

### Chapter 2: Setting the Captives Free Part 2

In part 1 of this teaching, we looked at how we are ALL involved in this spiritual war between the Kingdom of Light and the counterfeit kingdom of darkness, if we like it or not. As disciples we need to be aware of the spiritual war that is raging around us. As disciples of the Lord our participation in this spiritual war is not debatable.

Our calling and mandate and gifts empower and equip and determines how we operate and function in this war, but if we truly walk in authority and make a stand of authority against the power of darkness as the children of light then it should be naturally supernatural for us to come against forces of darkness and whatever bondage or yoke.

Remember, when it comes to demons or sicknesses or whatever bondage or yoke, we are dealing here with taking up authority against it and by that authority casting it down.

In part 1, we dealt specifically with demonic oppression. In part 2, we look at how the disciple is called to lay hands on the sick. Now, let us understand sickness by definition if also a very broad term. You have sickness in the flesh but you also get sickness in the soul (depression, anxiety, fear, rejection, unforgiveness) and then someone who is not walking with the Lord has a sickness of the spirit, which is one of spiritual impoverishment.

In the Gospels we find approximately 30 to 40 individual healing events, depending on how you classify the event. We know that each healing event is significant because it was signalled out by the Holy Spirit to be recorded. Out of all the healings that Jesus did in the four Gospels, these individual cases were chosen to represent the basic healing concepts of the New Testament. Each particular healing event demonstrates at least one important concept about healing. Sometimes Jesus drew attention to the important concept such as in [Mark 2:9-10, Mark 5:30, Luke 13:15-16, Matthew 15:26, Mark 5:36, Mark 10:52]. Other times the

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concept is demonstrated by Jesus, then explained [Matthew 17:19]. Many believers think of healing as a "fringe benefit". They don't realize that healing is part of the atoning work of Jesus Christ.

Let us understand that nearly one-fifth of the Gospel accounts are devoted to Jesus' healing ministry and the discussion occasioned by it. Scriptures therefore places a lot of emphasis on healing.

Healing is about restoration. And restoration is all about the Father's heart. When we are healed physically, we are restored in health. But then your soul and spirit is also uplifted and restored. All that God does is about restoration. This is why it is so important for disciples to lay hands on the sick, and to see them healed in the power of Jesus, because it is about restoration. So when we lay hands on the sick, it is about declaring the Father's heart, which is about restoration, for restoration is about love, life and hope.

Not only did the early church drive out evil spirits with Jesus' name, but many were also healed using the name of Jesus: Acts 4:30, "By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus." Jesus walked in authority and exerted His authority, and we see this especially when He was dealing with demons and sicknesses. Jesus was all about restoration. And just so we must be disciples of restoration.

From the outset, let us understand God healed in the New Testament and still heals today. "When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." (Matthew 8:16-17)

The earthly healing ministries of Jesus fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah 53: But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was crushed for our wickedness [our sin, our injustice, our wrongdoing]; The punishment

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*[required] for our well-being fell on Him, And by His stripes (wounds) we are healed.*

*We also read in Matthew 4:23: And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.*

*Jesus therefore did more than teach and preach, He also operated in supernatural power with signs, wonders, healings and miracles coming forth in His life. Healing was an integral part of His ministry and cannot be sidelined or excluded. The Gospels do not in any way sideline His healing ministry; but instead they show us clearly that it was a major part of His overall ministry. He healed then and He heals now. He never changes. And just so disciples are called to lay hands on the sick for the sick to be restored in the love of the Lord.*

*Jesus is referred to as the Balm of Gilead. It says in Jeremiah 8: Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then has not the [spiritual] health of the daughter of my people been restored?*

*A balm is an aromatic, medicinal substance derived from plants. Gilead was an area east of the Jordan River, well known for its spices and ointments. The "balm of Gilead" was, therefore, a high-quality ointment with healing properties. The balm was made from resin taken from a flowering plant in the Middle East, although the exact species is unknown. It was also called the "balsam of Mecca." In context to Jeremiah 8, there is no healing for the wounds of God's people (his creation), because it was not until Jesus, that healing came for only by his wounds (stripes) are we healed of our sin-sick state. The balm of Gilead in essence, refers to the Salvation (healing from being sick in sin) one gets in Jesus Christ.*

*Let us remember the Great Commission of Mark 16 includes healing. Jesus Himself has commissioned every Christian to be involved in healing. It says in My name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new languages; 18 They will pick up serpents; and [even] if they drink*

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*anything deadly, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will get well.*

When it comes to the Lord's commission to the disciples, it is not our place to decide that parts of it are more important than other parts. Jesus gave it all to us, and we are to follow it all. Many people have no problem agreeing that we are called to preach the Gospel to the lost and unsaved but dispute whether we should also be bringing a message of healing. They try to indicate that really salvation of souls is what is important and that healing is a side issue. They are both part of the package and come included in what God wants to do in our lives, and believers need to be just as equipped to minister healing as they are to minister salvation to the lost and unsaved.

