



Foundation of Faith

God Heals Today!

Divine Healing

God Is Still the Same

God Heals Relationships

Testimonies

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Editorial

Dear Reader,

In this issue of the Foundation of Faith, we have a wonderful message to share with you: Jesus heals—even today!

Because of sin, the world is under a curse—a curse that destroys people's lives and their relationship with God in every way. But that is precisely why Jesus came into the world: to heal people's afflictions. Whether it is spiritual distress, illness, broken relationships, or other problems—Jesus can heal them. And He does it gladly, because God is love . . . and He loves you!

When we think of healing, our thoughts generally turn to the body, because we see so many sick people around us. God's Word clearly shows us that healing of the body is part of the gospel. We read in Matthew 8: 16–17: "When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: 'He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses.'"

This is why Jesus went to the cross: to redeem lost humanity bound by sin, and to heal from illness and affliction those who believe in Him. That He did this while on earth is indisputable—the Bible is full of testimonies. But does He still do it today? In an age of technological and medical progress? Oh yes! Jesus heals today!

I have experienced this repeatedly in my own life. Even as a child, the Lord suddenly freed me from terrible pain after a car accident. Again and again in the years that followed, I was able to come to Him and find help. In pastoral care, too, I have often seen how God has intervened and granted healing in various ways according to His divine counsel—sometimes immediately, sometimes gradually, and sometimes He chooses, according to His sovereign purposes, not to heal in the way we expect, but to give sufficient grace to carry whatever burdens He deems best for us. Just a few days ago, I witnessed how the Lord wonderfully healed a two-month-old baby after following the instructions in James 5.

Yes, Jesus heals today! He is the same forever and ever. And you can trust Him to stand by His Word in your situation as well. What a wonderful Savior and God!

Ron Taron

A Miracle of God

Shortly before leaving China, K. Vatsas, a Norwegian missionary who worked with the China Inland Mission, told me the following story:

Years ago, a seven-year-old girl named Sigrid Berg lived in the Norwegian capital, Oslo. One day, a classmate pushed her down the stone stairs of the school building. At first, Sigrid did not seem badly injured. However, instead of getting better, she kept getting worse and worse. She was diagnosed with a degenerative hip disease, which soon progressed to the point of her needing crutches to get around; sometime later, she became confined to her bed.

Several doctors were involved in her treatment, for instance using tubes to drain toxic fluid from her hip. Nevertheless, the disease continued to progress, eventually damaging her spine and leaving one half of her body paralyzed. Even her speech was affected. After her fall, one leg stopped growing, ending up a few centimeters shorter than the other. To keep the leg straight, a sandbag was attached to it; to maintain her posture, a strap was attached to her shoulder and tied to the bed. Her hair fell out on the paralyzed side. She could not eat solid food, instead receiving fluid through a tube.

She was in this state for about two years, during which things slowly got worse. The doctors eventually gave up her case as hopeless, although they continued to treat her.

Sigrid was a frequent topic of prayer. At one point, Bolzius, a Swedish man of faith, visited Oslo. God had already healed many people in answer to his prayers, and the preacher of her parents' church brought Bolzius to their home to pray for her. He fell on his knees

and began to pray. Suddenly, he got up and said, "There is nothing for me to do here." With his large hands he stroked her hair and said, "My little girl, you're going to Jesus." Then he said goodbye and left.

One day, some time after these events, Sigrid read the 53rd chapter of the Book of Isaiah in her Norwegian Bible. Especially the fourth verse spoke to her, as she read, "Surely he has borne our sickness and carried our suffering" (World English Bible). She called her mother over and said, "Mother, Jesus carried our sickness and our sins on the cross. Do I still have to stay sick?"

From that day on, Sigrid began to believe that the Lord would heal her. Another day, she read in Matthew 9:35 that Jesus healed sickness and diseases. She called to her mother again and asked, "Is

Jesus the same as when He was on Earth?" The mother replied, "In His time, He will come." But Sigrid understood it a little differently. She thought her mother had said, "If He has time, He will come."

Thinking Jesus was very busy and would only come when He had some time, she asked her mother to get her dress and put it over a chair next to her bed so that she could get up and get dressed quickly when Jesus came to heal her.

One day, while Sigrid was alone in her room, a bright white light broke through the ceiling and lit up the room. At that moment, the child heard a voice say, "Sigrid, you can get up, you're healed."

Sigrid replied, "But the sandbag is tied to my leg." In response, the sandbag came loose and fell off her leg. As soon as she understood what was happening, she jumped out of bed and stood up on the floor. Her

*A bright white light
broke through the
ceiling and lit up
the room.*



legs were the same length now too! Sigrid began to jump with joy.

Perhaps having heard the racket, her mother opened the door. Seeing her, Sigrid shouted joyfully, “Mother, my legs are the same length now! Jesus healed me!”

That same day, the mother and her little girl went to her doctor’s house to show him what had happened. The child ran the entire route of over three kilometers to her doctor, Professor Nicolaisen’s house. When he saw the girl, he shouted, “That’s a miracle!”

Years later, Sigrid Berg went to the Moody Bible Institute in the USA to prepare herself as a missionary for China. However, before she went to China, she returned to Norway to visit her family. During this time, a number of doctors were meeting in Oslo. Professor Nicolaisen told some of them about the sudden healing that had happened years ago. To prove his testimony, he invited Sigrid to come to his house with him and show this particular case to his colleagues. She agreed.

The doctors undertook a thorough examination, which included X-rays. They also investigated the findings recorded at the time and examined the symptoms of this case, which had been written down by

her doctors back then. After the thorough examination, they found that the young woman was completely healthy. And not only that—one miracle followed the other, with the cellular tissue on one side being ten years younger than that on the other. Sigrid had just turned ten when she was healed.

The young woman then went to China as a missionary. Some years later, she returned to Norway on vacation. One day, she saw a woman with crutches sitting on a bench at the foot of a hill. Having once been reliant on crutches herself, she could empathize with this stranger. She started up a conversation and learned that this woman had lived for many years as a missionary in Africa. It was Malla Moe, whose name is well known in Norway and in other countries. In the course of their conversation, Moe bemoaned her own lack of faith, saying that, while in Africa, she had read about a sudden healing experienced by a little girl in Norway and wishing that she had that girl’s faith.

Sigrid, who was then Mrs. G. Vatsas, replied, “I’m the little girl who was cured back then.” About one year later, Malla Moe was healed herself.

George T. B. Davis



God Heals - Today

The priceless Gospel message also includes divine healing. In faith, we can take hold of God's promises and anticipate His sovereign work.

