

The Mission of Fountaingate: **Gently Offering Healing**

Pastor Brad spoke a month ago about the spirit of Fountaingate and how we must bring the mission to our community. Today I want to begin a series on The Mission of Fountaingate. Our mission statement is “Gently offering healing, health and hope to a hurting world.”

- **Gentleness (Dictionary):** The quality or state of being gentle; *especially*: mildness of manners or disposition.
- **Gentleness (Bible):** Mildness; meekness, kindness; humility; intrinsic goodness.

There is gentleness displayed in the way a mom holds her baby, the help of a nurse when you are in pain or the way a butterfly lands on a hand. These all reflect gentleness in a way that most people have seen. However, gentleness is also a fruit of the Holy Spirit, having wonderful power to bring healing and joy:

Galatians 5:22-23: *²² But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,²³ gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!*

Gentleness is a precious commodity these days, it seems. But if we have truly understood the immensity of what Jesus has done for us at the cross, we will seek the fruit of gentleness with all diligence calling out to the Holy Spirit to change or renew us. Two quotes I really liked about gentleness:

“The very first thing which needs to be said about Christian ministers of all kinds is that they are “under” people as their servants rather than “over” them (as their leaders, let alone their lords). Jesus made this absolutely plain. The chief characteristic of Christian leaders, he insisted, is humility not authority, and gentleness not power.”

(John Stott)

“Gentleness: An inward grace of the soul; calmness toward God in particular. An acceptance of God’s dealings with us, considering them as good. The term basically means to stop fighting God. Gentleness is responsibility with power.”

(Beth Moore)

Gentleness is surrender to God and God’s will. And true gentleness only flows out of a surrendered heart. Those who are in leadership positions must walk in humble gentleness!

The **Galatians 5** Scripture goes beyond the listing of the fruit of the Spirit and reveals how the cross is Gods’ gentleness. It is Jesus walking out His life in true gentleness with a heart completely surrendered to His Father! It is Jesus’ heart leading Him to the cross! He is our perfect example for gentleness during chaos and struggle

Leviticus 23:22: When you reap the harvest of your land, moreover, you shall not reap to the very corners of your field nor gather the gleaning of your harvest; you are to leave them for the needy and the alien. I am the Lord your God.

In the end, Boaz, the owner of the grain field, saw the gentle, kind heart Ruth had and married her because of it. Her gentleness resulted in a significant impact on Israel because she had a baby destined to be the great-grandfather of King David! We also see the gentleness in Jesus’ story of the Good Samaritan. Once again, the presence of gentleness in a person translates into action-not just words.

Luke 10:30-35: ³⁰ Jesus replied and said, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead. ³¹ And by chance a priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. ³² Likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion, ³⁴ and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵ On the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, ‘Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return I will repay you.’”

The above two stories reflect hearts of gentleness which are manifested in wonderful acts of kindness and compassion. Words spoken in a gentle way are powerful. Gentle words are Gods’ bandages. People are living in a world filled with anger and power. The last thing they need is more dictatorship. The possible mission of this church is to reach the lost with a gentle spirit not to be aggressive and demanding but to be more filled with love and compassion. Will we see miracles at Fountaingate ? Yes, I believe we will. Will we see the miraculous happen? Yes, I believe we will!! I look beyond my own understanding, and I won’t put God in a box. It is not up to me to decide how God will move but it is up to me to be obedient to what He is asking me to do. I live my life by Faith, and I believe all things are possible!!!! This church was planted for Healing and that is what will take place in the years to come!!

What are the ways that God chooses to Heal? What have we seen through His Word and even today in our churches?

I. First, there are times when God chooses to heal instantly. We see many cases of this when people went to Jesus. For example, John 5, we find the account of Jesus healing on the Sabbath near the Sheep Gate of Jerusalem at the pool of Bethesda. This pool was known for its healing power. Many invalids gathered there daily—the blind, the lame, and those who were paralyzed. One man there had been ill for 38 years waiting for the stirring of the water; for the people of the day believed that an angel of the Lord came down at certain seasons into the pool and stirred up the water and whoever stepped in first after the stirring of the water was made well.

John writes, "When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, "Do you want to be made well?" The sick man answered him, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; and while I am making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me." Jesus said to him, "Stand up, take your mat and walk. And at once the man was healed, and he took up his pallet and walked."

