

From Death to Life

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[0:00] Hi, everybody. Good morning. So, yeah, we're back in the book of Acts this week, and we've been going through Acts, which! is about the life of the early church. But today, in addition to just hearing from the early! church, God's word about the early church, we'll actually have a chance to hear some testimonies from Jackie and Florence today. And also, I'd like to give a warm welcome to Jackie's parents and relatives who decided to join today. Welcome. So glad you're here, and thanks for joining us.

Now, today in Acts 9, we're going to read about two occurrences of miraculous healing. Miraculous healing. There's Ananias, who's a man who was paralyzed, but then, at the word of Peter, stood up and walked. Also, Tabitha Dorcas was a woman who fell sick and died, but then was raised back to life. Miraculous healing. Now, I'd like to ask a question. What do you think of when you hear of healing? What's your gut reaction when you think about healing? For some of us, because I think there's a few different reactions we may have, for some of us, there's longing. I want healing. Some of us are praying for healing for ourselves, maybe for your knee, for a family member, a relative, a friend. You want God to heal. Or maybe there's a situation where you're disappointed that God hasn't healed. Now, for others, there's skepticism. I don't believe it. When you're reading about healing stories in the Bible, it sounds made up. Maybe you find the Bible hard to believe because you think that these miracles simply aren't possible. Or maybe you believe that God healed in the Bible, but it's hard to believe that he still does that today because I don't see it. Some of us read these healings and we're in awe, just like the people in Acts were. That God can do that? Don't lose that amazement.

But on the other hand, I think possibly the most common reaction to healing in the Bible is simply apathy. We just shrug at it. Most of us are Christians, but we've read these stories so many times in the Bible that when we read about healing, we don't blink an eye. We just shrug.

Paralyzed man walking again? Okay. Dead woman back to life. Cool story. The awe and wonder is gone. The healings are just stories in the Bible, but they don't feel relevant.

They might not feel relevant to our lives 2,000 years later in Hong Kong. So how do we react to healing? How is it that we react to healing? In any case, whether it's longing or skepticism, some awe, apathy, I believe that our passage here today in Acts 9 has something to say to every one of us. We'll read about these two healings in Acts 9 and even not just healing, but one case of resurrection. And today we'll see that God, yes, he wants to heal us, but his purpose goes far beyond just healing our bodies. When God heals us, he's giving a taste of the greatest message in the world that Jesus brings us from life to death, from death to life. The healings in Acts 9 and all the healings that happen today, they're pointing to the good news that Jesus brought us from death to life. He gives us new life. And with that, let's turn to Acts chapter 9 verses 32 to 43. Let's stand as we read God's word.

[3:28] If you're able, please stand as we read God's word together. We do that just as a small gesture of reverence. So Acts chapter 9 verses 32 to 43. Now as Peter went here and there among them all, he came down also to the saints who lived at Lydda.

There he found a man named Anais, bedridden for eight years, who was paralyzed. And Peter said to him, Anais, Jesus Christ heals you, rise and make your bed. And immediately he rose. And all the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord. Now there was in Joppa a disciple named Tabitha, which translated means Dorcas. She was full of good works and acts of charity. In those days, she became ill and died. And when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room. Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men to him, urging him, please come to us without delay. So Peter rose and went with them. And when he arrived, they took him to the upper room. All the widows stood beside him, weeping and

showing tunics and other garments that Dorcas made while she was with them. But Peter put them all outside and knelt down and prayed. And turning to the body, he said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes. And when she saw Peter, she sat up. And he gave her his hand and raised her up. Then calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. And it became known throughout all Joppa. And many believed in the Lord.

And he stayed in Joppa for many days with one Simon, a tanner. This is the word of the Lord. Please take a seat. Now, as we read just now, our passage is about healing. And today I'd like us to see that healing depicts the good news that Jesus brings us from death to life. That is what healing is about.

Now, before getting to Neas and Tabitha, last week we heard about another healing. Last week, we heard the story of Saul who was confronted and then converted. He was confronted by Christ and then converted. Saul was the one who approved of killing Stephen. He was someone who persecuted the church, breaking in house after house to drag those who believed in Jesus to prison. And in Acts 9, Saul was breathing threats and murders against the disciples of the Lord. And he went to Damascus to put these words, these threats into action. And that's when Jesus stopped him dead in his tracks.

The resurrected Jesus appeared to him in a light from heaven and said, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? And Saul was blinded for three days, but healed by Anais three days later. [6:06] He was blind physically, but now could see. He was also blind spiritually to seeing who Jesus was, but now he could see in a flash of light. His eyes were open to seeing the reality of Jesus when he was confronted by Jesus on the road to Damascus. He was blind, but can now see. Jesus confronted Saul and changed him. And this man, Saul is more commonly known as the Apostle Paul. Previously, he was a persecutor of the church, but he ended up as one of the greatest preachers and evangelists of the gospel of all time. He wrote 13 books of the New Testament. One was one of the most fruitful evangelists. That's the power of the spirit of Christ to bring the dead to life. And we see the same thing also now in our passage about the healing of Anais and Tabitha, Dorcas. Just as Saul was changed from persecutor to preacher, Anais was healed from paralysis to becoming a proclamation of Christ.

