

Healing and Tongues

by Kenneth Wuest

The sermon discusses the topics of divine healing, speaking in tongues, and the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts, highlighting their significance and purpose in the early Christian church.

Duration: 45:48

Scripture: Isaiah 28:11-12, Matthew 11:2, Acts 2:38

Topics: "Divine Healing", "Holy Spirit"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses three topics: divine healing, speaking in tongues, and the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts. The first point focuses on an example of divine healing found in Acts chapter 3, where Peter and John encounter a man who had been crippled since birth. The preacher explains that the elders of the church were called in to pray for this person because his illness was a result of God's disciplinary action due to sin in his life. The second topic explores the concept of speaking in tongues, referencing Isaiah 28 and 1 Corinthians, which suggest that when Israel is disobedient, God may use a language unfamiliar to them as a means of dealing with them. The final topic discusses the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the early church, emphasizing the idea of believers being controlled by the Holy Spirit in their daily lives. This is supported by references to Acts chapter 4 and 6, where it is mentioned that the believers were controlled by the Holy Spirit during prayer and in their actions.

Transcript

Our subject is threefold, divine healing, speaking in tongues, and the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts. First of all, we take up divine healing, and the first point in our message is an example of divine healing, and we find it in Acts chapter 3. We read, Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour. And a certain man, laying from his mother's womb, was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple, which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of men that entered into the temple.

Who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked for alms. And Peter fastened his eyes upon them, when John said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them.

Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have, give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.

And he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered with them into the temple, walking and leaping and praising God. There's the example in Acts here that we chose of divine healing. Its definition now is this.

Namely, the healing was done by a person to whom was given the power to do that healing. That's divine healing. Without use of means, and through an individual whom God has equipped to do the healing.

Now our second point is this. The purpose of divine healing. And we go to Matthew, and we read in chapter 11 this, in verse 2, Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? That is, John says, Are you the Messiah, or do we look for Messiah? Jesus didn't answer yes or no.

Why? John wouldn't have accepted it. What did Jesus answer? Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see. The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear.

What did Jesus answer? Namely, go and show John again the miracles I performed, which miracles were for the purpose of proving that my claims to Messiahship and my message were from God. Therefore, the purpose of divine healing in the first century was to attest the divine source of a message which the person gave who performed the miracle. Now, most of the miracles our Lord and his apostles performed were based on the healing covenant God made with Israel, which miracles Israel was therefore taught.

And we read in Exodus 15-26, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, Now comes the healing covenant. For I am the Lord that healeth thee. And when I turn to Psalm 103, And we bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all the sin of this, who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases, They were part of the healing covenant which God gave Israel.

Now, the reason why God gave the healing covenant to Israel was because Israel was to be the channel through which God would work to bring salvation to the human race. And he needed a healthy nation. So the healing covenant was never made with the Gentiles.

And we're going to look at a passage that shows that the healing covenant was not made with the Gentiles. And we turn to Matthew chapter 15, verses 21-28. And we read, Then Jesus went thence, and departed unto the coast of Tyre and Sidon.

And behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coast and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David! My daughter is grievously vexed with a demon. Here was a Gentile, accosting our Lord as Son of David, appealing upon the basis of his Messiahship for healing for his demonized daughter. She, a Gentile, was recognizing him as Messiah, and upon that basis claimed healing for her daughter.

But he answered her another word. And the disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away, for she cries after us. And he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost seed of the house of Israel.

In effect, the Lord Jesus says this to the disciples, Don't you remember the healing covenant God made with Israel? That covenant was only for the Jews, and for the reason that they were the channel through which God was to work to bring famine and need to be kept healthy. Now, this Gentile woman has accosted me as Messiah, and upon the basis of Messiahship has claimed healing for her daughter. I can't do it.

I was sent only to Israel, and the healing covenant was only for the Jews. Then, Matthew says, she came and worshiped him, saying, Lord, help me. And the minute that she recognized Jesus as just a person who could help her, he answered.

He answered and said, It is not meet to take the children of bread and cast it to the dogs. Now, let's be careful to notice that Jesus did not call this woman a dog. The Gentiles called the Jews dogs, and the Jews called the Gentiles dogs.

The Greek word means a little dog, and Jesus was referring to the little pet puppies that the children had. And so he said, It isn't fitting to take the children's bread and throw it to the little pets underneath the table. And she said, Truth, Lord, yet the little pets eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table.

Then Jesus answered and said, And to all women great is thy faith. Be unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

That is enough to show us that the healing covenant, divine healing, was never for the Gentiles and was for the Jewish nation. Now, the healing covenant was an operation in the early church. And we turn to James chapter 5. James chapter 5. And we read this, if you will, please.

