



# SERMON OF THE WEEK

## First Presbyterian Church of Honolulu at Ko'olau

### September 17, 2017

### “Healing Prayer for Today” (How to Pray Series)

### The Rev. Dr. Dan Chun

**M**y goal this morning is to convince us that we should pray in faith that people can be physically healed immediately, and that inner healing can begin. The problem is that when it comes to healing, there is a lot of noise and static out there in society about why healing prayer is fake.

Here is a video clip of a famous televangelist. This is how much of society views healing prayer and why they have a problem with miraculous prayer. And to be honest, for most of my life, this kind of healing prayer that we're about to see is why I did NOT believe that healing prayer existed today. But more on that later.

Take a look at this video. You're about to watch a man named Robert Tilton of whom ABC News did an exposé. (Video clip of Robert Tilton was shown)

If that's what it means that Bible days are here, I didn't want anything to do with it. Linking money requests with healing is wrong. I had a lot of junk in my head of seeing far too many videos of people who I felt were harmful to the Gospel and were just trying to take other people's money.

There once was a televangelist who rented a room on our church campus to record a show. Since he was recording the show in our fellowship hall, our staff alerted me that I need to drop by the shoot to hear what he was saying. And so I did, and I heard him saying how widows need to give him \$5,000 so they could be blessed!

I later had a meeting with the production team who was renting our facility at a huge price and told them they must not have that person ever speak again because of what he says. Because of that they never came back and we lost a lot of money. Tens of thousands of dollars. But I felt that I had to say what I said because the integrity of the gospel and the love of Jesus is at stake.

Because of televangelists like in the video we saw, and let me tell you there are many, many more, I could not believe that healing prayer was for today. I was what is called a “cessationist,” which comes from the word that means “to end or to cease.

A cessationist believes that the miraculous spiritual gifts of healing, prophecy, and speaking in tongues ENDED or CEASED to exist after the apostles of Jesus died. So because I believed that, when I prayed for people who were ill, I didn't expect them to get healed. I just prayed that they would be comforted. I didn't even know I was a cessationist, but I was by my actions! Why? Because I couldn't get these darn televangelists out of my mind. I believed that many of them were charlatans, who were out for people's money. They were not honest.

But then I met thoughtful, authentic people of integrity who did believe in healing prayer. They showed me biblically how miracle gifts are active today. All of us can have access to them to help our loved ones, our family, and even strangers. I could pray for super-

natural healing without being weird. In the Bible prayer for healing was never manipulative or crazy as I saw on TV.

And so about 20 years ago I started to study healing prayer in the Bible. I read books. I attended conferences. I talked to the so-called experts in the field, some of whom had Ph.Ds. – theologians, pastors, and lay people. I read the Bible and looked up all of the healing passages. I read this verse in the gospel, which is a biography of Jesus, written by a physician named Luke: “*Then Jesus called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases.*” (Luke 9:1)

This one verse was hard hitting for me. Did Jesus give that power and authority just to the 12 apostles, or was it for all of us? Also, the Lord told them not to just pray for people, but to actually cure them. Later I would read that people were actually cured by those prayers.

If this is true for today, this is radical. This is revolutionary. Could our church people pray and actually see people get healed? I have felt for most of my Christian life and as your pastor that if something is in the Bible, if it is in the Word of God, then we should be able to see it in the World.

I came to the conclusion that the Bible can't be exclusively for a special class of people called the apostles who died more than 2,000 years ago. No, I believe God's Word is for all people today, not just for clergy, not just for the original 12 apostles, but for ALL people.

**W**hen we read the Bible, it should be that we all get to pray, not just a small number of dead people from a long time ago. We should be in the community, not just in church, praying for healing.

Some believe the Holy Spirit just does not work that way any longer. They don't believe the Holy Spirit empowers people that way today. And yet they believe Satan is fully-empowered, alive, and well today. But not the Holy Spirit? Are not joy, love, and peace for the followers of Jesus today? That didn't stop with the apostles.

Is not evangelism for today? Is not helping the poor for today? Why is it that healing allegedly stopped and all the other gifts are still active? Why would we believe that the miraculous gifts are not for today but everything else is? If Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, why can't He work with science, through science, or apart from our scientific understanding to make healing happen?