Let's look at verse 32 here. It says, now, as Peter went here and there among them all, he came down also to the saints who lived at Lydda. The Apostle Peter, he was going around doing apostle things, preaching the gospel, building up the church. And he came to the saints, God's people at Lydda, which is a place about 40 kilometers from Jerusalem. And there he found a man named Anais, bedridden for eight years, who was paralyzed. Peter said to him, Anais, Jesus Christ heals you.

Rise and make your bed. And immediately he rose. Imagine being there. Do you see how insane that would be? Anais was paralyzed for eight years. That's a long time. Imagine not being able to move, not being able to leave your bed for eight years. I recently got my PR in Hong Kong. I came to Hong Kong seven years ago. So not even eight years, but in that time, lots of things happened, right? We have COVID. We had protests. Some people lost their hair. And that all seems like a world ago. Just not even eight years. Eight years ago, that's when Fortnite first came down. Eight years ago, that's when Trump tweeted, covfefe. So for eight years, Anais was suffering. For eight years, he was paralyzed in bed.

But with these words, Jesus Christ heals you. He got up immediately. Let's not shrug and skip past this. This is the power of Jesus to heal. Jesus Christ heals you. Know that it's not, it's, it's not Peter. It's Jesus, right? Jesus Christ heals you. In an instant with a single word, he said, rise. And immediately the paralyzed man got up. And that got me thinking, do I have such a big view of God? [8:55] Are my eyes fixed on a glorious God who has this power to heal? So if you've been praying for someone, maybe to know Jesus, a friend, a coworker, a relative, maybe you've been praying for eight years.

Remember Anais? Immediately he got up. If there's someone you think that is so far from God, is so hard hearted, what does it change to know that God can save even someone like Paul, a persecutor of the church, some, or someone who's paralyzed for eight years? Jesus Christ heals you. Do we worship, do we worship such a God with that power? And what's the result of Anais's healing?

It says in verse 35, all the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw him and they turned to the Lord. Now in this, we see one purpose for miracles and healing. People saw that Anais was healed and the

result was they believed in the Lord. Jesus turned Anais's paralysis into proclamation. That's one purpose of healing. Miracles serve the message. And that's why in Acts, the most common name for miracles, the most common phrase to describe miracles is signs and wonders. As wonders, these miracles fill us with awe and astonishment. And as signs, they're like those blue MTR signs that point us towards the nearest station. It's signs and wonders give weight to the proclamation that Jesus is Lord and their salvation for all who believe in him. Anais healed. When Anais was healed, that gave reason, they gave people reason to believe. And so they turned to the Lord seeing what had happened.

So Anais's paralysis became proclamation. Next up, we have the story of Dorcas, also known as Tabitha. Anais was healed. And if that was crazy enough, Dorcas was literally resurrected. She was dead and came back to life. Dorcas was brought from death to life. Let's look at verse 36. She, that being Tabitha, Dorcas, she was full of good works and acts of charity. Yet despite all her good works in those days, she became ill and died. Anais was paralyzed, but Dorcas was straight up dead. And after washing her, it says, they placed her in a room upstairs. They washed her and prepared to bury her. But first, they sent for Peter in verse 38. Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men to him, urging him, please come to us without delay. So Peter rose and went with them.

And when he arrived, they took him to the upper room. All the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing tunics and other garments that Dorcas made while she was with them. So Dorcas was dead and they sent for Peter. Now the Bible doesn't specify exactly why they went to go find Peter. There could be a few reasons. Dorcas was well known and loved in Joppa. So maybe Peter knew her and they wanted him there for the funeral. Or another reason is maybe they believed that Peter could heal her. They heard of Peter healing Anais at Lydda and rushed to him, believing that he could raise Dorcas to heal Dorcas also. Those are two possibilities, but the Bible doesn't tell us enough to say for sure. But even if we don't know what those at Joppa believed when they sent for Peter, we know for sure what Peter believed. We know for sure that Peter believed that Jesus could bring her to life. Verse 40 says, Peter put all of them outside, meaning he sent them all outside the room. And he knelt down and prayed.

[12:33] And turning to the body, he said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes. And when she saw Peter, she sat up. Again, let's not skip past how insane this is. Dorcas was dead. She was dead. But he called to her, Tabitha, get up. And she opened her eyes. The dead rose to life. And I can only imagine how those who were there felt. They were outside grieving, comforting one another, maybe hugging one another, not sure what would happen. But in between their sobs, they heard Peter from outside the room, maybe muffled, saying, Tabitha, get up. And then Peter, he runs out of the room. He says, come and see, look, she's alive. She's alive now. Imagine the joy that would have felt. The joy, the relief, the amazement. How could this happen? Jesus brought her from death to life. And we see again in verse 42, people saw that and they believed. It says, it became known throughout all Joppa and many believed in the Lord. Once again, miracles support the message of who Jesus is. Because if Jesus brought

Dorcas from death to life, why not believe that Jesus also rose from the dead? Miracles give reason to believe. But that's not all. See, out of all the miracles that Jesus could have done or that the apostles could have done, why is it so often that the miracle is one of healing? Why did he so often choose to heal? Right? Jesus could have done other miracles. He did some other miracles, but he, he, he could have flown through the sky like Superman, faster than speeding bullet, leap tall buildings in a single bound, shoot lasers out of his eyes. Those are some miracles that Jesus could have done to get people to believe in him, right? Jump off the temple in Jerusalem and have angels catch him.

