that (your name) has renounced to leave me right now.*” The command is an expression of faith that the enemy’s power has been broken in our lives.

**Fifth Key: Be open to the Father’s Blessings.** Feel God’s love. God wants to speak into our lives and reveal that He is our Father. He wants to affirm our identity, purpose and destiny. You need to be blessed to succeed in life. Blessing is the bread we need for our life’s journey. Blessing means speaking words that empower someone to prosper and thrive. They are words that give life and peace. Words carry spiritual power. Every blessing that the Father spoke to Jesus now belongs to you. The Father reveals to us who we are as we come before him in the Son. What you have longed to hear all of your life has already been spoken by the Father. As you receive His blessing, you will be healed. We are truly free when the obstacles to God’s love have been removed and the Father’s love and affirmation are made real to us in Christ.