The Foundation

Isaiah, the herald of the age of salvation, proclaimed of the suffering Servant of God: "Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows . . . and by His stripes we are healed" (53:4–5). These words not only comfort agony of the soul, but also apply to physical suffering, which afflicts all of humanity.

Matthew writes how Jesus healed and recognized this as the fulfillment of God's prophetic Word (Matthew 8:16–17). As David already describes in Psalm 103:3, healing encompasses the body as well as the soul. On the cross, Jesus took upon Himself the entire burden of sin, its guilt, and consequences. On Easter morning, the life and power of God triumphed. If Christ died for our needs according to the Word, we as a church today can ask for healing from Him, and He will answer in accordance with His will. Divine healing of the body is therefore not a side issue alongside salvation, but the effect of redemption, which seeks to free us from the bondage of sin.

The Gospel in Word and Power—The Ministry of Jesus

Right from the first pages of the Gospels, we read about the Messiah who went about teaching and proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. "Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people" (Matthew 4:23). No matter what illness, disease, or torment, whether it was physical distress or even possession of the soul, "He healed them" (verse 24).

He was both a preacher and a physician—the Savior of the world. In Nazareth, He explained His mission with these prophetic words: "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, . . . He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted" (Luke 4:18). Without hesitation, Jesus answered every cry for help from those with leprosy, blindness, disabilities, as well as many other sufferers: "I am willing; be cleansed" (Mark 1:40–42). When Jesus touched the sick woman, her fever left her (Luke 4:38). How powerful must the experience have been of the woman who had suffered from bleeding for years. Jesus healed her and left us an account which can strengthen our faith: "Daughter, your faith has made you well" (Mark 5:34).

Reflecting on Jesus' ministry, Peter said, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him" (Acts 10:38). Jesus permits people to experience the effects of the kingdom of God: sins are forgiven, the bound are set free, and the sick are healed. Jesus triumphed over the destructive power of Satan and gave healing to the soul and the body.

Sent to Heal

Jesus healed and gave this mission to His disciples as well. When he sent out the Twelve, He commanded to "preach" and to "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons" (Matthew 10:7–8). Later, this gave credence to the gospel message (Luke 10:9).

Before His ascension, Jesus said to His disciples, "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me" (Acts 1:8). Jesus wanted the disciples to bear witness to the glorious Gospel and to proclaim it with authority through accompanying deeds. God still wants to confirm His Word today. Even today, people should experience the power of God in both soul and body.

The Book of Acts reports on the work of the Holy Spirit in the early church. The leading figures, Peter and John, were not extraordinary people. Yet they allowed themselves to be used by the Spirit of God and were powerful witnesses of what the risen Christ was doing in the church through the Spirit. They stopped by the beggar at the temple gate. He spoke to them and asked for financial help. They had something far better to offer him: "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk" (Acts 3:6). The man jumped up, the miracle became known, and a door opened for the Gospel. Luke continues in Acts 5:12–16: "Many signs and wonders were done among the people. . . . they brought the sick . . . and they were all healed." When Philip was ministering in Samaria, God performed many signs and wonders through him. The people listened to the gospel, saw the healings of the sick, "and there was great joy in that city" (Acts 8:5–8).

Many other divine healings are recorded in the Book of Acts (e.g., 9:32–42; 19:11–12; 28:8–9). If we read carefully, we see that repeatedly the Lord bore "witness to the word of His grace" by "granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands" (Acts 14:3). Over and over again, it was a means of powerfully

bringing the message of salvation to the people. They were to see Christ: He lives and acts—even today.

Healing in the Church

Immediately after leaving Egypt, Israel heard these great words: "I *am* the LORD who heals you" (Exodus 15:26). This applies even more to the church of the Most High, which is His body. As human beings in a fallen and broken world, God's children are also susceptible to illness and are not always protected from accidents. That is why God has given us instructions for such cases: "Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven" (James 5:14–15).

The instruction is quite simple. No extraordinary "specialists" are required, only the Shepherds of the church. This is not about a special ritual or process, but simply an act of obedience in the name of Jesus. Anointing with oil may have been linked to the ministry of Jesus (Mark 6:13), but above all it is a strengthening of faith. The sick person should come forward, and the elders will come to him, pray with him, and anoint him. The Lord sees and hears, and if it is His will, raises up the sick person.

God desires healing—not only for the body, but above all for the soul. Therefore, the distress of the soul must first be addressed, then God can intervene and provide healing. However, what happens when our faith is tested, when despite earnest prayer, no visible healing occurs? Although the Bible does not remain silent about such cases, God has not weakened or relativized His powerful promises. His promises are eternal truth. We may claim them for ourselves and trust in God's faithfulness, even if the response to our prayers differs from what we imagine, even if time passes without any noticeable changes. God has heard—and He will act according to His divine purpose.

Divine healing of the body is an important part of the work of redemption until the Lord's return. We may believe this and ask it for ourselves today. Thus, the word is fulfilled: "Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8).

*Hermann Vogt
Gifhorn, Germany*

God's Power Was There to Heal!

In Luke 5, we read about an amazing event in which Jesus healed a man's soul and body. It was a man who was paralyzed and could not come to Jesus himself, so his friends or acquaintances brought him. Because it was impossible to get into the house due to the crowd, they took the unthinkable step of removing the roof of the house and lowering the sick man down at Jesus' feet. Jesus looked at the situation and said, "Man, your sins are forgiven you" (Luke 5:20). No one had expected this; not the sick man, not his friends, not Jesus' disciples, and certainly not the Pharisees and teachers of the law! They considered it blasphemy.

Let us consider a few points:

1. Jesus came to heal souls

Although healing the body is an integral part of the plan of salvation, the Savior's primary concern is the salvation of the soul. What good would it do to enjoy a few short years of health if, in the end, a person were lost forever? Probably everyone present looked at the poor, paralytic man and thought, "Yes, in his helplessness, he really needs healing for his sick, broken body." But Jesus looked much deeper. Of course, He wanted to proclaim His divinity through His statement, "Man, your sins are forgiven you." He used the opportunity to give the unbelieving Pharisees and teachers of the law a chance to recognize the Savior of the world and also be saved. Although they were probably there to denounce Him before the people, He loved them and wanted to help them. And so Jesus looked at the faith of the paralyzed man's friends . . . and forgave his sins!

Healing of the soul is still the greatest need that every human being has today. Through sin, all are corrupted and will ultimately be condemned to eternal damnation. Only through faith in Jesus, through repentance of one's sins and finding forgiveness and salvation in the Savior, can one escape "everlasting destruction." How many souls are broken and "paralyzed" by sin, far more than this physically paralyzed man! How many other broken hearts are there that Jesus would like to heal, including yours, if you are in such a situation. Whatever your need is, bring it to Jesus. He can and wants to heal you.