But Jesus didn't do that. Those are not the miracles Jesus chose to do. He chose primarily to heal. And that's because healing depicts the good news and is a partial fulfillment of the good news. The message is that the kingdom of God is here. That's the gospel. The kingdom of God is here. Jesus has come to proclaim good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty, those who are pressed to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. That's what Jesus came to do. Why is that? Because before the good news of the gospel, there's the bad news that we were all sinners. We are all sinners. We were all sick in the heart and dead in sin. And maybe you feel this. You can try as much as you want to do good things and you could do that for a bit, but inevitably we fail. Inevitably we fall short. At some point we will

get angry with our parents. At some point we will fall short. We were sick in the heart and dead in sins.

And now other religions and perhaps secular morality will tell us that the solution is to change and do better. We just need to work harder, try harder. But Paul, Anais, Dorcas, they show us that dead people can't work their way out of the grave. They can't do that. If we are dead in sin, there's nothing that we can do to save ourselves. Dorcas couldn't just sit up and get out of bed by her efforts.

[15:56] The good news is that Jesus loved us and on the cross, he took the punishment that we deserve, died in our place and rose on the third day so that we may have life freely given if we believe in him and are united with him. And just as Peter said, Tabitha, get up. And she opened her eyes.

God said to a dead sinner, God said to me, Gabriel, get up. He said, Jackie, get up. Florence, get up. And he says to all of us here today, get up, open your eyes, look on Jesus and be saved. We were dead in our trespasses and sins. There's nothing we could do to fix it. But God, being rich in mercy because of the great love with which he loved us, made us alive together with Christ. By grace, you have been saved. That's the gospel. Through Jesus, God heals us completely in every way. Now, for those of us who follow Jesus, do we know that, are we aware that our faith is also a miracle? Today, if you're here gathered with us worshiping and you feel in your heart, a love for God, this burning for the glory of God, that is a miracle. God brought you from death to life. God gave you that love for him through his spirit who lives in you. That's a miracle. But do we shrug at that?

Like how we might skim past the fact that God healed Anais and Dorcas. Do we also forget how big a deal it is that Jesus literally brought us from death to life? Sometimes when people share their testimony, they think, they say something like, I was born in a Christian family. My story isn't that interesting. Right? And that was me before. I remember hearing stories of people doing all these crazy things, like getting arrested and, and God turned them around. And I thought, man, I wish I, like I was a drug dealer. And then, you know, I met Jesus in jail. That'd be such a cool story. Right? That'd be such a cool testimony. But that's not the point. That's not the point. Right? It's only a minor detail how Anais got paralyzed or how Dorcas felt sick. We don't get much detail though there. What really matters is that we were dead. We were all sinners, but Jesus gave us new life. And that's always a miracle. Every person here who knows Jesus is a reason to celebrate just as the widows would have been overjoyed. Right? When Dorcas, Peter said, Hey, come see, see Dorcas. She's now alive. They would have been overjoyed in tears, mind blown, seeing her alive. Every person who's come to know Christ is a miracle. And so I want to take a pause here, take a moment to celebrate someone in our church family. We heard about Anais. We heard about Dorcas. Now I'd like to invite our dear friend, Jackie up to share what Jesus has done for him. Let's get him a mic. Thank you.

[18:53] Hey, Jackie. Hello. All right. So we'll go straight because we don't have much time. So what was your life like before, before you met Jesus? What was your life like before? Before Jesus? It's like, it's like almost 12 years ago. 12 years ago. Yeah. It was a long time ago. So I'm trying to, uh, I would say I was always searching. I was always searching, like looking back is clear when, when you're going through, you don't really know. Uh, but, uh, as I reflect, I kind of, I see myself as always searching for something more because there's something that is kind of strange because before I met Jesus, um, there's a unifying thing where, which is like, don't lie.

People like are gravitated to love, um, you know, righteousness, justice. These things are like, without, without Jesus, people still resonate with that. And that made me curious. So I kind of, uh, but I wasn't like focused and looking for religions, but my actions came out as like studying, um, like Buddhism, studying like Eastern philosophy, um, Greek mythology, and then like, even like art, just looking for answers, I guess, just curiosity. So. Cool. Thanks for sharing that. And what led you to encounter Jesus? What led up to that? Uh, yeah. So, so in the midst of that, it's pretty, pretty normal stuff. Um, but, uh, a decade ago, um, I get, I get news from my family that, um, really kind of broke my world that, uh, made me not have the dreams that I kind of have, uh, previously. So, uh, there was a period where I was kind of lost, like about like six months or so, just, like I said, when I was going through it, I didn't really know that I was doing that, but how to like numb that pain of like, of loss. Um, I just partied a lot and just drank a bunch and then did all the, did all like, you know, smoke a lot of weed. I was in Canada. So like, so it was legal.