James chapter 5 and verses 14 and 15. He read, If there is any sick among you, let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, reminding him of all. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up.

Now, these verses and the whole official, for instance, must be taken in view of the historical fact. James is generally, I think, conceded to be about the first New Testament book that was written. It was written very early.

And it was written to the Jews. And it was written to the Jews before God set Israel aside as a nation. And we'll read it from this standpoint now.

If there is any sick among you, let him call for the elders of the church. The reason why the elders of the church were brought in is because this illness was the result of God's disciplinary action in the life of a certain saint who had sin in his life. And this sin affected the church.

So the elders were called in. And they were called in to do two things. First, to pray for this person.

And second, to anoint him with oil, and this in the name of the Lord. Now, that Greek word anoint means to massage. And one of the chief Nebidian agents in the first century was oil.

You remember the Samaritan party to the woes of the traveler whom the robbers injured? Wine and oil. Wine for its disinfecting properties. The alcohol would do that.

And oil, olive oil, for the healing properties. All of which means that oil here stands for the medical aid in the first century. And this is with the healing covenant.

And the prayer of faith shall save the sick. Now, this is applicable for this context. We pray often, and we pray as far as we know in place bereavement.

But we don't get well. This has no reference for the day. It's national, it's dispensational.

The prayer of faith shall save the sick when? When that person's sickness is due to the disciplinary action of God, and he confesses his sin and gets rid of it. And then, the prayer of faith shall save the sick. We can't take this statement, the prayer of faith shall save the sick, out of its context, and say, no, Lord, answer prayer, and now you're gone.

That wouldn't be correct interpretation of the Bible, nor civic. This has to do with sickness amongst the Jews. And they have the national covenant of the Bible, and God guaranteed to heal.

Therefore, we have the healing covenant in Israel, and it has nothing to do with the Gentiles, although Jesus Now, God set Israel aside as a nation, back there in Acts, chapter 28, where we have Paul declaring that he's going to the Jews. We'll look at chapter 28 of Acts for a moment, and we'll see what Paul has to say. The Jews he had called to confer with him in Rome, in his imprisonment, rejected the gospel.

And Paul says in verse 28, "...be it known unto you, therefore, descend unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it." Thus, the healing covenant had to do with Israel as a nation. And then, when God set Israel aside as a nation, the healing covenant was also abrogated, which means that the healing covenant is not in effect today. Today, God heals in answer to prayer when it pleases him to heal.

He does not answer prayer for healing. It is not as willed sometimes. Sometimes, in his wise purpose, he allows saints to be ill all their lives, as a method of dealing with them, bringing them closer to himself.

But he does heal in answer to prayer when it pleases him. And he usually uses a medium through which he heals, not directly. God doesn't spring at the miraculous.

When there's medicines at hand, he wants us to use medicines. In the case of a missionary, far from any doctor, in instance it's God. But there is no healing today through individuals.

There is no need for it. The need for it in the first century was to establish Christianity as from God. And the healing miracles were to show Israel, and therefore, since that has now been proved, again, Jesus and his apostles never emphasized or used it as a bait to get people to listen to the gospel.

Indeed, Jesus kept his healing ministry in the background, and often told those whom he healed not to say anything about it. In contrast to many so-called divine healers, and finally, Jesus and his apostles never took money for healing, and thus we dealt with the divine healing matter. The gist of the matter is this, that divine healing was an answer to the divine covenant for the preservation of the nation.

That it had to do with Israel, with the Gentiles. Sometimes through means, sometimes through... That brings us to speaking in tongues. And we have enough... The background for speaking... And we find that speaking in tongues is one of... In dealing with Israel as a disobedient... We read in... Whom shall he teach knowledge? And whom shall he... With stammering lips... Another language will he speak... To this people.

Now that expression, this people... And here we have... When Israel is... Now... One of God's methods in dealing with rebellious sinners was the confusion of tongues... And so... This is the way... That brings us to the speaking in tongues in the New Testament. And we go to the book of Acts... And we have in the book of Acts two kinds of speaking in tongues. Paul in 1 Corinthians says... Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels.

That is there are two kinds of languages, two kinds of tongues. Human languages and languages of angels. At Pentecost we have human languages.

And in chapter two of Acts... We read that these languages are those of... The Parthians and the Enamites and the Mesopotamians and from Judea, Pamphylia, Egypt, Libya, Cyrene, Rome, Crete, the Arabians. These were human understandable languages. The miracle was mainly that these Galilean Jews did not acquire these languages, did not learn them in the power of the Holy Spirit.

And these languages were for the purpose of attesting to the nation. Then we turn to the tongues in the later book of Acts. Pardon me.