2. Jesus heals the body of the paralyzed man

And the scribes and Pharisees began to reason, saying, "'Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?'" But when Jesus, perceived their thoughts, He answered and said to them, "Why are you reasoning in your hearts? Which is easier to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Rise up and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"—He said to the man who was paralyzed, "I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house" (Luke 5:21–24).

Jesus forces the unbelieving religious scholars to abandon their preconceptions. He left no doubt that He, as the Son of Man, is God! But the Savior also forces the sick man to make a decision. Previously, Jesus responded to the faith of those who removed the roof and lowered the paralyzed man down. Now the paralyzed man himself had to believe.

We don't know how long he had been paralyzed, but the fact is that after a few weeks of inactivity, mus-



cles atrophy and cannot regain enough strength in a matter of seconds to enable a paralyzed person to jump up and walk away. It's just not possible. It takes a lot of practice and the body has to rebuild itself. But all that is nothing in the face of the Creator of the entire universe. When He says, "arise," the impossible becomes possible.

Once, after being anesthetized in a clinic, I was lying on a hospital bed and the nurses immediately ordered me to get up and go home because they needed the bed for someone else. Two of them grabbed me under my arms and tried to get me to my feet, but I simply had no strength in my arms or legs. I hurriedly told them that if they lifted me off the bed, I would collapse. No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't move my arms or legs. That's how I imagine this paralyzed man. Jesus commands him, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." What would we have done?

Would we have objected, saying, "I can't"? Or would we have simply obeyed Jesus' word despite the impossibility and stood up in faith? We read about the paralytic: "Immediately he rose up before them, took up what he had been lying on, and departed to his own house, glorifying God" (Luke 5:25). Surely it was joy over his sins being forgiven that led him to childlike faith in Jesus. Do we, as children of God, also have such faith?

3. The power of God was there to heal them

Who were they who wanted the power of the Lord to heal them? In Luke 5:17 we read, "that there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting by, who had

come out of every town of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem." The Luther translation ends this verse with the words: "and He helped everyone." Yes, the power of the Lord was present to heal everyone, but one class of people found no healing. It was the spiritual elite. All who sincerely sought help found it—but not them.

Why?

a. Because they were not there with pure motives. They had come to criticize. They had come to find fault with Jesus, to corner Him in front of the people. And so they could not be healed.

b. They could not be healed because they saw no need for healing. They were the good ones, the ones who were right. God cannot easily help the self-righteous. They must first humble themselves before Him and recognize their great need for healing through Jesus.

c. Although God's power was present to heal them, they were not healed because they did not believe. Without faith, it is impossible to please God and find help from Him.

How tragic that these spiritual leaders did not find healing for their greatest need. The power of the Lord was there, and it was there to heal them . . . but they did not want it. How many people in our time also despise the grace of God that is offered to them. The power of the Lord is still there today to heal you. Claim it for yourself! Then you too, like this former paralytic, will go home rejoicing and praising God.

*Ron Taron
Steinbach, Manitoba*



Divine Healing— A Privilege of God's Children

More than seven hundred years before the birth of Christ, the prophet Isaiah prophesied the coming of the Savior and His mission. With prophetic insight, he saw the man of sorrows beaten and wounded for our transgressions. He saw how our pains and illnesses lay upon Him, and how He bore the punishment of the world in humble submission. The prophet expresses this in the following words: “Surely He has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:4–5). The prophet saw in the atoning suffering of the Lamb of God a remedy for soul and body—both physical and spiritual afflictions.

The evangelist Matthew confirms the prophecy quoted above with an account of Christ's healing ministry. “When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: ‘He Himself took our infirmities and bore *our* sicknesses’” (Matthew 8: 16–17).

It is true that nowhere does the Bible say that it is a sin to use a human remedy for illness. But the fact that Christ bore our infirmities and pains should awaken a sense of gratitude in us, because through His grace, our heavenly Father has also thought of healing our bodies.

If we consider divine healing in this light, we will see it as a great privilege that has been granted to us through the love of God. Certainly, man has only a weak concept of God's grace and can often be plagued by questions such as: “Should I completely give up doctors and medicine?” “Should I trust only God?” “Must I reject all but Christ as my physician?” We can only answer No to all these questions, as God can use medicine, doctors, and technology to help us. There is no compulsion to reject human help, for God does not rob us of our free will. Medical knowledge can help us but in the end, God is the source of all healing. We, as His children, can believe His words and promises, and can trust Him in all things.

Faith to be healed by God does not simply come by itself. Paul writes: “So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10: 17). The soul must therefore be taught and trained by God until it is willing to accept Christ as the promised Savior and Physician. But there are also many who believe the words of James 5: 14–15 and act accordingly. For they know that divine healing according to God's will is their blood-bought privilege.

“Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven” (James 5: 14–15). ■

God is Still the Same Today

Psalm 36:5 states, "Your mercy, O LORD, is in the heavens; Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds."

These words have a special meaning for me. It was in August, some years ago now, when we had just returned to Winnipeg, Manitoba from York, Nebraska. Because it was quite hot out, I said to my wife, "I'm going to sleep in the basement because it's a little cooler down there." As I was going downstairs, I felt such severe pain in my chest that I immediately dropped myself onto the bed. I felt paralyzed. I could only move my head and toes.

So I lay there all night in pain and couldn't sleep. In my distress, I prayed repeatedly and examined myself before the Lord, asking, "Have I done something wrong? Have I sinned against you?" So there I lay all night, as I didn't want to wake up my wife.

Then, suddenly, after all my praying and pleading—it was around 5:00 in the morning, when the sun cast its first rays through a small window into my darkness—I clearly heard a voice: "Your mercy, O LORD, is in the heavens; Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds." The interpretation was immediately clear to me: God's mercy also reaches down to me. And I felt as if I were being carried on arms of love.

The pain and paralysis remained, but I was certain I would survive. I will get well again! How and in which way, that is up to God. That is in His hands.

These words of God from Psalm 36 continued to be unforgettable to me.

The next day, I was anointed and gave God thanks. After fourteen days, I was able to walk slowly from my house to the church, which was across the road. I came into my church office and found a sheet of paper on which was written: "Why does God send us tribulations?" I myself had written this down in the days before my trip to York, Nebraska. I even had noted some answers: to test us; to purify us, etc.

Perhaps you are thinking, that happened years ago, but what about now? God helped then—but what about today?