Completely don't recommend. Super lost. And then, uh, six months passed, super lost spiritually looking for like an answer. Um, and then now I'm physically lost. Uh, GPS wasn't very good. I had to go back to university, uh, to my dorm room. Um, the, the party was on a Saturday. So like now it's a Sunday, uh, making my way back, um, get lost, see a church in front of me, super hungover. Uh, and I'm like, my standards are so low. So I'm just like, okay, at least there's a sink I can drink water from.

Like, so I go inside, no words exchanged with the greeter. And then she just really nice. She just gave me a cup of water and then, and I'm like, thank you. And then I sat, I sat back at the, at the back of the pews sermon just started. Um, I think that's the first time I've ever like listened to a sermon and, and actually heard it in my heart. Cause I've, I've been in church environments before, uh, to be frank, it was quite scary. Cause I used to go to, go to like summer school, like, or like, uh, or Sunday school. And then there was one time where like, yeah, they kind of make you, they make you believe in Jesus. I was like, I was like like this, this tall. And then I'm just like, okay, sure. I'll believe in Jesus. And never went back.

Yeah. So, uh, so people are not perfect. That's what I'm trying to say. Uh, but fast forward to this moment, the preacher was saying, um, like making a comparison of unconditional love and the mainstream love, which is like kind of like the Hollywood love, which is like, and the difference. I think that's the first time I heard someone broke it down so well for me, which is, uh, the mainstream, the, the romantic love, the Hollywood love that you kind of see most of the time is actually a transaction where I give you this much, at least you can give me that much back. Right. That would be kind of the reasoning. If you really dig down to the essence of it, that's, that's kind of toxic and it's not good. Uh, that's actually a transaction. It could be even a business transaction. [23 : 58] Um, but where God loved the unconditional love is I love you. Here we go. I love you. And period.

And I think when I heard that, I just broke down, I think because maybe it's because of the accumulation of the things that was happening in my life. And, and then I felt the presence of God and, uh, the preacher gave me like some applications in the sermon to like apply it in my life. Like how do, how to challenge this? How do you, how far can you go with this, uh, concept? And then, and I tried my life and then people around me felt better as well. And I can see the goodness in it. And eventually I'll just like, okay, uh, the more made me curious, went back to church more. And then eventually, uh, became consistent. And then there was a moment where I'm like, am I Christian?

Yeah. And then you were sharing that for you. It was, there was one moment where you, that kind of hit you, that love for God, but it took, it was a journey, right? That was like the start of a journey where you came to know Jesus. You were exploring, you were open to asking these questions and you, you found that the more and more you tested what the Bible said, you found that it was true. It's true. It's rock steady, man. And how's your life changed since, um, yeah, since I'm still on this journey. I'm also still figuring out what unconditional love looks like.

There's always more that you're, cause as you walk with God, the more healing you, you, you get, the further that God wants you to walk with him and you have to humble yourself to get there.

[25 : 50] Like, don't, don't like the victory is not yours is, is God's and he's, and he's trying to heal you. So I think that's, so I'm still walking. I'm still learning like what, what it's supposed to be like right now. Yeah. We're glad we're on this journey with you. Thanks. Thanks, Jackie. Thank you.

Let's give him a round of applause. And yeah, Jackie, Jackie didn't have time to share, but one thing he really wanted to say is, you know, there's stories in the Bible where people are healed instantaneously. See, and God does that.

But for a lot of us, it takes, it's a, it's a process. God takes us on a journey. And even once we get to know Jesus, there's this process of sanctification where we, we, we look more and more like him. And actually, Jackie had one more story about how a couple of years after that, he had eczema and God healed him of that. And actually through that process, he came to know and love God more. So if you, you're interested, I'm sure he's happy to share with you.

Um, but that's how Jesus came to change. Jackie gave him new life. And just as apostle Paul was physically and spiritually blind, Jackie was physically lost on a three hour journey back home, hung over and spiritually lost. But God, Jesus changed his life. And for those of you who know Jackie, if you see something different about him now, where he's, there's this joy in him, this lightness in him, I invite you to be curious and learn more. Ask him what's changed because it is so good to know the

God that Jackie knows. So I invite you to that.

And now some of you might be wondering, okay, so we talked about spiritual healing and spiritual resurrection. What about like real healing, healing, healing, like physical, mental healing, like, like Anais paralyzed, but getting up and walking. Does God still heal like that today?

[27:37] Does God still heal today physically? And the short answer is, yes. He still does. And we can pray for healing today. Some reasons why firstly, God can heal through just natural means. God created the world and he gives us his common grace. God made us. And it's incredible how intricately he designed our bodies to heal itself. Right? God gave us platelets in our, in our blood so that when we cut, when we're cut, they'll clot and stop the bleeding. And there's white blood cells to fight off infection and our skin will cells will multiply and cover over the wound.