Let me pause here a moment to say very clearly that you and I don't have power in ourselves. Any authority and power in prayer comes from the delegated imparted authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. We heal in Jesus' name, by His power, and for His glory alone. Biblical healing is not a celebrity event where the person praying for healing is glorified. Instead, Biblical healing is a celebration of the grace, power, presence, authority, and love of the living Lord in our immediate circumstances and needs as well as the healing of our bodies, souls, and spirits. This authority and power from Jesus are manifest in different ways in different people. Some people who pray for healing have a sense in their bodies where the other person is experiencing pain. This is a clue for them for what and how to pray. Others see things in their mind's eye; God shows them what they need to pray for and pray against. Some experience heat flowing through their hands, some experience coolness.

The Lord may give a special word or Scripture to some which can be encouraging and serve to build faith. In that moment, however, the focus is not on what is happening to the person praying but on what God is doing for the one receiving prayer.

II. Secondly Sometimes God chooses to heal over time.

An example of this is found in Mark 8:22-26. This is the account of Jesus healing the blind man in Bethsaida on the northern end of the Sea of Galilee, the home of Peter, James and John who were followers of Jesus. For the record, let me assure you I don't practice healing by spitting on people. 😊 In this situation, the healing was in stages rather than immediate. Jesus worked with the man, asking him what he was experiencing. At first, he saw people looking like trees walking; after more prayer, he saw clearly.

Another instance of healing over time occurs in Luke 17:11-19. I won't read the passage but let me remind you of this familiar story. It's the miracle of the ten lepers who came to Jesus to be healed. They weren't healed immediately in Jesus' presence. They were touched by God as they made their way to the temple in accordance with Christ's command. There was an act of obedience on their part which activated their healing. For many of us, healing is a process more than a one-time event.

III. Thirdly, Sometimes God chooses to heal through medicine.

Olive oil was the most common medicinal ointment used in Biblical times. The parable of the Good Samaritan depicts the use of wine (for the antiseptic properties of alcohol) and olive oil (which has antibiotic properties) in the treatment of a traveler's wounds (Luke 10:34).

The book of James further suggests that when we pray for healing that we anoint people with oil in the name of the Lord. A specific formula for healing is not being mandated here. Rather, there is recognition that the use of prayer in Jesus' name together with the medicinal properties of

things like olive oil can be a powerful combination. Across the centuries, the Christian Church has encouraged the use of medicine in combination with prayer in the healing process.

There are other examples such as Paul encouraging Timothy to take care of his upset stomach by mixing a bit of wine with water to kill the germs in it and purify it. He says in *1 Timothy 5:23*, ***“No longer drink only water, but take a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments.”*** My point is that nothing should prevent the Christian from seeking professional medical advice, along with prayer, in their desire and search for healing. Medical science and faith are not mutually exclusive. They can become complimentary. In our day, however, we tend to turn to medicine alone for healing. Perhaps we would benefit from getting balance by adding in healing prayer to amplify the positive effects of medicine and to glorify the Lord with greater faith during our infirmity/sickness.

IV. Fourthly, God chooses at times to heal by giving us the grace to accept our infirmity.

Let’s look at 2 Corinthians 12:7-10. This is the kind of healing most of us don’t want. Biblical scholars’ debate about what the Apostle Paul’s ‘thorn in the flesh’ was. Some think it may have been malaria related migraine headaches or chronic eye problems. It might also be a person or demonic spirit since he says it was a ***“messenger from Satan sent to torment me, to keep me from being too elated.”***

Notice what Paul writes, ***“Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, but he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:7-8).*** Sometimes the Lord uses our infirmities, our suffering, and our tragedies to draw us into deeper fellowship and communion with God and one another. I want you to hear carefully what I am about to say.

Some of life's most valuable lessons are also some of life's most costly and painful lessons. If not for the pain, we would not grow. God gives us healing grace to cope with our pain and suffering and learn the essential lessons that are contained within it. The famous Christian leader, Corrie Ten Boom, whose entire family was killed by the Nazis, wisely said, *“The object of our greatest pain can become the source of our greatest healing when we offer it to God.”* I am certainly not implying that everything that happens to us is the will of the Lord. The Lord, however, can use everything that happens to us as a means of growth and spiritual renewal. This is what Paul affirms when he writes in Romans 8:28, ***“We know that in all things God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose.”*** Some refer to this as the “All Things” plan of God. Our challenge is to pray, seek the Lord and to listen for what God is trying to communicate to us amid our circumstances and pain. To do this effectively, we often need mature Christians to journey with us and help us make sense out of our suffering. We need a confidant who is faithful in the Lord.