We can experience God's divine healing today. God's Word clearly states: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). During the first week of August this year (2025), a family whose two month old daughter was constantly crying asked us to pray for their child and anoint her according to James 5. Brother Taron and I did so. The following Sunday, the family was able to attend the worship service for the first time. The mother was now able to hold a calm child in her arms. Praise God! Let us trust Him in all things, for He is still the same today as He was in the past.

*H. D. Nimz
Steinbach, Manitoba*

*We can experience
God's divine
healing today.*

God Heals Relationships

We know that our Lord Jesus' messianic ministry including healing. He healed the sick, cast out demons, gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and even raised the dead. Scripture teaches that this healing ministry continues today through the working and power of the Holy Spirit. This healing ministry also includes souls; all sinners who repent of their sins and ask for Christ's forgiveness receive a new, clean heart. Forgiveness in Christ also includes a healed relationship with God. This was one of the Father's main reasons for sending His Son; to reconcile us back to Him and restore humanity's relationship with Him.

God's healing power can also restore relationships between people. Can we think of people in our lives with whom contact has been destroyed because of wrongdoing, gossip, misunderstandings, and the like? Should we not try to do our part in restoring these relationships? The process of rebuilding broken relationships is referred to as reconciliation.

Jesus used a parable to teach His followers the importance of reconciliation. Within this parable at least two different groups of people are represented: those who cause relational strain (offenders), and those who are hurt by them (the offended). In the same way that reconciliation with God requires sinners to act on God's grace and His calling, reconciliation with people requires those involved to do their part. Let's start by considering the offender.

1) The Offender

We read in Luke 15: 11–12, "Then He [Jesus] said: 'A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to *his* father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls *to me*.' So he divided to them *his* livelihood.'" From these verses it is obvious that the person who initiated the strain in the familial relationship was the younger son. In biblical times, it would have been incredibly disrespectful for a son to have asked for his inheritance before the death of his father. That son would have disgraced his father before the whole community. Such a display of disrespect was punishable by death (Deuteronomy 21: 18–21).

Knowing how inappropriate it was for the younger son to ask for his inheritance and then leave his home,

we can assume that his father was greatly hurt by these actions. But instead of punishing the son, the father allowed himself to be humiliated, gave his son his inheritance, and let him leave. How hurt we would be if a family member or friend behaved this way to us! Perhaps some of us have personally experienced a similar situation. Or perhaps we are to blame for ruining certain relationships in our past, through our thoughtless, selfish behavior. And yet, the reason why Jesus shared this parable was to show His listeners that every sinner is like this prodigal son.

Jesus continues the parable in verses 13–16 by explaining how the younger son left his family so that he could live in sin and waste his father's money with prodigal living. Prodigal refers to debased and extravagant behavior. In our society today, such a lifestyle is flaunted on social media. But as extravagant as his life was, everything eventually came to a crashing halt. Not only had he wasted his inheritance, but a severe famine also came across the land in which he lived. Instead of being served, he became the servant of someone else. Instead of tending to people, he was sent to feed the swine. Instead of feasting on luxurious delicacies, he watched as the pigs ate their primitive feed, which he would have loved to eat, but wasn't allowed to. He hit rock bottom. Hitting rock-bottom is what's needed for many people to realize their sinful condition and begin to make things right with God. But what about our severed relationships with people? What will it take to humble ourselves and mend the relationships that we or others have destroyed? What will it take to seek Christ's healing in our relationships?

2) The Offended

It's at this point in the parable that Jesus switches focus from the actions of the offender to the actions of the offended. There are two people offended in this account.

a) The Father: The first being the father. The actions of the younger son had certainly hurt and offended the father. The son had severed his relationship to his father. The father compares the son's leaving the family as if he had died (v. 24). If someone we loved treated us the way the younger son did his father, how would we

feel? (Hurt, saddened, etc.) But even though they did this, wouldn't we want them to come back? Wouldn't we pray for them, and hope that they would return? The father in this account loved his son so much, that he went one step further; he went out in search of his son. Scripture says, when the son was still a great way off, his father saw him (v. 20). The action of the father and his forgiving nature represent, first and foremost, God's attitude and love for sinners still estranged from Him. The Lord is waiting for every sinner to come to Him and to seek forgiveness for their sins. If we truly want to be cleansed from our sins, and be forgiven by God, He will always welcome us with open arms. Why? Because He loves us so much and wants a relationship with us.

It's not enough to just want to be saved, and to believe in God; we also need to confess our sins to Him, the same way that son confessed his sins to his father (v. 21). The father then forgave him, put his best robe on him, put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet (v. 22). These were all symbols that showed the son that the father had forgiven him and accepted him as his son again. When we bring our sins to God with a repentant heart and ask Him to forgive us through the blood of Jesus, God will forgive us and make us His child.

But what does God's love and forgiveness toward sinners have to do with our broken relationships? Paul writes in Ephesians 4:31–32, "Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you." As God forgave us, so we ought to forgive those who have hurt and offended us. God did everything He could from His part to mend His relationship with us. He searched for us and called on us to come home. He even gave his very best, hoping that we would receive His gift, and be added to His family. If there are severed relationships in our lives, have we done our part to try and mend them? Or do we stubbornly place all the blame on the person who has offended us, and say, "they're the ones that need to make it right"? To truly mend relationships, both parties need to do their part. The son had to seek his father's forgiveness, but the father did everything he could, from his end, to make things right.

b) The Older Brother: The second offended person mentioned in the parable is the older son. He rep-

resents what a life looks like when those offended refuse to forgive those who hurt them. We read in verses 25–30, "Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.' But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. So he answered and said to *his* father, 'Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.'"

Though the older son may not have wronged his father in the same way that the younger son had, his bitterness and resentment toward his brother led to a strained relationship with his father. Likewise, bitterness and unforgiveness toward others will always lead to strain in our relationship with God. Our Lord says in Matthew 6:15, "But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." A willingness to extend grace and forgiveness to those who wrong us will always lead to blessings from God (Matthew 5:9).

As long as we live in this world, our relationships will be tested. At times, we will be hurt and offended by the words, actions, and attitudes of others. At times, we may be the ones who offend others. But what do we do in situations like that? Do we seek to make right what has been wronged, or do we allow those bridges to burn down? For some of us, those bridges have been burned down for many years. But with the healing grace of God even they can be rebuilt if we're willing to do our part and reconcile ourselves with others. Let's not wait for others to initiate reconciliation; let us simply do everything we can to forgive them and seek the forgiveness of those we've wronged. When others seek our forgiveness, let us act like the father of Christ's parable, and not like the older son. Life is too short and eternity too long to burden ourselves with grudges. Let us forgive others as God has forgiven us in Christ. Let us seek Christ's healing for our hurting relationships.