God is the one who heals us even in how he designed our bodies. And God also gave us intelligence and wisdom to learn science, develop medicine, train doctors who can treat us. So doctors, modern medicine, they are gifts from God. So when we're sick, we can go see a doctor while thinking God for that gift.

He's been given us and glorifying him for it. Also, secondly, God has a power to heal, not just naturally, but supernaturally. God is the one again, who created the world and he's active in the world, who sent his son into the world, who sent his spirit in the hearts of all who believe in him. And Bible says, our God is in the heaven. He does all that he pleases. If God is, he created the world, he's certainly able to fix the world too. God has the power to heal today.

He's able to do it. And I don't dare limit him or put him in a box that way. Thirdly, God is a compassionate God. He's still a loving and compassionate God today.

[29:15] Matthew 14 verse 14 says, Jesus had compassion on the crowd and healed their sick. Jesus had compassion when he saw the state they were in and that compassion moved him to heal them.

Also, when Jesus heard Lazarus had died and saw the grief of those who loved him, there's that famous verse, Jesus wept. Jesus wept. Jesus was grieved by our suffering.

In the Old Testament, Exodus 5 verse 26, God says, I am the Lord, your healer. I am the Lord who heals you. Our God is a healer and he has that same compassionate heart towards us today.

So yes, God still heals and we can pray for healing. Knowing that he has the power to heal and he loves us. He cares for us still today. Now at the same time, we need to avoid a mistaken overemphasis on healing.

We can underemphasize healing. Just think that God is separate from the world with a secular worldview, a very enlightened worldview. There's also a way to mistakenly overemphasize healing.

[30:22] Let's not take healing beyond what the Bible says. There's some people out there preaching that God promises health and wealth for all believers. If you follow Jesus, if you have enough faith, it is always God's will to heal you.

God promises you healthy, prosperous lives today. That's what some people say. Okay. Now that's false. The Bible doesn't promise us full healing in this life.

If anything, there's assurances that we will suffer. John 16 verse 33 says, in this world, you will have tribulations or suffering. And if you really want to be apostolic, remember last week, what Jesus said about the apostle Paul, chapter nine, verse 16, I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.

And we're not going to focus on money today, but all I'll say is that God did bless Judas with 30 pieces of silver. Now, those who promise health and wealth today will back their claim by saying that Jesus's death on the cross bought our healing.

For example, Matthew 18 verse 17 says, Jesus cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick. This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah.

[31:32] He took our illnesses and bore our diseases. Jesus was casting out demons and healing diseases. And Matthew connects that to the atonement, quoting Isaiah 53.

They say that Jesus's death purchased not just forgiveness of sins, but also healing for all who call upon him. And actually, let me tell you so far, I agree with all this, that yes, Jesus died to fully heal us completely, physically, mentally, spiritually, relationally in every way.

That is absolutely true that Jesus died for that. But the question is, when? When will we surely be healed? When will we receive these promises in full force?

When will we receive these promises? The big mistake is not a matter of whether, but when the kingdom of God will finally be consummated and we have all these promises completely. Yes, the kingdom of God is here and we see glimpses of it in healing today.

But the fulfillment, the full effect of the promise is for when Christ returns. Healing we receive today is only a taster of what's to come. There's examples in the Bible, faithful believers who weren't healed.

[32:43] For example, 1 Timothy 5, 23 tells us that Timothy has stomach problems, but Paul doesn't say, hey, you need to pray more and you will surely be healed. He says, drink some wine rather than dirty water to avoid healing your stomach.

Or Paul himself in 2 Corinthians, there's a thorn in his flesh, likely a physical ailment. It could be some other form of suffering though. But he pleaded to God three times for healings, but even the apostle Paul wasn't fully healed.

Yet he said, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then I am content with weaknesses. That's the type of faith that glorifies God.

When for the sake of Christ, I'm content with weaknesses. Remember, Aeneas got up and walked. Dorcas came back to life. But what do you think happened 10, 20, 100 years later?

Aeneas got up, but he died. Dorcas lived again, but at some point she died again. That can't be all that there is to healing. Look at this world, how painful and miserable and broken it is.

[33:50] It'd be terrible if the blessings of the cross were limited only to what we see now. That's not good news. God heals today, but when he heals, it's a foretaste. It's a little sampler of his promise.

We look forward to so much more. When Christ returns, there'll be no more pain, no more death, no more sorrow. He will wipe every tear from our eyes. And the blessings we have in Christ are so much more, they include, but are so much more than just the promises of healing now.

So yes, God heals us physically now. We have a taste of that. We'll have that in full effect when he returns. And I'd like to invite Florence up now. She'll share a little bit about examples of healing in her life and her family.

And as she comes up, she messaged me before this week. My family's life should be a K-drama.

Ha ha. That's what she said. So yeah, Florence, you told me I know your family has been through a lot.

