

FIREPLACE 7: Healing

Tainted by PAST DISAPPOINTMENT?

Our EXPERIENCE hasn't always matched our THEOLOGY.

So, the temptation is to BACK DOWN & GIVE UP.

We have experienced DISAPPOINTMENT, but refuse to RETREAT into a theology & practice that no longer EXPECTS God to act.

Have you ever prayed earnestly for God to intervene, only to see things turn out differently to the way you'd hoped? How did that experience affect you?
Have you ever found it difficult to reconcile what you believe about God's power and goodness with what you have actually experienced? How have you wrestled with that tension?

Don't Let the Fire GO OUT

We cannot MANUFACTURE the fire of God, but we can refuse to build a church that MAKES NO ROOM for it.

... That QUENCHES the Spirit or CEASES to PRAY.

What do you think causes Christians to become more cautious in praying for healing or expecting God to intervene as time goes on?
How do we hold together two convictions: God can heal today, and we cannot guarantee the outcome of our prayers?
How can we encourage one another to keep praying boldly without making people feel guilty when healing doesn't happen?

Fireplace PRINCIPLES

Jesus taught kingdom PRINCIPLES, PATTERNS & PRIORITIES, largely through PARABLES & MIRACLES.

e.g. Luke 5:17-26 (See also 1 Cor 12:4-11)

1. EXPECT God to ACT
2. BRING people TO Jesus
3. MAKE ROOM for the SPIRIT

So, let's be a church that EXPECTS, ASKS & MAKES ROOM.

Read Luke 5:17-26 and, if time allows, 1 Cor 12:4-11.
What stands out to you about the faith & determination of the friends who brought the paralysed man to Jesus? What can we learn from their example?
The message identified three principles: expect God to act, bring people to Jesus, and make room for the Spirit. Which of these comes most naturally to you, and which do you find most challenging? Why?

Pastoral Practice: Pray Boldly, Love Deeply

(James 5:14-16, Matt 10:7-8, 1 Cor 13:1-7)

The THEORY

1. God is ABLE
2. God is COMPASSIONATE
3. We are called to PRAY, but we don't CONTROL OUTCOMES

The APPROACH

1. CARE
2. LISTEN
3. PRAY
4. RESPOND

Read James 5:14-16 and 1 Cor 13:1-7. The suggested approach to praying for healing is care, listen, pray and respond. Which of these steps do you think we might most easily overlook, and why?

Unanswered Prayer

- * We don't always know WHY someone isn't healed.
- * Scripture gives us INSIGHTS, but it doesn't give us the ability or permission to DIAGNOSE every INDIVIDUAL situation.
- * Our job isn't to EXPLAIN or JUSTIFY, but to LOVE them and stand WITH them.

What should our response be when someone isn't healed? Why is it important not to diagnose why someone hasn't been healed or criticise their faith? How can we continue to support & love someone when their circumstances don't change?

The CHALLENGE / Our COMMITMENT

1. Be AVAILABLE = 'Lord, here I am, use me.'
2. Be OBEDIENT = 'Lord, help me hear You & respond.'
3. Be BOLD = 'Lord, give courage to stand on Your promises.'
4. Be HUMBLE = 'Lord, help me put their blessing before my reputation.'

Which of these comes most naturally to you & which do you most need to grow in? Think about your everyday life: at work, with friends, in your family or within your connect group. Is there a situation in which you could offer to pray for someone? What might help you take that step?