Do you have a person like this in your life? If not, I encourage you to ask God who you could share this type of friendship. Pray for guidance in building this kind of relationship. If you are not sure you know someone like this, I encourage you to pray that God would connect you with someone in your church or community you could meet and commit to grow together in the Lord. Powerful healing can come when two or more are gathered and agree together in prayer.

In ***Matthew 18:19*** Jesus said, ***“...if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father who is in heaven.”*** This reveals that there is power in praying with others. We need to pray for what God wants and for what God is doing in a person’s life. We don’t dictate or demand that God do what we want. We pray and seek alignment with what God is doing and with what God wants just as Paul did when he didn’t get the answer for which

he was hoping. I have discovered that the most powerful prayer happens when we come into holy submission and alignment with the lessons God needs to teach us. To do so, advances our wisdom and understanding and increases the power of God flowing through us in healing.

I think this fourth type of healing is the most difficult to accept. Many of us want the easy way out, the quick fix, the painless path. However, Jesus did say that we must take up our cross if we want to follow him (Matthew 16:24). He said in *John 16:33*, "***In the world you will have tribulation. Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.***" The cross, suffering and resurrection are at the center of Christianity. If we want to live with him, we must also learn to die with him. This brings me to the last point.

V. The fifth & Final way God chooses to heal is following death, in eternity

For the Christian, death is a release from the limits of this life...physical limits, spiritual limits, limits of knowledge and understanding. The Bible says in *Revelation 21:3-5*: "***See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them as their God; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more ;mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.***" *And the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new."*

When we pray, many people have the idea of trying to bring what is true in heaven to earth. This thought comes in Jesus' prayer, "May your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven." However, we don't often approach prayer as Jesus did, knowing who God is and being in complete alignment with God. Many of us pray as if we are trying to get a reluctant God to bless us, heal us, to do what we wish, or to do what we think is needed for someone.

Let me suggest an alternative. What if we took seriously the Scripture that you and I are seated with Christ in the heavens (Hebrews 12:2 and 7:25)? ***Romans 8:34 declares that Christ Jesus "is at the right hand of God and is also interceding (praying) for us."*** In ***Ephesians 1:6-7*** we read that you and I are seated with Christ in the heavenly realm, ***"And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus."*** We see in these references that Christ is praying constantly. He is praying continuously for you and me...by name. His prayers are perfect prayers. His perfect prayers are to heal us and then release and empower us to begin the healing work He has destined for us to do in the world as a means of glorifying Him. You and I are called to join our prayers with Christ. Amazingly, wonderfully, our little droplets of prayer are valued by God. Your prayers may not seem like much but when added to prayers along with the rest of the church, those living on earth and Christ in heaven, there is unexplainable power!

Prayer involves a lot more listening for what Jesus wants and looking for what He is doing and much less informing the Lord about what we want. When you and I begin to pray like this, we will see more answered prayer. When we pray for healing, we are not dictating to God which of the five ways we expect healing to come. We simply pray that God would work and bring the healing that is most needed in the manner it is needed. The method and timing of the healing is left up to God. Sometimes God uses more than one of the ways I have spoken about. Jesus said ***in Matthew 18:18-20, "...if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I."*** In ***John 16:23-24, Jesus said, "...Truly, I say to you, if you ask anything of the Father, he will give it to you in my name. Hitherto you have asked nothing in my name; ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full."*** James 5:15-16 reads ***"The prayer of faith will save the sick, and***

the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed." Healing power is available for all of us in Jesus Christ, the perfect Son of God who died on the cross for our sin and rose again and sits at the right hand of God praying for us. He wants us to experience his healing grace in our lives.

Therefore, in closing, I ask you to honestly search your heart. Ask God to show you one or more ways in which you need to be healed. Then humbly turn to the Lord with your need and desire for healing. God is not interested in perfect sounding prayers. God wants hearts open and available and willing to pray in faith for healing for ourselves and for one another.

Our Mission here at Fountaingate is to reach the lost and gently bring the healing to the broken. Our responsibility to God is to be the church He planted in Cornwall. A church of gentleness, a church of healing. A church that prides itself on listening to God and following the Word of God. A church which does not believe in "hyper" teachings and allows the Holy Spirit to work at our altar. As Pastor Brad spoke a couple weeks ago, it's time to Alter Back to the Altar! It's time to cry out to God and believe that He wants to bring healing – Emotional, Physical, Spiritual, Mental healing – to our congregation and community. The Holy Spirit is GENTLE. Therefore, by following where the Holy Spirit guides, we will keep within our Mission that God entrusted us with.

Next week my wife will touch on the second part of the mission statement...to gently offer health.

Be Blessed!