And we have to summarize 16 episodes in five minutes. Could you tell us first about what happened with your mom's, her depression, how God healed your family?

[34:57] Yes. So this is an ultra abridged story. Yeah, you can find me later for a longer version. But in the beginning, when I was born, my mom had postpartum depression. And it really worsened over the years because of a miscarriage as well.

So she wasn't able to see. So my mom and dad are here too. Hi. She wasn't able to see anybody during that time. She could only stay at home.

And then the pressure at home was really high as well. She would harm herself. She would also, there was still a lot, there was also a lot of physical and verbal abuse involved. And as I grew up and I was very depressed.

I hated life. I had no hope, honestly. My dad tried everything to help her as well. We really sought for many options, but nothing worked. We turned to pet therapy.

Long story short, we ended up with 13 cats. Didn't really work as well. So it's just a really long story, you know? And in that journey, really just sought for hope and sought for, because it was just really hopeless.

[35:57] The first, yeah, long period of that life, we really didn't know when that exit was. So all this time, my aunt, who is a Christian, she would preach the gospel to us.

She'd like give us Christian books. But then my dad took none of that to account, except for this book called The Power of a Praying Husband. And it was just that one occasion where he was reading this prayer of release for, of depression for my mom.

Thought nothing about it because he read it to comfort my mom. Um, the next day, again, I'm going to abbreviate everything that happens in between. He gets stung by a bee. He's allergic.

So he, within two minutes, rashes everywhere, um, anaphylaxis, right? So he's a dentist. And then he thinks, maybe I can save myself with an easy jab of epinephrine. Tries to make it to the clinic.

Doesn't make it to the clinic. Bright light shines, falls to the ground, gets whisked to the hospital. Um, and in that time, my mom also ends up whisking to the hospital to see what's going on.

[36:58] My aunt, who keeps preaching a gospel to us, is also there. Um, doctor comes out, tells everyone that, hey, your dad's BP and heart rate dropped to zero. He's likely going to die.

Just be prepared for the roast. And then my mom was like, oh, you know, what can we do? Like, what can I, I want to try everything to save my dad. And that was when she, um, prayed with my aunt, Auntie Joan.

Some of you might know her. Auntie Joan, the sinner's prayer as well. And it's just for healing and gave her life to Jesus. And that night she had the greatest sleep of her life.

Completely senseless because she could never sleep before. She would sleep at 5am, 6am, stuff like that. But she slept from the start to the end. Whereas my aunt couldn't sleep. Um, but then after that, we fast forward to when my dad wakes up, he looks around, he realizes that the doctor misdiagnosed him.

They put him as an epileptic. So they were giving all the wrong, giving him all the wrong meds. He has no history of epilepsy. He had no seizures. It was a completely ridiculous diagnosis. Doesn't make sense.

[38:00] Even a normal person would see the rashes and be like, hey, he's, he's got allergies. You know, simple as that. But hey, no. Um, so he was stuck in the hospital because he was on the wrong meds, but he couldn't die because they gave him a shot of adrenaline when his heart rate stopped.

Right. So it was just stuck there. Um, and over the course of everything, he was stuck in the hospital for four days and three nights. And my mom in the process came to him was like, hey, you know, I gave my life to Jesus.

I want to go to church and I am going to turn from, you know, all the ways that, um, we've, I've been treating you guys. And I just, you know, feel a sense of peace. And fast forward to the end, we see that actually this entire crazy story was not, of course, my dad was healed.

He didn't die. He's still alive here today. The doctor did a really bad job, but he's still okay. But it was to heal my mom. You see, because if he had the epinephrine shot and he got out right away, it would actually not have done anything.

You know, it would just be, hey, mom, mom, I was really, I was going to die. I had an aphylaxis, but hey, I'm okay. So happy, happy. Everything else is good. But no, because of his, um, yeah, because he was sent to the hospital and he was stuck there for a good while.

[39:07] Um, my mom had the chance to turn to the Lord. And after this, we saw her depression disappear over the years. Yeah. Um, so it was just really cool. It's just that incident afterwards. It was almost as if she just changed.

Like she couldn't see anybody anywhere between the crowds of like five to six. She'd be like, no. But then now she was able to share her testimony, preach to other people, um, be in a fellowship. So it's just a really beautiful transformation. And not only did, you know, God heal my dad, my mom, but also just our entire family. Yeah. I love that. And I guess, yeah, your, your mom and dad here today are a living example of how God heals depression, bee stings, even though that was bungled, but he's still alive.

We thank God for that. And, and that you've all come to know Jesus, right? And, and you also shared that your relatives soon after that came to know Jesus and, and your, your aunt had, um, a battle with cancer.

Can you share about that? Yeah. So shortly after, um, just again, uh, are actually, my mom's family was really broken. They hated each other to their guts. So my uncle hadn't, my uncle and my aunt, my mom haven't seen each other for like seven years.

[40:10] Cause they really disliked each other. And then to the point where, you know, they like rip people's faces out of the family photos that kind of dislike. So they really hated each other's guts. Um, but because my auntie Carmen, she just moved into a new apartment.