Remember, the Lord healed because the anointing was upon Jesus. *Acts 10:38: "how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.* Just so, when we walk in the Spirit and abide in the Lord, the anointing is upon us to lay hands on the sick.

So what did Jesus do with the anointing upon His life? He did good and healed people! Just so we as His disciples with the anointing of the Spirit must do good, set the captives free and so see the Lord glorified.

Some of the general principles we can learn from the healing ministry of Jesus is that He is the will of God in action, for Jesus came to do the will of the Father God. *John 8:28: Then Jesus said to them, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things.* So when Jesus healed people and said that He would, He was doing and saying what the Father said and did. His healings of people were a direct reflection of the Father's will and plan. Therefore, if we lay hands on the sick, we do the will of God and laying hands on the sick is therefore the will of God in action.

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The Lord also healed to bring glory to His Father. *Matthew 15: 30* And great crowds came to Him, bringing with them the lame, crippled, blind, mute, and many others, and they put them down at His feet; and He healed them. *31* So the crowd was amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled restored, the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they praised and glorified the God of Israel. So if Jesus healed because it is the will of God, then surely we as disciples must also lay hands on the sick to bring glory to God.

Jesus also healed to fulfill God's promises. *Matthew 8:16* When evening came, they brought to Him many who were under the power of demons; and He cast out the evil spirits with a word, and restored to health all who were sick [exhibiting His authority as Messiah], *17* so that He fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: "He Himself took our infirmities [upon Himself] and carried away our diseases." When the Master heals, it is a fulfillment of the prophecy spoken through Isaiah. On the cross, Christ took our sickness and infirmities.

Jesus healed to confirm His own Word. *John 10: 37* If I do not do the works of My Father [that is, the miracles that only God could perform], then do not believe Me. *38* But if I am doing them, even if you do not believe Me or have faith in Me, [at least] believe the works [that I do—admit that they are the works of God], so that you may know and keep on knowing [clearly—without any doubt] that the Father is in Me, and I am in the Father [that is, I am One with Him]. Christ knew exactly why He was sent to earth. He came to perform the works of His Father. Miracles confirm the spoken word of Jesus. He heals to fulfill His personal word to you.

Lastly, Jesus healed to show us the power in His blood. The prophecy declared in Isaiah 54:4-5 was fulfilled 20 centuries ago on the cross. It also says in *1 John 3: 8* The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. So every time the Lord heals, the devil's defeat at the Cross is exposed once again. Indeed, there is power in the

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Blood, and so when we as disciples lay hands on the sick, we declare this is God's will, this is God's Word, this is God's Truth and this is the power of salvation, redemption and restoration!

Be reminded again of Luke 9: 1 Then He called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases. 2 He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. So it is clear that according to Luke 9 and Mark 16, that the disciple has been called to heal the sick. This is therefore the mandate and the calling of the disciple. It is our mandate because it was the mandate of Jesus.

Indeed, the Lord wants us to be healed. It is not the Lord's will that we be sickly, and be struck down by illness. To be sick is being held captive to that sickness, and you are in bondage to that sickness. It says in the Book of 3 John: 2 Beloved, I pray that in every way you may succeed and prosper and be in good health [physically], just as [I know] your soul prospers [spiritually]

Again, let us also be reminded when the Lord calls us to heal the sick, this deals not only with the outwardly illness of the flesh, but also one of the spirit and the soul. To heal the spirit is a matter of evangelising and leading someone to the Lord, because in the love, acceptance, grace and mercy of the Lord do we find our strength, redemption and restoration. To heal the soul is, however, a very complex matter for the soul is very complex.

For now, let us just look at the mandate of the disciple to lay hands on those who have a physical sickness, because this in itself is a complex matter. Healing is very important, because healing deals with restoration and atonement – if it be healing in spirit, soul or body.

We need to understand and to discern that God does not make you sick. Many do believe God brings sickness upon your path to teach you a lesson, or to refine you on your spiritual path. This is not true. God does not

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deliberately and willingly strike us with sickness or illness. What happens is that we will become sick or we become ill as soon as we step out of the will of the Lord, therefore step away from His Presence by not trusting, not obeying, not yielding, not listening and not abiding in Him.

Here is a simple example of we reap what we sow. Do you know there at least 10 health problems relating to stress? This includes heart disease, asthma, obesity, diabetes, headaches, depression and anxiety, gastrointestinal problems and Alzheimer's disease. Stress causes low energy, headaches, upset stomach, aches, pains, and tense muscles, chest pain, rapid heartbeat, insomnia and frequent colds and infections.

So why are we talking about stress? Well remember *Matthew 6: 25*  
“Therefore I tell you, stop being worried or anxious (perpetually uneasy, distracted) about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, as to what you will wear. Is life not more than food, and the body more than clothing?”