As I studied the Bible, as I talked to more people and witnessed more healing, I came to the conclusion that the miraculous gifts of healing, prophecy, and even speaking in tongues is for today (my next three sermons will be devoted to that).

We are not a Pentecostal Church. We are not known as a charismatic church. Yet, we are part of a movement to be a Christ-centered biblical church and, therefore, a church that does pray for healing. The Holy Spirit was not supposed to stop with the church. We are a pass-through, where the ministry of the Holy Spirit continues through us to benefit the community.

According to our survey, nearly 500 people have joined First Prez in the last five years, which means many of you are new to our church. So let me tell you how we became more involved in believing that miraculous healing prayer is for today.

My journey actually began at least 15 years ago. As I told you I was turning from a cynic and getting more and more

interested in the possibility that the miraculous gifts were for today. Then in the week of September 6, 2002, a little over 15 years ago to the day, I was leading a Hawaiian Islands Ministries Conference in the Bay Area. As our conferences are ecumenical, our seminars included a variety of traditions, like the charismatics on healing. We offered elective healing seminars, and my friend David Bunker attended a Friday night seminar.

For 52 years David suffered from polio and a nerve atrophy disease. I saw him arrive at the conference with his crutches and leg braces. I had known him for 17 years. Well, the next day, Saturday morning of the conference, while I was in the front row going over notes just before the conference began, David walked in and sat next to me.

Yes, David walked in and sat next to me but WITHOUT crutches! In fact, he was holding his braces. He said, "Dan, I got healed last night. They prayed for me."

"What?" I said in my usual cessationist way. "You got what? No way!"

He said, "I got healed. They prayed for me, and I got really hot. Then my leg started moving. And now I don't need my braces or crutches anymore."

And I'm thinking, "No, no, no. Yes, we have seminars and teachings on healing, but no one is supposed to get healed. We just talk about healing. We teach about healing, but no healing is allowed because my theology, my belief, doesn't accept that."

But David was indeed healed, and I could see it with my own eyes.

Years later, did the pain, discomfort, and some lack of movement return to David? Yes. For I have learned that healing prayer is never permanent. If it were so, no one would die. But that night, a miracle happened.

At that same seminar on healing, my friend's sister, who suffered from back and shoulder pain from a car crash 17 years earlier, also got instantly healed from the pain. Gone! And so again, in my disbelief, I thought, "No way!"

And another person, a physician's wife suffering from a rash for six months, got healed of her rashes! They suddenly disappeared. No way!

So I thought, "Holy smokes! Holy mother of pearl! These are people I personally knew, and they weren't faking it. It's not like those people in wheelchairs in televangelist shows whom I suspect were already well and were just faking it.

David was a person I knew for 17 years, sick for 52 years, and he was healed through prayer. I knew these other people. I thought, "Oh, my gosh, healing is for today." We, the common believers, can pray and see people get healed immediately.

That was September 6, 2002. Then 20 days later on September 26, I went with my mother to her doctor for her appointment. My mom had lung cancer. They discovered it in 2000. It spread to her bones and back. When the cancer went to her bones, there was no chance that the cancer would leave. Back then there was no known therapy that could take cancer out of bones.

So on Sept 26, 2002 we were going to look at her bone scan again after she had chemotherapy to slow down the growth. Her first bone scan in the year 2000 looked like this. (Photo of first bone scan was shown.)

The doctor had put black dye into her body, where the dye was expected to go anywhere there was cancer. You can see in the x-ray that the dye is in the head, back, ribs, chest, and pelvic area. She had cancer all over. Many people in our congregation prayed for her (thank you!). If you think healing prayers from afar don't work, then think again.

**S**he was supposed to pass away within months. But she didn't.

A year and a half after that bone scan, my mom had another bone scan, and this is what it looked like. (Photo of second bone scan was shown.)

I couldn't believe it! There were hardly any dark spots. Cancer gone from her bones! There were still some dark spots but they were where the ink went into her arm or going out in her urine in her bladder.