We're like, Hey, why don't we have a house warming anyway? So that was the first time when our entire family got together for the first time after like seven years. So then, um, my mom shares, you know, her testimony is like, I got healed from depression.

You know, God is really wonderful. Our family has changed so much. And there we realized that my uncle Ping, his wife also has severe depression, auntie Karen, and she's had it for a really long time

as well.

And also tried everything, doctors, nothing worked. So with that, my mom was like, Hey, why don't you come to church with us? And, you know, let's see, uh, and, and meet God and see what happens.

So auntie Karen actually knew God a little bit before, but never had a personal relationship. But when she went to church and she heard the sermon and just in the prayer heard that word sinner, she just broke down.

[41:10] I think she really just saw something that's within her heart that she couldn't heal within herself. And she really needed the Lord. So she gave her life to Jesus. Um, and shortly after, and then shortly after in like three months, her depression also just left her.

And then our, her, her husband also believed and also her family believed as well, but that wasn't the end of the story. So within a few months, she actually got diagnosed with lung cancer and it was just casual.

It was stage three B, uh, doctors told her that she had three months to live. So I mean, all of this, right. She's just a new baby Christian. And then she just came to Christ and suddenly, Hey, you got cancer. Um, but then there was still this kind of like joy and peace about her that you can't explain. So our family, we got together, we started to pray. There was this one aunt in Hong Kong back then, Auntie Carmen, she hadn't believed yet. Um, but then she was the one who moved. So we're like, Hey, you know, why don't we keep praying for Auntie Karen and see what God would do. We trust that God is powerful. Um, and, and again, long story short, there was this one time I just, I was on the bus and I felt that the Holy Spirit told me that, Hey, you got to tell your Auntie Carmen that Auntie Karen's going to be healed.

[42:15] I'm like, Oh, can I say that? What if she doesn't get healed? What? I say it anyways, because, uh, yeah, I say it anyways. And in the end, uh, Auntie Karen, Karen does get healed.

Actually, um, she does chemo, does rare therapy, essentially didn't really get any effects from it. Didn't really lose any hair. So like had minimal pain. And within, I think like just a couple of months, the doctors did a scan and there was nothing left.

So just a scar. Yeah. Which is so crazy because the doctor's like, you got three months to live. Um, and it was so beautiful. Auntie Carmen, the process of all of this also came to know Jesus. So this broken family that hated each other so much that they would rip each other's faces out.

They all came to know Jesus and, um, and it was really just restored those, all those relationships. That's amazing. Yeah. And then, so yeah, their God seems like he healed your aunt of cancer. He did heal your aunt of cancer. Um, what happened next? So within a few months again, um, her cancer came back, but this time it was in stage three B with stage four.

[43:25] So it was just widespread. And then, um, and it was really difficult this time. We prayed for her. She was just in so much pain, you know? Um, in the end, she had so much morphine and it's none of it worked as well.

She was just in very dire circumstances. We prayed, but God didn't heal at this time. Um, but what was even more beautiful, I think was just seeing just her faith, you know, like she had such hope and such just hope for, um, for what is to come.

She knew that what this life wasn't it. And then she was looking forward to when she can meet Jesus again and when we can all gather together and see her together in heaven. So it was just really beautiful, um, to know that, you know, even though God healed her the first time, he didn't heal her the second time.

But I think what was more beautiful was how she was able to hold on to the hope that is beyond this world. And I think that is what we're able to hold on to as well. So, and that's more beautiful than her getting better and us meeting together in heaven is more beautiful than anything.

Amen. Thanks Florence. Yeah.

[44:38] Thanks Florence. Um, yeah, it's her family has been through a lot. She's, she's experienced a lot of the, the concepts, the ideas we talked about today, the stories we read in the Bible. She experienced that she saw that God heals and sometimes that healing is only temporary, but it's part of an even bigger purpose that you have this eternal hope that you will see your aunt once again.

Right. Um, yeah, her aunt was healed of cancer, but passed away later, just like Dorcas Aeneas. They were healed 2000 years ago, the past away later yet in Christ they have, we have a hope that

they, they're, they're, they're in a place where there's no sickness or pain and, and, and her aunt will live forever.

So yeah, once again, um, you may have a variety of, of, of reactions to healing, skepticism, apathy, uh, longing to the skeptical, right?

Who can't bring herself to believe in miracles that Jesus rose from the dead. Well, there's, you heard from Jackie, you heard from Florence, you heard their stories of how their lives were changed and how Florence's family experienced healing.

And even if you don't believe, I invite you to be curious and ask, and ask them, why do you believe in Jesus? Tell me more. See the evidence of life, lives changed by Jesus, right?

[45 : 57] And know that he offers to you a new and abundant life that you can come to know him like Florence's family, like Jackie has experienced life today. For the rest of us, we heard last week, if you've been converted to Christianity, if you've been, if you say you've been converted as a Christian, has your life been converted or are we just apathetic to the miracle that God worked in us, that God gave us new life?