You see, if we worry, and we stress, then our hope is not in God. In God we find our rest, our peace, our trust and our hope. Jesus was not really giving as an advice, but He was commanding us to stop being anxious, being stressed has a terrible impact on our physical bodies.

When we lay hands on the sick, we need to listen to the counsel of the Spirit, for if there is legal ground in a person for the devil to attack, it needs to be addressed. Let us make this clear – sickness is not from the Lord. Sickness is a result or the consequence when we live or abide not fully in the presence of the Lord through obedience, holiness or faithfulness.

For example, if we live unhealthy, we become sick. Whose fault is this? We first need to repent of living unhealthy, address our lifestyle and then allow God to restore. If someone smokes plenty of cigarettes a day and continues to struggle with his lungs, whose fault is this? Sure, God can heal that person, but that person will continue to be sick as long as he or

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she smokes. If we do not sleep enough because of stress, or we are stressed because we are overworked in our pursuit of wealth, then we need to address the root of why we are sick so that we can walk in restoration.

A disciple who comes to a person who is sick needs to therefore listen to the Lord, and move in the Spirit to know what the right course of action is. Maybe it is just to lay hands and pray be healed. Maybe it involves a word of wisdom or knowledge or discernment or prophecy. Either way, we need to listen to the Lord.

Remember, to be healthy implies not just physical health, but also health of the spirit and soul. Many times the body is sick because the spirit or the soul is not healthy. If we are bitter, angry, depressed, or we cannot forgive someone or we have taken offense, then these emotions in the realm of the soul can easily manifest in the realm of the physical. We need to therefore listen to the Lord.

Similarly, a sickness can be caused by demonic activity (directly or indirectly through witchcraft). And we can allow demonic activity into our lives when we are not fully under the Blood, when we give the devil a legal right to act against us and when we are out of the will of the Lord.

Therefore, a disciple needs to move in the Holy Spirit when laying hands on the sick. After all, are you dealing with a simple illness of the body, or a manifestation of a malady of the soul or is it a spiritual manifestation?

Let us understand, the Lord wants us to be healthy and so he calls His disciples to move in His power, wisdom and discernment to set the captives free for them to be restored. It says in *Exodus 15: There the LORD issued a ruling and instruction for them and put them to the test.* <sup>26</sup> He said, "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."

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Indeed, for those who listen carefully to the Lord and do what is right in His eyes (not the eyes of the world or any church denomination) will be covered by the Blood of Jesus and will stand strong against the diseases, dread and pain of this world.

Let us for now look at *Deuteronomy 30: The Offer of Life or Death*: 11 Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach. 12 It is not up in heaven, so that you have to ask, "Who will ascend into heaven to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?" 13 Nor is it beyond the sea, so that you have to ask, "Who will cross the sea to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?" 14 No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it. 15 See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. 16 For I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in obedience to him, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess. 17 But if your heart turns away and you are not obedient, and if you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them, 18 I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. 19 This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live 20 and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the LORD is your life, and he will give you many years in the land he swore to give to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

In the Old Testament life and death translated into blessings and curses for the Israel nation. Under the Law of Moses, the Lord presented to His people a very simple choice – follow God and live, or disobey God and die. Take note of verse 15: *See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction.*

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We are either going to follow God and live in abundance – spirit, soul and body – or we are going to choose to allow ourselves to become infested by the world and therefore suffer the touch of death – in spirit, soul and body. For those who fear Him, obey Him and who listens carefully to Him shall surely live here and in eternity.

It says in *Psalm 1*: *Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, 2 but whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on his law day and night. 3 That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers.*

Indeed, we have a choice to walk in life or death by choosing to abide in the Lord (John 15) or abiding in the world. Sickness is not from the Lord, but it might not necessarily come directly from the devil. Most of the time it is the manifestation of us not always abiding in the Lord, not obeying, not listening, not doing as He commands us daily spiritually, emotionally and physically. But at times, the devil might strike someone with sickness, illnesses and plagues, but this will only happen when a legal right has been given to the devil to act in such a matter. Therefore listen to the Lord and follow the Spirit when laying hands on the sick!

Praise God. He is our Deliverance from our enemies, from darkness, from sickness, from injustice, from our strongholds, from our weaknesses, from our inadequacies, from our troubles, from our woes, from our spirit afflictions, from our fleshly torments, from our sin, from our iniquities and from a life without meaning. He is our DELIVERANCE from the second death [domain of fire]. He is our hope and salvation and light.

You can only set people free when you know God as your Deliverer. Praise the Lord! He is our Deliverance. Nothing else will deliver us – not psychology, not money, not status, not doctors, not anything, but only God!

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*He is the Balm of Gilead, so go forth as a disciple and lay hands on the sick!*