When the radiation oncologist called me to go to his office to look at her slides, my heart dropped. I expected bad news. But then he showed me the slide and said, and I'm quoting him since I wrote down his words in my journal: "I have never seen this before for a person with lung cancer. Normally when I see a patient with what the first slide looked like, I never see the patient again," meaning the patient would die soon.

Another radiation oncologist was called in and said he has NEVER in his entire career seen lung cancer leave the bones. Sometimes people say, "Dan you talk about miracles but there is no medical proof." Well, today you have seen a documented miracle!

Did my mother eventually die? Yes, four years later after being diagnosed. Is healing forever? No. No one would die if every ailment is healed forever. But was I happy that I had four extra years with her? You bet. After seeing that second bone scan, I firmly believed in healing prayer. No holding me back now.

By God's providence I was scheduled to preach on healing on three days later on Sept 29. So on that Sunday at church in 2002 at our old Makiki campus, I came out of my charismatic closet and announced to the church that I firmly believe that healing prayer is for today, and that we are not to be cessationist. I said God offers this ability for each and every one of us to pray for people, and

we should have faith that healing could occur.

And then another miracle happened. It was almost like Jesus was saying, "Dan, I really want you to seal this in your heart. I am giving you and your church the power to heal, if you would just pray and use it."

Three days after that sermon on healing, I got an email from member Jean Hood, which in essence said, "Hey Dan, just wanted you to know that I was deaf in my right ear for 12 years. And three sentences before you ended your sermon, my ear popped and I got healed. Just wanted you to know, signed Jean Hood."

What!!!??? No way! So I immediately called her up. And I said, "Jean, what happened?"

She said, "I know I was just sitting there, and suddenly I thought the sound man had accidentally pushed the sound knobs louder because everything was so much louder. And then I went out on to the church lanai (this was our old campus) and it seemed everyone was talking so loud. I got into my VW bug and I could hear my daughter speaking on my right, when normally I couldn't because I was deaf in my right ear. When I turned on the radio, I didn't have to turn it up loud."

I asked her, "But what did I say three sentences before the end?" She said, "I don't know. Can't remember."

I thought about it, but I couldn't figure it out. Then that night, as I was leading a men's Bible study, it hit me. Right during the study, and I shouted out, "I know what I said. I ended my sermon with Luke 7:22 where Jesus said: "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have good news brought to them. In Christ's name, Amen.

I looked at the last verse and counted backwards. Three sentences before I ended I said, "the deaf hear!" And Jean Hood's ear got healed.

I asked a friend who does tons of healing prayer around the country if he has ever heard of such a thing. He said I have never heard about someone getting healed by quoting Jesus, in the Bible. "The deaf hear." Jean getting healed was so important for me because remember I had tons of bad televangelist memories where I felt either the televangelist was emotionally and manipulating people, or the people were hysterical, emotional and were just rationalizing their healing.

But in this case, I wasn't asking people to get healed so I wasn't manipulating. And Jean wasn't asking to be healed, so she was not emotionally getting herself into a state to be healed. But she got healed anyway. (And unlike Robert Tilton, I didn't even get \$1,000 for the healing! Which is not the way we Chinese do healing!)

I don't fully understand the ways of the Holy Spirit, but at that service where Jean Hood got healed, I also announced that I would be having our first healing service on 11/11 - November 11, 2002. I, being of little faith, said we would not have it in the old sanctuary in Makiki, which had room for at least 600 people, but rather in the fellowship hall, which could fit 225.

I was quite anxious for our first healing service, and when that night came, I became even more anxious. Why? Because that night in that Fellowship Hall that could fit 225, more than 325 people showed up! Some with crutches, some with walkers, one person came in a gurney. It was STANDING ROOM ONLY, and I remember thinking several things:

First, Lord, couldn't we have started with easy stuff like headaches or sprained ankles? Lord, some of these people cannot walk. They are in real physical pain. Couldn't we have started off slower?

**S**econd, I thought that the people who came would not have come for a Bible study. “Hey, everybody, Pastor Dan is teaching the gospel of John.” If that were the case, maybe only 20 would have showed up. But when people heard that it was a healing service, many came. Like in the Bible, healing was always accompanied with evangelism. People came to faith because of it.

