

The Holy Spirit has many tasks and bestows on us many gifts. In last week's study, we considered the gift of testimony. Jesus promised the disciples (and us) that he would send the Advocate to testify on his behalf after he is gone. (John 15:26). This week we consider the gift of healing.

Monday John 14:15-17 (NRSV)

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you."

Wow! Another presence in our lives as great as Jesus. Just as Jesus abides in us (John 15:4-6), he promises that the Holy Spirit will be "in" us also. Jesus tells the disciples they will know the Spirit through the Spirit's abiding presence.

How do you experience the Holy Spirit in your life?

How often are you aware that the Holy Spirit is "in" you?

What was one time this was clear?

How does the Holy Spirit affect your life?

Tuesday 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 (NRSV)

Now there are varieties of gifts... All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses. [*Read the entire passage in your Bible*]

Paul writes to help the newly converted in Corinth understand that God brings special gifts for a common purpose through the presence of the Holy Spirit. Paul lists nine gifts (and others elsewhere in his epistles). Each has a special province, healing, for example. Each gift, however, has the same ultimate purposes – to glorify God and to build an effective community of faith on earth.

Which gift(s) of the Spirit have you received?

How have you used the gift(s)?

Wednesday 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 (NRSV)

To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given . . . gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles. . . .

Healing is God's work, often "manifested" by the Holy Spirit; that is, healing is "grasped by hand" through the Holy Spirit. And healings (or miracles), as gifts given through the Spirit, are about more than the cure of one person's injury or illness.

For what purposes does God give us the spiritual gift of healing?

Thursday 2 Kings 5:9-12 (NRSV)

... Elisha sent a messenger to [Naaman], saying, "Go, wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored and you shall be clean." But Naaman became angry and went away, saying, "I thought that for me he would surely come out, and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and would wave his hand over the spot, and cure the leprosy! Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them, and be clean?" He turned and went away in a rage.

Naaman was the commander of the king's army. He was told that the prophet Elisha could heal his leprosy. Of course, it was a gift of the Spirit, working through Elisha, that would do the healing. Naaman did not understand and insisted on his own ideas of how to be healed.

Have you ever pulled a "Naaman," that is, insisted that things be done your way?

What was the result?

Friday 2 Kings 5:9:13-14 (NRSV)

But his servants approached and said to him, "Father, if the prophet had commanded you to do something difficult, would you not have done it? How much more, when all he said to you was, 'Wash, and be clean'?" So he went down and immersed himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God; his flesh was restored like the flesh of a young boy, and he was clean.

Naaman's servants convinced him to give God a try. He was healed and, as a result, accepted the God of Israel – though he still didn't quite get the idea that this God, through the Holy Spirit, and not Elisha, was responsible for his healing. (2 Kings 5:15-24).

Where was the Holy Spirit at work in this story?

Must one believe in order to be healed?

Saturday Psalm 147:1-3 (NRSV)

Praise the LORD! How good it is to sing praises to our God; for he is gracious, and a song of praise is fitting. The LORD builds up Jerusalem; he gathers the outcasts of Israel. He heals the brokenhearted, and binds up their wounds.

God built up God's people after they returned to Jerusalem from their captivity; God used the gift of healing for this purpose. And God was glorified. The Holy Spirit was at work, then as now!

How is the Holy Spirit at work today in building up God's people and the Church?

What gifts do you use to build up God's people and the Church?

God, thank you for building us up with your gifts through the Holy Spirit. Amen