*David Knelsen
Hamilton, ON*

I Thought

“But Naaman became furious, and went away and said, ‘Indeed, I said to myself, “He will surely come out to me, and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place, and heal the leprosy.”’” (2 Kings 5: 11)

Most of us are familiar with the story of Naaman. He was one of the mighty and brave commanders of the Syrian king Aram and played a decisive role in the great success of the Syrian armed forces. The Bible suggests that he was not only popular with his superiors but also enjoyed a good reputation in his private life. However, this could not conceal the fact that there was something beyond his control: he suffered from a (then) incurable disease, leprosy.

The story of Naaman clearly shows us that since humans were expelled from the Garden of Eden, illness and death have been part of human life. First of all, there is nothing unusual about us becoming ill. Even though God can use illness to speak to us, to correct us, to set us on a different path, to make us think and pause, and yes, sometimes even to make us feel the consequences of sin, illness is not necessarily attributable to God’s instigation. We humans sometimes simply become ill—sometimes seriously ill—as a result of poor nutrition, an unhealthy lifestyle, or harmful environmental influences.

What is striking about Naaman’s story is a young girl (some translations refer to a little girl) who had been captured by the Syrians on one of their raids in Israel and was now a servant in Naaman’s house. We do not know how old she was, but this young girl became, in a sense, an “angel of the Lord” for Naaman. It is remarkable that she was friendly and benevolent toward the people in her foreign home. But that is not the only thing that strikes us. There is also the matter-of-factness with which she speaks of the prophet of the Lord in her homeland of Israel, saying that if Naaman went to the prophet Elisha in Samaria, he would cure him of his leprosy. She leaves no doubt about this, and it al-

most seems as if every child in Israel knew: God heals! What a testimony from the mouth of this child. But how did she come to know this? Was she taught it? Did she experience it personally in her own young body? Did she witness God performing these miracles on other people through His servant, the prophet Elisha? We do not know. The most likely explanation is that before her captivity, she had a home where faith in a God who heals was exemplified and thus omnipresent. Did not the Lord introduce Himself to His people in this way: “For I *am* the LORD who heals you” (Exodus 15:26)?

We as Christians in a godless world can learn much from this little girl! Do we mean well toward the people in our (unbelieving) environment? Do we consciously notice when our coworkers become ill? Do we share testimonies with our neighbors about how the Lord has healed us or others? Do we offer to pray for them and share their concerns with the church? Sometimes it would simply be appropriate to pray for your coworker when they call in sick and then tell them when they return that you prayed for their recovery. The same can be done with your classmates. For the little girl, it was an opportunity to share her faith. The outcome of the story shows us this very clearly. But there is something else. It is the matter-of-fact way in which the little girl talks about healing sick people. Isn’t that remarkable? What do our children learn in our families? How strong is the idea that God heals, that healing sick people is part of the gospel? This certainly does not preclude our children from experiencing a visit to the doctor, but do they know above all that God still heals today?

May God protect us from any kind of fanaticism that demonizes the blessings of medical advances, and may He protect us from relying foremost on human

help instead of on Him, and also help us to remember that even those medical advances ultimately come from Him, and that if He chooses to heal us through medical means, we still must give Him the glory.

Back to Naaman. The girl's message struck a chord with him. He had probably already tried many things to cure his illness and longed to be healthy. And here was an option he had not yet considered: the God of Israel!

Naaman did not hesitate for long and set off to travel to Israel. There, after a few detours, he arrived at the house of the prophet Elisha and waited for him to come out and intercede for him before God. After all, he was not just anyone, he did not come empty-handed—he saw himself as a special and important “patient.” But Elisha did nothing of the sort. Instead, he sent his

servant to the door and told Naaman: “Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored to you, and you *shall* be clean” (2 Kings 5:10). Not more, but also not less.

What was now required of Naaman was faith. This faith would prompt him to do what Elisha had told him to do, and then he would be healed by the God of Israel. Naaman was anything but convinced by this approach; on the contrary, he was completely indignant. He had expected something completely different. He began to express his displeasure: “Naaman became furious, and went away and said, ‘Indeed, I said to myself . . .’” He had expected Elisha, and ultimately God, to act as he had imagined. Disappointed and angry, he turned away and decided to return home.

At this point, the Bible draws our attention to something we must take seriously: God is sovereign. Once again: God is sovereign! Even when we are sick and suffering and long for His intervention, it is always the Lord who decides *how* He does it, *when* He does it, and *if* He does it. As contradictory as it may sound: Ultimately, healing our sickness is not about

us but about God being glorified. The Lord decides how He can be most glorified. But we can trust Him completely. It is remarkable that in Naaman's case, God decided not to heal him “just like that” through His word—which He could undoubtedly have done—but expected action from Naaman. God knew his heart. Naaman's indignation revealed where the problem lay: his pride had to be broken. Only then could the Lord

perform this miracle. And so it can also be in our lives that there are things that prevent God from performing the miracle of healing, things between us and God that need to be cleared away. If this is the case, God will not leave us in the dark but will be specific. He loves us. And for us, too, He has thoughts of peace, not of evil, to give us a future and a hope (Jeremiah 29:11).