And we turn to Acts chapter 10 and verses 44 to 46. It's in the house of Cornelius and the Gentiles are saved and receive the Holy Spirit. We read, while Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. Now how did these Jews know that the Holy Spirit had been given to the Gentiles? Because we read in verse 46, they heard them speak with tongues. Again we have God using tongues, languages foreign to their own, to prove to them a certain thing.

And we want to be careful to note here that this was speaking in tongues was not to prove that any individual received the Holy Spirit, but that a large section of the human race, known as the Gentiles, received the Spirit. In one section of the Christian Church today, sincere believers teach that if a person doesn't speak in tongues, he doesn't have the Holy Spirit. But they mistake this passage here.

This passage does not teach that the speaking in tongues proved that any individual received the Spirit, but that the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, received the Spirit. And that has been proved. Therefore, speaking in tongues does not lead us today to show that the Gentiles had received the Spirit or that anyone had received the Spirit.

Then we turn to Acts chapter 19, where we have a case of Jewish disciples of John the Baptist who were saved before the cross. And in the Old Testament times, the Holy Spirit was not given. And Paul says to them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost, in view of the fact that ye believed? The Greek makes it clear that this is what Paul meant.

Have ye received the Holy Ghost, in view of the fact that you believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard that there be any Holy Ghost. Then it turned out that they had been baptized by John. But when they looked backward to an accomplished salvation at Calvary's cross, Paul laid his hands upon them, and the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spoke in tongues.

Jewish believers now end up speaking in tongues, which was for the purpose of showing that they who had received the added benefits, and that speaking in tongues was for the purpose of showing that the Jews there had received the Spirit. Now, we do not have any instance of a person being saved under the Old Testament Satan today, and alive. And therefore, that speaking in tongues is not necessary.

That brings us to the speaking in tongues in 1 Corinthians chapter 14. And we find that there are two purposes of the speaking in tongues there in the early church. And these speaking in tongues, of course, are the tongues of angels.

And we read, We follow after love and desire, spiritual gifts, for rather that ye may prophesy. For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men. Howbeit in the Spirit he speaketh mysteries.

But he that prophesieth, that is, the person in the early church who received the Holy Ghost, but I would he all speak with tongues, for rather that ye prophesy. So one purpose of the speaking in tongues here in the Corinthian church was edification. But let us remember Jewish proselytes that needed to have testimony borne to them regarding the divine source of Christianity.

And then the other purpose of speaking in tongues in the early church was, namely, as an evidence of the divine source. And in the same chapter of 1 Corinthians 14, verses 21 and 22, we read this. In the law it is written, and here is where Paul quotes Isaiah, With men of other tongues in the church, and yet for all that will they not hear me.

Wherefore tongues, and that Greek word sign, means in the testing miracle. A miracle whose purpose is the proof of the person who speaks. And there we have again the statement that the speaking in tongues is for the unbeliever and to the Jewish unbeliever.

Now, Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13 and verse 8, Now Paul doesn't say in that verse what we can use our reason here in the book of Acts, in Acts 20, And deals with the Jew today as he deals with the Gentiles. And setting Israel aside as a nation, he also deals with the Gentiles as a nation. Which means that there is no speaking in tongues.

And for the reason that God has discontinued that message. And for the reason that any speaking in tongues which occurs today comes from God and from demonology. And thus we've dealt with the speaking in tongues.

Briefly, we said that speaking in tongues was a method that Isaiah predicted God would use with the disobedient Israel. It wasn't for the Gentiles. In the second place, it was to attest to the divine source of God.

Never for the Gentiles. And where the speaking in tongues in the book of Acts proves that the Gentiles are what which means that there is no speaking in tongues. So much for divine use and speaking in tongues.

That brings us now to the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts. And we turn first of all to Luke chapter 11. Luke chapter 11 and verse 13.

Where the Lord Jesus speaks to his disciples. He said, if you then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? Now the Lord Jesus was inviting the disciples there to ask that the Holy Spirit be given to the disciples. This was under the age of law.

And the Holy Spirit was not given to a believer under the Mosaic economy as a permanent indweller for sanctification. The Holy Spirit came upon our unbelievers in the Old Testament times. And Jesus invited the disciples for the person of the Holy Spirit to come and indwell them.

And it appears that the disciples did not pray that prayer. And we have the Lord Jesus in John chapter 14 and verse 16 saying this, I will pray the Father and he shall give you another counselor. The implication being you didn't pray, but I will pray.

And Jesus prayed and prayed that the Holy Spirit might come. And he came on the day of Pentecost. And on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit entered into three new aspects of his ministry, none of which was true under the Mosaic dispensation.

