**Pastor Tim’s Message Notes from 5-30-2021
Jesus the Healer**

People often say things like “how were things like in Bible times” or “back in Bible times,” but I have perhaps a startling word for you today, Bible times have not ended. We are living in Bible times. In fact, all of human history, from its creation to the return of Christ and Christ’s kingdom being established fully on earth, that is all technically Bible times.

While the written Bible is completed and has been for some time, the events described in this book are not yet completed. So, we are living in Bible times. And that’s kind of exciting, if you think about it.

One important example of how we are living in Bible times is the Book of Acts. I love the Book of Acts. It is one of my favorite books in the entire Bible. And it is a very important book. In fact, it is difficult to picture the New Testament without the Book of Acts.

Acts picks up where the gospel accounts of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John conclude.

And it describes the birth of the church. Just last Sunday we celebrated Pentecost once again and we saw how Jesus had been exalted in heaven and how He had poured out the Holy Spirit on that small group of about 120 followers. And by the end of the day there were 3,000 new believers in Jesus as the Messiah.

The very first verses of the Book of Acts give us a huge clue that we are still living in Bible times.

Acts begins in this way. Luke writes, **“In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus *began* to *do* and to *teach* until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen.”**

The former book Luke is referring to is his gospel. Luke wrote both his gospel as well as the book of Acts. But I would like for us to focus on one word from this opening sentence of Acts – the word “**began**.”

In the gospel of Luke, Luke records what Jesus began to do and to teach.

What this implies is that Jesus will continue to do things and to teach in the book of Acts as well. But by the end of verse 9 of chapter one, what happens? Jesus ascends into heaven.

So, the big question is how would Jesus be continuing to do things, actions, and to teach of the Kingdom of God with Him now being in heaven?

The answer is that He would do it through others, through his followers such as Peter and Paul and others and by the power of the Holy Spirit Jesus would be building and leading His Church. Jesus is and will always be the head of the church.

And take a moment to think about this. Jesus desires to do and to teach through you and through me. That’s amazing isn’t it.

We see this in the Book of Acts, but until Jesus returns, we are still living in the Book of Acts. You and I continue the ministry of Jesus to this world. And that’s a humbling thought.

This is important to keep in mind as we explore the book of Acts in the coming weeks. As we look at various passages of the Book of Acts in the coming weeks, we will see Jesus continues to act and to teach.

Truly, apart from Jesus, we can do nothing of significance for God, but Jesus lives in His people and He can and will do amazing things through us. We are called to be His hands, His feet, His mouth in this world.

In fact, in an amazing verse from the letter 1 John, John writes (4:17) ‘**in this world we are like Jesus**.’

This doesn’t mean that we are Jesus. But we are called to be His representatives, His ambassadors. And our lives are to reveal the Kingdom of God in our broken world.

One profound example of this truth is found in Acts 3:1-16.

Let us hear God’s Word together.

**3 One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon. 2Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. 3When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. 4Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, “Look at us!” 5So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them.**

**6Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” 7Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man’s feet and ankles became strong. 8He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. 9When all the people saw him walking and praising God, 10they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.**

**11While the man held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon’s Colonnade. 12When Peter saw this, he said to them: “Fellow Israelites, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? 13The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go. 14You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. 15You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this. 16By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus’ name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see.**

This is an amazing story. This man had been lame from birth. He had been carried each day since he came of age to one of the gates of the city of Jerusalem. Gates were perfect places to be placed, because people had to walk by you in order to get through the gate.

And Jesus does a beautiful thing at the Beautiful Gate. Jesus heals this man. It was the power of Jesus Name, spoke through the mouth of Peter, that brought healing to this man. A miracle had taken place. And people were astounded. This man who had never walked was now walking, jumping, and praising God!

But Peter makes one thing very clear. It wasn’t by his own godliness that this man was healed, it was by might of Jesus Christ. Peter in and of himself couldn’t heal anything, but he understood that Christ now lived in him and he wanted to be a vessel of Christ’s love and power to others.

We read a little later on of people lining the streets in order that Peter’s shadow might fall on them and these people were healed. Peter knew that Jesus was the healer, not himself. Peter simply made himself available as a willing vessel whom Jesus could bless others though.

Through chapters 3 & 4 of the book of Acts, there is a big debate about the Name of Jesus. Some of the religious leaders tried to forbid the apostles from teaching or acting in the Name of Jesus. They understood that the apostles were claiming that it was Jesus Himself that had done this miracle. Jesus was indeed alive and reigning in power from heaven. And they wanted to shut the apostles up.

But the apostles knew that they must obey God rather than men. And they were to live by the power of the Name of Jesus. The Name that is above every name.

This story teaches us that as Christians today, we are to be Christ’s ambassadors. And one way that we do this is by offering the healing power of Christ towards people or situations.

Christ is the healer and there is so much that is broken and in need of healing in this world today, just as there was in the first century when He walked among us.

But friends, here the good news, Christ desires you to be a vessel that releases His healing in this world.

What is our response to then be?

**Simply this.** **We are all called to invite Christ to heal through our prayers.** Our prayers are powerful in His hands. More healing takes place when more praying occurs. Our prayers do make a difference. God desires to work through us.

There is so much that we can pray about. So much healing that is needed. Physical healing situations, emotional healing, mental healing, spiritual healing ---- your prayers release the power of God into situations.

So please do not be afraid to pray. Do not feel like you need to be in perfect health yourself to pray for others. Do not feel that you have to be in church to pray for others. You can pray for people when you are with them or when you are alone, but our prayers are more powerful than we realize.

This doesn’t mean that everyone that we pray for is going to come to Christ or to be healed physically in this life, but please know that our prayers do make a difference.

If you believe in Jesus and if you have invited Him to fill you with His Spirit, know that you are a witness for Jesus everywhere that you go.

In other words, there are many forms of Christ’s healing. And the Lord loves to ministry through people, through us.

Peter spoke a prayer that released Jesus’ healing on this man.

Please know that Christ’s healing is often incremental. Jesus does bring instantaneous healing at times, but more often, it seems, healing is more of a process.

Please know that the Lord is pleased with us when we pray and ask for His healing to be released over people, over relationships, over situations.

A good way to pray is found from our study of the Lord’s Prayer. Jesus taught in that prayer that we should pray in a way that honors God’s Name, advances God’s Kingdom, and releases God’s will on this earth.

Remember, Jesus said “Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

In other words, our focus in our prayers should be on God’s Name being honored and His purposes being advanced in the midst of this broken situation.

Sometimes God’s healing takes place through people passing away and going to be with the Lord. Jesus is not a genie and He doesn’t have to answer our prayers in the way that we desire. But please know that He desires wholeness and wellness and healing, one way or the other, in people.

And truly, the most serious form of healing that we all need is the healing of our relationship with God, the forgiveness of our sins and our reconciliation with God. This healing again comes through Jesus. He is the One that heals our relationship with the Father. This is the most important healing.