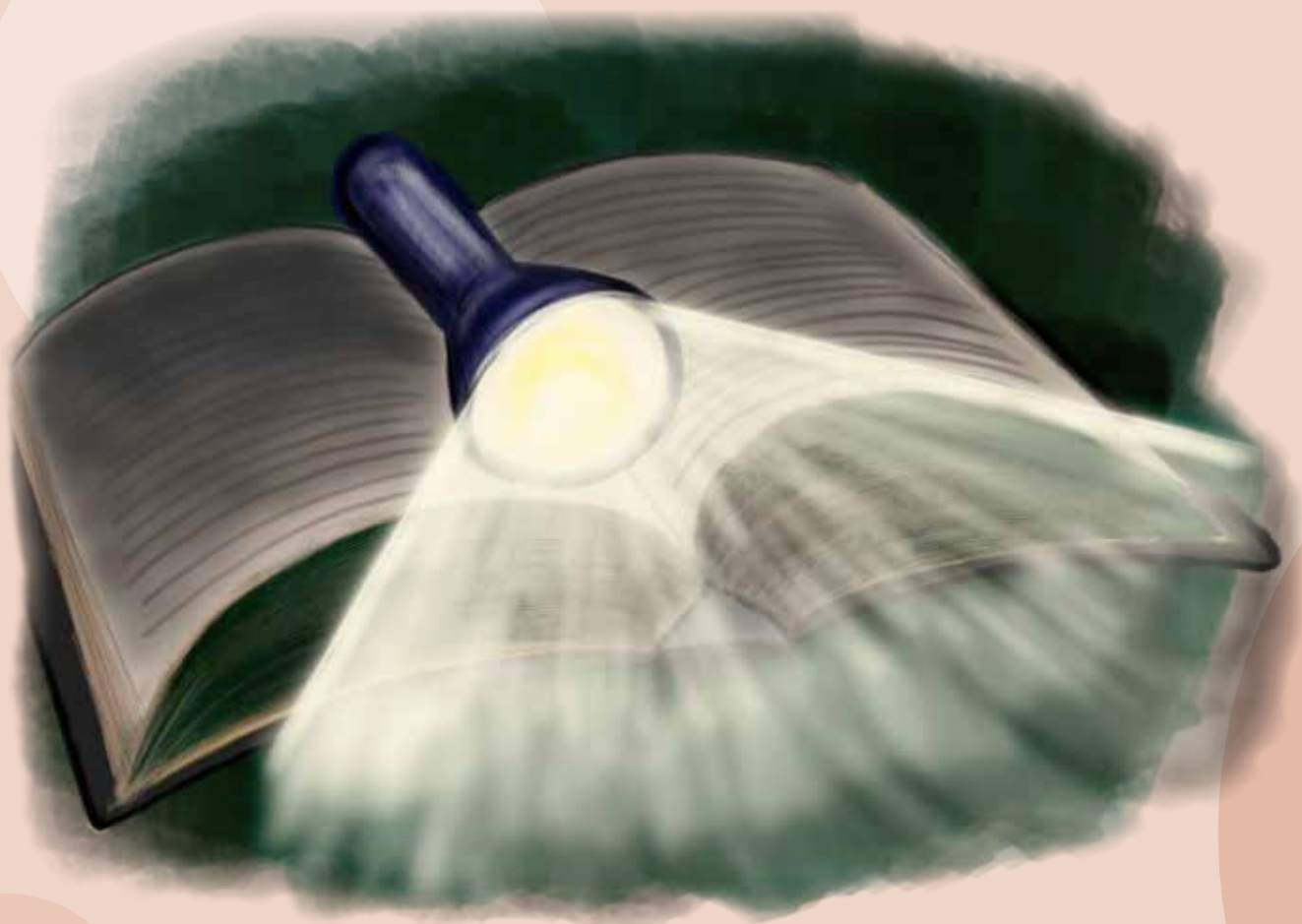


How fortunate Naaman was to have good advisors. His servants bluntly laid out his problem once again: “If the prophet had told you to do something great, would you not have done it?”

Often there are spiritually mature people in our circle who support us in our concerns before the Lord and become good advisors, people who mean well and from whom we are willing to accept advice. Naaman listened to these words and went to the Jordan and did what the Lord expected of him—and he experienced the miracle of his healing. When Naaman realized this, he could not help himself; he went back to the house of the prophet Elisha and . . . “stood before him.” He no longer waited for someone to come out to him. No, his pride was broken, he had been healed, and now he gave glory to whom glory belongs: “Indeed, now I know that *there is* no God in all the earth, except in Israel” (2 Kings 5:15b).

May God help us today to achieve such breakthroughs in faith—to His glory!

Niko Ernst
Herford, Germany



Heavenly Signposts

Have you ever looked up at the night sky? Then you've probably seen countless stars. And those are just the ones we can see with the naked eye! But how many stars are there really? No one can say for sure. In our Milky Way alone, the number is estimated to be between 100 and 400 billion stars.

100 billion—that's a one followed by eleven zeros! This number is huge and difficult to imagine. Someone tried filling two normal 10-liter buckets with a million grains of rice. That means a bathtub can hold about 10 million grains of rice. So, 100 billion would be 1,000 bathtubs full of rice.

But stars are not only beautiful. They used to have an important function. Today, we use navigation devices in our cars or on our cell phones to find our way. But many years ago, such things did not exist. For many centuries, the stars have helped people to orient themselves and find their way, especially sailors at sea who used them to calculate their sailing route.

Can you think of a story in the Bible where people followed a star? Read Matthew 2: 1–12! It tells the story of the wise men from the East. They were astronomers, and one night they discovered a new star in the sky that they had never seen before. They knew that this star was something special. So, the wise men set off and traveled many, many miles. The star led them to Bethlehem. There they found the baby Jesus with his parents. They were very happy, worshiped him, and brought Him gifts.

Today, we no longer need stars to find the right path. And there is no special star that leads us to Jesus. But we have something even better. We have the Bible, God's Word. It is like a map or a compass for our lives. It leads us to Jesus and shows us how to live according to God's will.

That is why it is so important to read your "biblical map" regularly. It helps you make the right decisions and stay on the right path. Those who live according to the Bible cannot go astray!

Irene Wuchrer

The Night Hike

Laura stands at the window, eagerly looking outside. The leaves on the trees have turned red and yellow, and many are already lying on the ground. It gets dark earlier every day. Dad has promised to take her and Nicholas on a night hike. Today is finally the day.

"Dad, it's dark outside. Should we go now?" asks Laura.

Dad takes his big flashlight out of the closet. "Yes, get dressed warmly, and we can go."



The three of them start walking. Soon they reach the edge of town, where there are no more streetlights. Dad turns on his flashlight. Its light shows them the way, enabling them to see where they are going. They walk across meadows and then along the edge of the forest. Dry leaves crunch under their feet. There are rustling sounds everywhere in the bushes, and sometimes they hear strange animal noises. It's a little scary in the dark. Laura and Nicholas stay close to Dad.

"It's good that you brought the flashlight," says Nicholas.

Dad explains, "Yes, it helps us find the right way. You see, the Bible is like a flashlight for us."

Laura looks at him questioningly. "What do you mean?"

Nicholas thinks for a moment. "I think I know what Dad means. When I don't know what to do or how to decide, it's like standing in the dark."

"Exactly!" says Dad. "Then the Bible is like a light and helps you make decisions. You can ask Jesus to help you when you're unsure. He can show you how to act or what to decide. Then you'll find a suitable Bible passage, or God will give you the right thoughts,

or someone will talk about your problem—maybe your Sunday school teacher."

"Now I understand!" says Laura happily. "The Bible is like a flashlight for our lives. How wonderful that we have such a good flashlight. Then we can't get lost."