And third, I saw people there from Pentecostal churches. I asked them, “What are you doing here at a Presbyterian Church?” And they said it’s because our churches don’t teach this anymore. We’re not equipped on how to do this. We don’t have services like this so we came to yours.”

So that night at the healing service, with fear and trepidation, we asked for people to come forward for healing. I recently read my journal for that night to remember what happened, and here is what I wrote:

Tom’s neck was healed. Bev’s frozen arm could now be raised. Jane could breathe better. Also healed were Leslie’s knee, Sonia’s ear and jaw, Fran’s back pain, Sheldon’s knee, Glenn’s back pain, Jennie’s wrists, and Lynette’s carpal tunnel. Ellen’s neck and back all greatly improved or healed. One person who was really cynical about the whole thing and didn’t get healed there, realized as she was driving home from the service that her arthritic hand was healed. I share these stories to increase your faith that healing prayer is indeed for today, and we should be doing it to help others.

But let me address some of the questions people have about healing prayer, and then I am going to teach you how to do it.

First of all, a healing prayer ministry is all about compassion and Jesus. Jesus loves His sheep. He loves His people. He empathizes with our pain because He knows what physical pain is like because He was tortured and crucified. He knows injustice as He went through an unfair

court system. He knows betrayal. He knows about friends letting Him down, like how Peter denied him many times. He knows what it is like to lose a loved one, as He cried when His friend Lazarus died. He knows what it is like to be falsely accused, as He was called wrongfully a “glutton and a drunkard.”

As I said last week, Jesus is the God we have always wanted – empathetic to the max since He knows our pain. He is kind, tender, and wise.

But when it comes to healing, you may wonder, “Why didn’t Jesus heal me and my loved ones in the past?” Tough question: yes, not all are healed. I know of a man who walked out of a teaching on healing because he thought of his wife and daughter who were not healed and died of cancer.

Yet, I know of a friend who came to one of our healing services because his wife wanted to, but he sat there fuming as I preached because his young daughter died. It turned out that they took her to a faith healer, and when she didn’t get well, the faith healer said it was because the little girl didn’t have enough faith. When my friend got mad at him, and asked how he could you say that. The faith healer then said, “Well, it is because you and your wife don’t have enough faith.”

So it was a miracle that he even showed up at our healing service just to please his wife, even though he doubted, was highly cynical, and really didn’t want to be there. But then at the healing service, when I asked people to put their hand on the place that God might heal, he begrudgingly put his hand on his knee. And God healed him right then to his utter surprise! And because of that his cynicism on healing disappeared. He later gave his testimony of his healing in our church. His name was Bob Curtis.

But yes, God doesn’t heal everyone – and here is where we have to trust God. If He takes our loved ones to heaven to a place of no more pain or sorrow, then

maybe God felt at that point it was best for them. I don’t know. But being in heaven is the ultimate healing. We are dealing with a loving God, not an ATM that we can control. We have to trust that He knows what is best and that there is a reason.

In the story of when Jesus went to a pool of Bethesda and healed a man who had been lame for decades, you realize later that Jesus only healed one person at that pool while there were many others who were also lame or sick. Why just one? I don’t know, but we have to have faith that there is a loving God. I do know that healing is to glorify God. He doesn’t heal everyone for that. Just one person healed at the pool of Bethesda can point to God’s glory.

But that leads to the next tough question: Was I, or my loved one, not healed because we did not have enough faith? If anyone ever says to you that you were not healed because you didn’t have enough faith, know that that’s garbage thinking, and that person does not know the Bible. The Bible has stories of people who were dead but were raised back to life by Jesus, like Lazarus and a young girl. See the parallel? They were both dead, which means they had zero faith. They were dead!

