

GROWTH GROUPS

February 3, 2013

Matthew 8:5-13; Isaiah 53:4-6

Conversation Starter: How many times have you ever prayed for someone that you knew or loved that they could experience a healing touch from God? Think about how much you wanted an answer to prayer in that situation that was a, "Yes, I will do it." Have you ever had prayers for healing that you didn't get the answer that you wanted or expected? What was that like for you?

Understanding: This passage of scripture continues our series on the book of Matthew's Gospel. Jesus has just completed his Sermon on the Mount and has gone into the countryside where people come to be healed. In Chapter 8, Jesus heals a leper, the Centurian's servant who was paralyzed, Peter's mother-in-law with a fever, and many who had been possessed by demons. He also calms the storm while crossing the sea of Galilee. Wow! Jesus speaks a Word and those who were ill were healed. People brought friends and loved ones to be healed. The scripture says that he healed them all. Those are both awesome and troubling words. Our prayers for healing never work out with a 100% rate of success as we see it. Sometimes, even "easy" cases are not healed as we might define healing. Yet, we look around us and see people in the church here who have been healed and we are thankful. The Centurian had a faith that was rare in Israel. Jesus had never seen such faith. He believed that Jesus could just speak a Word from afar and that the servant would be healed. He understood that Jesus had authority from God to do great things. Jesus sends him away and says that the healing would happen just as he believed that it would. Jesus says that the man had "healing faith."

Questions

1. Why do we not seem to experience healing miracles here in America while missionaries continue to tell stories of great healings in other countries? Has the age of miraculous healing passed for America?
2. How does God use modern medicine to participate in the healing process? Is this any less miraculous? Why do we see it as different?
3. How did the Centurian develop such healing faith and understanding of what Jesus could and might do in healing people? What might happen in a local Church if God began answering such prayers for healing and the miraculous broke out here in Maumee? What might happen if God's healing "God stories" were told clearly? Why are people so hesitant to share answers to prayer?

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