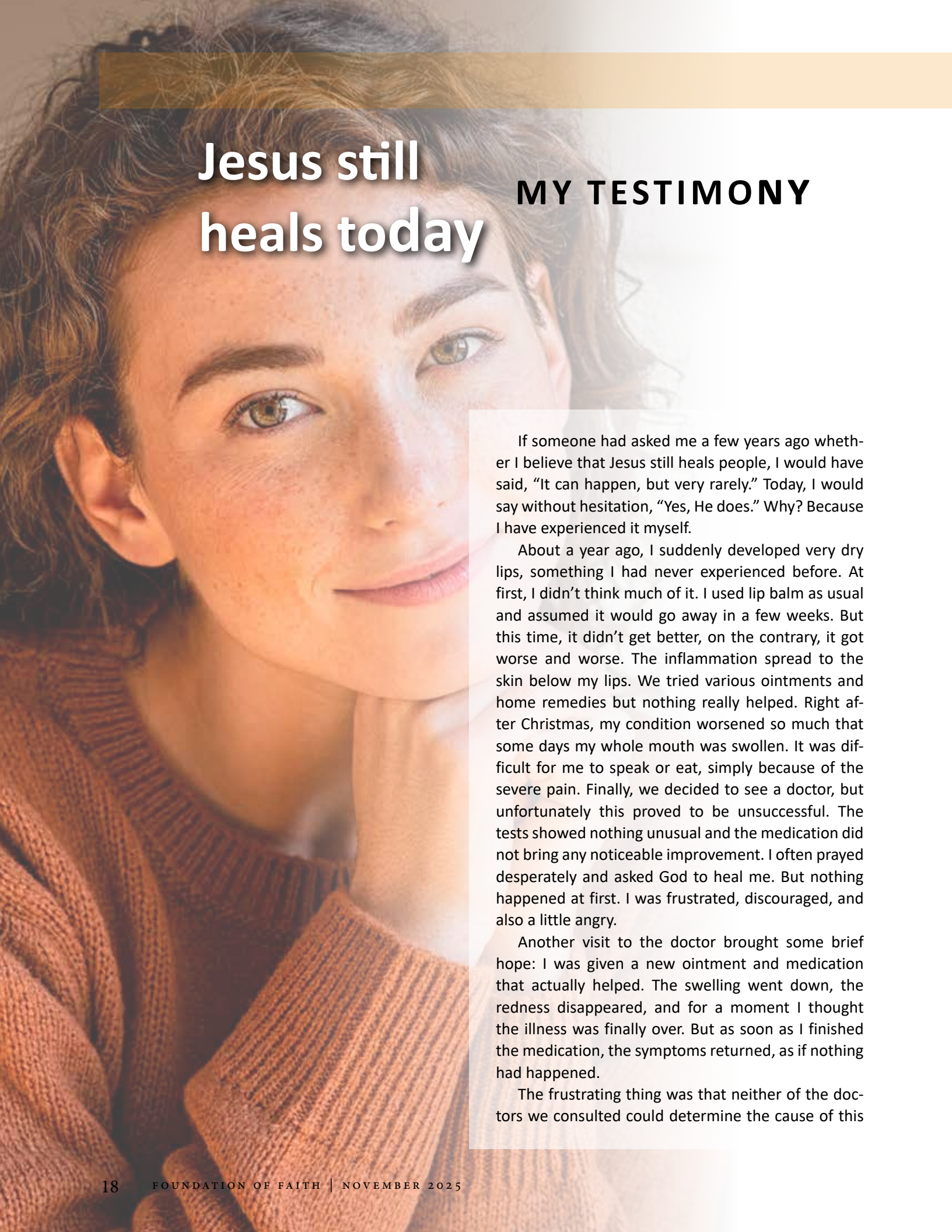
Together, the three of them continue walking across the meadows and through the rustling leaves. The flashlight shines the way home. Laura and Nicholas are happy. The night hike was exciting, and they learned something important.

Irene Wuchrer



"Your word is a lamp
to my feet and a
light to my path."
Psalm 119:105





Jesus still heals today

MY TESTIMONY

If someone had asked me a few years ago whether I believe that Jesus still heals people, I would have said, “It can happen, but very rarely.” Today, I would say without hesitation, “Yes, He does.” Why? Because I have experienced it myself.

About a year ago, I suddenly developed very dry lips, something I had never experienced before. At first, I didn’t think much of it. I used lip balm as usual and assumed it would go away in a few weeks. But this time, it didn’t get better, on the contrary, it got worse and worse. The inflammation spread to the skin below my lips. We tried various ointments and home remedies but nothing really helped. Right after Christmas, my condition worsened so much that some days my whole mouth was swollen. It was difficult for me to speak or eat, simply because of the severe pain. Finally, we decided to see a doctor, but unfortunately this proved to be unsuccessful. The tests showed nothing unusual and the medication did not bring any noticeable improvement. I often prayed desperately and asked God to heal me. But nothing happened at first. I was frustrated, discouraged, and also a little angry.

Another visit to the doctor brought some brief hope: I was given a new ointment and medication that actually helped. The swelling went down, the redness disappeared, and for a moment I thought the illness was finally over. But as soon as I finished the medication, the symptoms returned, as if nothing had happened.

The frustrating thing was that neither of the doctors we consulted could determine the cause of this

illness. It was like a puzzle that no one could solve. I felt helpless and desperate.

I often begged Jesus through tears to heal me, but the time just wasn't right. Eventually, we found another ointment that at least alleviated the worst of it. My lips healed but the skin underneath remained sore and inflamed. It just wouldn't heal, and the inflammation continued to spread. But we kept praying.

Finally, I reached a point where I surrendered myself completely to Jesus. I told Him how much I wanted healing, more than anything else. At the same time, I also prayed: "Lord, if it is Your will that I should bear this illness for a long time, perhaps even for the rest of my life, then I will try to accept it." I realized that perhaps learning to willingly submit to His will was already the first step toward healing. For a while, nothing changed and things even seemed to get worse. Nevertheless, I continued to pray. I was often tired and discouraged by this persistent illness. But with God's help, I tried to remain patient and trust Him.

When I came home from our youth group one Friday, my mom had a suggestion: My younger sister had been struggling with severe skin allergies for some time. It had been a hopeless case for a long time until my parents found a special ointment that greatly alleviated her symptoms. Mom suggested I try the ointment before bed to see if it would help. I hesitantly accepted her advice. I was afraid that it would only make things worse or that nothing would happen at all. But I decided to trust and applied the

ointment. A few days later, the redness had disappeared. My skin looked normal again. Nevertheless, I was still skeptical. I thought it would be the same as with the other ointments, first a brief improvement, then a relapse which had been the pattern up to that point. But this time it was different. The disease did not return.