So if you don’t have a lot of faith or NO FAITH AT ALL to get healed. Even if you doubt, still seek healing from Jesus because you are a prime candidate for healing, like the man in the Bible who took his son who was having seizures to Jesus for healing:

*Jesus asked the father, “How long has this been happening to him?” And he said, “From childhood. It has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if you are able to do anything, have pity on us and help us.” Jesus said to him, “If you are able!—All things can be done for the one who believes.” Immediately the father of the child cried out, “I believe; help my unbelief!” (Mark 9:21-24)*

**A**nd Jesus then healed the child, even though the father had unbelief. So the results of healing prayer are not based on your faith as a recipient of prayer.

But to continue the story, then the disciples followed up with the Lord Jesus when He went into a house.

*Mark 9:28 When Jesus had entered the house, His disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?"*

*Mark 9:29 He said to them, "This kind can come out only through prayer."*

Prayer and faith. If you have no or little faith that's okay. When it comes to prayer: The praying people have to be followers of Jesus and THEY need faith, not so much you. And it's Jesus who does the healing in a variety of avenues. I firmly believe in healing in many ways: through medicine, technology, acupuncture, through physicians and nurses. But some healing ONLY comes with prayer and maybe in addition to the medicine.

Our medical community understands this, and that is why our church healing prayer team has doctors and nurses on it. It's often both-and, not either-or. Sometimes you need to pray more than once for healing. So if you came for healing prayer and you were not healed, come again for prayer.

Even for Jesus who once prayed for a blind man; Jesus had to pray for him twice for him to be fully healed. And if that is true for Jesus that is true for us all. And if you want to learn how to pray for healing for others it is really simple. It's the same acronym I taught you before for intercessory prayer – LEAP BLT to GO. It's printed on the back flap of your worship bulletin (or for 11:11, it's an insert in your news bulletin):

#### **LEAP BLT TO GO**

**L** – LISTEN

**E** – keep EYES open

**A** – ASK permission to lay hands

**P** – PRAY

**B** – BLESS

**L** – ask and LISTEN for how the person is feeling

**T** – TELL possible outcomes

**TO-GO** - GO do it

The prayers can be silent or short, like Jesus would just say, "Lame man, take up your bedding and walk (or get up)!" Sometimes I pray to God to heal people. Sometimes I just say "in Jesus' name, body be healed or knee be healed." And you can too. By the way, for healing prayer it is always important to say "in Jesus' name" or "in Christ's name" for that is who does the healing not us.

And today is a good day to pray for healing because it happens best in an atmosphere of faith, and there are a lot of people here who have faith. We know Jesus even said in the Bible that if there is no faith in the room He can't heal. But today there is a lot of faith, and that is why we have healing services to fill it with people with faith praying for others.

But enough said. Let's do it. We're going to pray for healing. We will do two prayers. One will be a mass prayer by me. Sometimes people get healed in a mass prayer. The second one you will do it. But I will explain that later. For now, let's close our eyes and bow our heads as I do the mass prayer for healing.

For those of you who have a physical pain I am going to ask you to put your hand on or near the area of your body that needs healing. And if it is an emotional issue that you would like relief or healing, put your hand on your heart.

Dear Heavenly Father, I ask that you send your Holy Spirit. Please fill this room in a supernatural, miraculous way. And I pray for those with physical needs. I pray that Your Holy spirit will flow through their bodies and souls, like a gentle waterfall from the top of their heads to the soles of their feet. Rinsing them and cleansing them of all impurities. Those with physical ailments, in the name of Jesus Christ, be healed. May knees be strengthened. Muscles, tendons, ligaments, discs be aligned. For those with cancer, bodies be healed.

For those with a neck issue, or a hearing issue, or hip issue, be healed in the name of Jesus Christ. For all those who put their hands in other areas that need healing, bodies be healed.

For those with emotional issue, Lord, I pray that healing will take place right now. Lift their despair and fill them with hope—a hope that you hear them and that you're with them. And may they have joy in their hearts. May You be their wisdom in what to do with what's facing them. Give the max dose of Your unconditional love that will help them forgive the unforgiveable, and receive forgiveness as well. For all these we pray in Christ's Name, Amen!

Now I am going to ask those who would like more prayer to stand right now and I am going to ask those around you to pray shortly on more time as I said sometimes it takes at least more than one prayer. Please stand if you would like prayer. And those around these people standing, please pray.