On the day of Pentecost, three things took place. The anointing with the Spirit, the baptism by the Spirit, and the firmness of the Spirit. By the anointing with the Spirit, we mean that God the Father, in answer to the prayer of God the Son, sent the Holy Spirit to take up his permanent residence in the heart of the believer for purposes of sanctification.

That took place at Pentecost, where individual believers received the Holy Spirit as a permanent indweller for sanctification. Second, the baptism by the Spirit. The act of God the Holy Spirit placing these individual believers, indwelt by him, into vital union with Jesus Christ, thus creating the body of Christ of which he is the head.

And thus we have the Church of Jesus Christ, the mystical body of Christ, formed at Pentecost. The third is the fullness of the Holy Spirit, or his control over the believer. Now, in the Old Testament times, the Holy Spirit did control believers for a certain period of time for service.

But he did not control them constantly through their lives. There was no process of sanctification. Old Testament believers were regenerated, they had the divine nature, but distinguished between regeneration and the personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

They are two different things. Regeneration is the act of God the Holy Spirit imparting divine life again to the human spirit of the individual, giving him the divine nature. That's one thing.

But to indwell him personally, that's another. Now we have, therefore, the third thing, the constant control, or let's say the control of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life as a process. Those three things happen on the day of Pentecost, and they are true for this age of grace.

Now, we want to take up the matter of the reception of the Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts. The Book of Acts is a transition book. There are things in the Book of Acts that happen in the early church that do not happen today.

For instance, the reception of the Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts, in at least the three cases which we will point out, is different from that which is today. Every time a Jew, a Jew let's say, in the Book of Acts receives the Holy Spirit, it is in an extraordinary, out of the ordinary way. Every time a Gentile receives the Holy Spirit, it's in the ordinary way.

We turn first to Acts chapter 2, and it's at the close of Peter's sermon, and Peter, he says, "...and be baptized, every one of you, because of the..." The Greek has it very clearly. "...the gift of the Holy Ghost, which is repentance, which includes faith, water baptism, and then the reception of the Holy Spirit." This verse has no application. This is dispensational.

"...this earth and space, the Jews and the Jewish nation, has crucified..." "...was accused of crucifying Messiah..." That brings us to the second instance in the Book of Acts, where Philip went to preach to the Samaritans. And the Samaritans, you remember, were half Jewish, and they had the Samaritan tentative, and they had a rival temple at Mount Gereth, and the Samaritans and the Jews had no dealings with one another. Now, some of these Samaritans were saved.

"...and when the apostles," we read, "...which were in Jerusalem heard, who, when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit..." Here we have an instance in this age of grace, where believers were saved. The Holy Spirit was withheld for the reason that had he been given, and they have been given their full... "...so far as this earth is concerned, the split between the Samaritan nation and the Jews might have..." "...and they..." "...the Samaritans, rivaling the Jews..." "...therefore it was necessary..." "...then laid they their hands on them." "...and the laying on of hands and submission." "...and the Holy Spirit was withheld, and they spoke in confidence." Now we come to another instance where the Holy Spirit... That is in Acts chapter 19. We just had it, the Holy Spirit.

Now, we don't have those... That brings us to the place where the Gentiles received the Spirit, and there we read, "...while Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them." This is the normal order for this age of grace. Namely, the immediate reception of the Holy Spirit puts his faith in Jesus Christ. So we've had that matter of the reception of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts.

And that when the Gentiles... It was an immediate reception... One more thing we want to take up, and that is this. As we read the book of Acts, we seem to see in the standard translations what is called a repeated... I want to take you to some passages now and submit to you that they are not repeated fillings of the Holy Spirit. The language there... For instance, we have a certain cup we fill with the Spirit here on one day.

We turn to Acts chapter 2 and verse 4. They were all filled with the Holy Ghost. That is, they were all controlled by the Holy Ghost. And we turn to Acts chapter 4 and verse 8. Then Peter, controlled by the Holy Ghost, said unto them, in verse 31 of the same chapter, When they had prayed, the place was shaken, where they were assembled together, and they were all controlled by the Holy Ghost.

Now they were not controlled by the Holy Ghost because they prayed. How could they pray if they were not controlled by the Holy Ghost? That's a description of the normal condition of the saint in the early church. Controlled moment by moment by the Holy Spirit.

We turn to Acts chapter 6 and verse 5. We read in the same, Pleased the whole multitude, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and controlled by the Holy Ghost. That's the normal condition of the saint. Should be.

Not a repeated filling. Chapter 13 and verse 9 for a moment. Then Paul, who was also called, then Saul, who also was called Paul, controlled by the Holy Ghost.

And then 1352. And the disciples were controlled, filled with joy and controlled, which means that instead of saying one baptism in many fillings, we should say one baptism and the only thing that will keep the constant control of the Holy Spirit is sin and the like. Thus we have our priest and the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts.

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