Anais was paralyzed for eight years, but his life was turned completely upside down when he heard Jesus Christ heals you, get up. And today Jesus tells us, get up. He freed us from sin and calls us to live in that freedom.

What's Jesus calling you to leave behind? Let's not turn back to sin. Let's not turn back. Let's live the new life he's given us. And what happened after Anais and Dorcas were healed?

The news spread and many believed in the Lord. If you've come to know Jesus, whether your testimony is dramatic or not, whether you have dramatic stories of miraculous healing or you've, you've been so lost, you've, you've, yeah, so many bad things in the past.

You have a story to tell. God has done a miracle in you. Share your story. Some people, you might have friends that like to debate apologetics or science or social issues.

[47 : 16] But it's hard to argue against your story, what you've experienced, how God has changed your life. Whether or not someone believes in miracles, it's hard to argue when a paralyzed man starts walking again and a dead woman comes to life.

Will people also believe when they see you? And if we're longing for healing, know that we have a compassionate God who loves us.

We can pray and cry out to him for healing. Don't neglect that fact. Don't neglect the fact that God cares for you and he wants to heal us in part even now.

And if you're in Christ, his blood assures us that God will 100% surely heal you. But maybe not today or tomorrow or not even the day we die.

But he will certainly heal you and bring you from death to life once for all on that day when Jesus returns. And it's not easy when healing doesn't come now.

[48 : 15] We heard Florence's story. It's not, I can't know the full extent of the pain your family has experienced. But how pitiful would it be if this broken world was our home?

If this was all that there was. Thank God it's not. Let us have faith, anticipation, and eager expectation that Jesus will make all things new and it'll be glorious.

Please, I'll invite the musical worship team to come up now as I close by reading this encouragement from 1 Corinthians 15, which is about when Jesus comes again, what will happen. Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment in the twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised imperishable and we shall be changed.

For this perishable body must put on the imperishable and this mortal body must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that it is written, death is swallowed up in victory.

[49 : 24] Oh, death, where is your victory? Oh, death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain. That's the good news.

That's the gospel. Jesus defeated death once for all and he gives us life. Let us respond in song. Amen. Jesus, we thank you.

We thank you that it was your grace that met us. Your grace, this gift. That you would save us.

We who are lost. We who are blind. We who are sick. And Jesus, that you are here right now, today, in this place.

[50 : 38] Bringing healing. Not just to bodies, but to souls. Thank you, Lord.

Thank you, Lord. And Lord, we finish as we start it. By keeping our eyes firmly fixed on you. The author and perfecter of faith, the alpha and omega, the beginning and the end. We thank you. We thank you.

In your name we pray. Amen. Please take a seat. Thank you, Gabe. Thank you, Gabe. Thank you, Gabe.

And thank you, Florence. And thank you, Jackie. Just as a final reflection. As I was listening to these testimonies, and I was listening to what God actually does in lives, and he transforms lives, and he changes them as he pleases.

[51 : 49] I was reminded of Jesus in John 5, when he sees the man at the pool for 38 years, unable to walk, unable to carry himself in. And he asks him that simple question, that almost just assumed.

Do you want to be healed? And the guy says, yes. Of course I do, but no one can help me. And as Gabe posed the same question to us today.

Do you want to be healed? I don't know what your relationship is with healing. And I know actually the church has done its fair share of damage when it comes to a topic like this. But I want to tell you right now that I do believe in healing.

I do believe that God heals. It's just who he is. He's here. But you can also see, he saved that man. He healed that man at the pool, and he didn't heal anyone else. Because as Gabe said, there's something bigger.

Everyone that was healed by Jesus eventually passed away. And so it tells you again that what Gabe said, that this is something, there's something bigger at play here. And so we, we ask and we pray because we know that God heals.

[52 : 59] We know that God cares, and he does care for our sufferings right now. And so I want to encourage you, keep asking. Keep trusting. But then, as Gabe showed us today, but also cast our eyes further.

That there are two kinds of healing that we are craving for, not just the one of body, but the one of the soul. And if I may, just to finish, every day we go out here, we will see news about how this world needs healing.

That there is brokenness, there is sickness. Not even just in body, but not just in mind, but in the very depths of our beings. Every time you see something like that, I pray that we would have the faith to then pray for that healing, for the world.

And we take heart that Jesus said, hey, this world, you will have trouble, but I came to overcome all of that. I came to bring healing to all of that, to wipe away every tear, to restore health.

Let us be vessels of that healing to those around us. Let us be vessels of that healing to those around us. This is the end of our time here.

[54 : 14] Next week, we're going to carry on into Acts 10. So continue, continue to pray and ask, what is the Lord wanting us to do as we follow the book of Acts, as we follow the early church here? And what role do we have to play?

That is not, these are not fairy tales. These are real people having real testimonies, having real lives transformed conversions. And we are a part of that. We are an extension of that. Let us pray as each one goes now, that the spirit of God that moved then is the same spirit that moves now.

Bless you. May the Lord bless you and keep you. And we'll see you next week.