It has now been over a month since I first used the ointment. I still use it a few times a day, but the disease seems to have finally disappeared. Sometimes I ask myself: Why didn't we discover this ointment sooner? I don't have a clear answer but I believe that God needed this time to teach me patience and perseverance. I had to learn to accept my suffering even though it was very difficult. Sometimes God makes us wait so that our faith can grow and we can come closer to Him.

In the Bible there are also many people who were sick for a long time before Jesus healed them, but everything happened for the glory of God. And that is exactly what I want, that my story would reveal His greatness and glorify Him. Jesus still heals today! He still performs miracles today. I don't know what the future holds, but the condition of my skin has already improved enormously. For that, I want to praise the Lord and never forget what He has already done for me.

"Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits" (Psalm 103: 2).

*Stefanie Rempel
Neustädt, Mexico*

On Track to the Finish Line

I visited an older sister in a retirement home. She talked about some of her fellow residents, their illnesses, and that their days were likely numbered. She seemed to be doing well for her age. Almost as an afterthought she added with a mischievous smile, “I guess I’ll have to die healthy.” Her humorous comment left me grinning.

No matter how you say it: death is inevitably part of life. The wise Solomon already stated this around 3,000 years ago: “*One generation passes away, and another generation comes*” (Ecclesiastes 1:4). That was true then, is true today, and will remain true for as long as the earth revolves. It is the inevitable cycle of generations.

The Bible speaks of death in a frank and simple manner: it just calls it “dying.” The author of the Letter to the Hebrews speaks openly and without reservation: “And as it is appointed for men to die, once, but after this the judgment” (Hebrews 9:27). So, death is not the end of everything, but rather the threshold to God’s judgment—and thus to eternity.

When you contemplate this, it hits you. With every birthday—with every single day—we move closer to our finish line. Step by step, sometimes subtly and unnoticed, and at other times painfully obvious. And then the crucial question surfaces: What comes after that?

Does everything end with the last breath? Or is there a “beyond,” a continuation past the boundary we call “death”? The Bible provides a clear answer. Life does not end in nothingness but leads us to the One who created us. That’s why it is so important to consider today how we will face that encounter with God.

On another occasion, I visited a brother in the hospital. He was elderly, with increasing limitations, so his children agreed to his admission as recommended by his physician. When I entered his room, his face noticeably lit up. As the IV slowly rehydrated his body, we discussed his condition and the tests he had undergone. Then he looked at me and said in a calm manner: “The hour will come for everyone.” After a brief pause, he added with firm conviction: “I am ready!”

He didn’t need to say more. The question I had intended to ask was fully answered. We prayed together and said goodbye. Thoughtfully, I got into my car and drove home. One day later, he entered his eternal home.

Not only was his soul ready to meet the Lord but he had also wisely made certain his affairs were in order. The burial site had long been determined, and he had prepared an envelope for each of his children. He had even remembered the pastor with a brown envelope labeled “When I die.” Enclosed was everything needed: a self-written eulogy, suggestions for the funeral service, selected hymns, a deeply meaningful Bible verse, and other information. You could tell he had seriously considered the topic of death and had planned accordingly. In doing so, he had not only intentionally prepared for his own encounter with the living God but had also lifted a great burden from his loved ones. He had even made the pastor’s task easier with this final expression of his caring and thoughtfulness.

As I reflect on all of this, a story from the Bible comes to mind. The prophet Isaiah received a message from God to deliver to the terminally ill King Hezekiah, “Thus says the LORD: Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live” (Isaiah 38:1). The message was clear and unmistakable: Hezekiah was to prepare for the end and get everything in order. But Hezekiah fervently pleaded with God—and the Lord heard his prayer. He granted him 15 additional years. But even that period of grace came to an end. In 2 Chronicles 32:33 we read, “So Hezekiah rested with his fathers, and they buried him in the upper tombs of the sons of David.” Hezekiah’s story shows us although God can extend life, the end is still inevitable. What matters is that we are ready—whether sooner or later—when our time comes.

Even after the gift of 15 additional years, Hezekiah likely never forgot the prophet’s words. In fact, they weren’t meant only for him—God’s Word is always a message to all of us. It wants to speak to our hearts. Moses captures this truth in one sentence, “Teach *us* to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom” (Psalm 90:12).

In an age where people prefer to avoid or postpone the thought of death, Moses says the opposite: we should intentionally deal with our mortality. Our life is shorter, more fleeting, and more fragile than we often care to admit.

But the goal is not to plunge us into fear or despair, but to make us wise—to teach us to live with an eternal perspective. To “gain a heart of wisdom,” as the New



Century Version translates it, means “so that we may be wise” and in the New Living Translation, “that we may grow in wisdom.” In other words: those who reflect on death learn to truly understand life and to live it in light of eternity.

Those who live with eternity in view and prepare accordingly will be able to say at the end, “I am ready.” When the hour of death comes, everything else instantly loses importance. Possessions, achievements, plans—all is left behind. We take nothing with us. The last breath is also the entrance into eternity.

“I am ready”—these words are a testimony of peace with God. They speak of forgiveness, of erased guilt, and of a heart at peace. David describes this state beautifully in Psalm 32: 1–2, “Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the LORD does not count against them, and in whose spirit there is no deceit” (NIV). Such people are truly wise. Because they do not walk blindly into the unknown but can confidently advance toward the finish line—with the certainty: I am ready.

I admire what that brother did: he didn’t think only of himself and his relationship with God but also considered the loved ones left behind. Through his preparation, he tried to significantly ease their burden. When a death occurs—usually suddenly and unexpectedly—the family is often overwhelmed and struggling. “My thoughts are completely scattered,” a sister wrote to me after a death in her family. Important documents cannot be found, details for the eulogy are missing, and many organizational issues pile up like a mountain. In such a challenging time, the burden feels even greater, creating a time filled with stress and pressure.

Perhaps this reminder can help us with our personal planning. Making final arrangements is not only

a sign of foresight but also an expression of love for those left behind. Some points worth considering are:

- The will – Clear legal arrangements help avoid disputes.
- Distribution of personal belongings – Who gets what, even if it’s not in the will (car, paintings, dishes, family photos, coin collection, etc.)?
- PIN numbers and passwords – For computers, credit cards, or online accounts.
- Bank accounts – Clear details of financial institutions.
- Investments and assets – So nothing is overlooked.
- Pension documents – For cancellation of benefits.
- Personal information – For example, when you became a believer or were baptized.
- Wishes for the funeral – Favorite hymns, meaningful Bible verses, maybe even thoughts for the memorial service.
- Location of documents – And don’t forget to tell a trusted person, perhaps the executor, where everything is kept.

Whoever makes timely arrangements removes a great burden from those left behind—and gives them peace and direction at a difficult time.

We don’t know when our time will come or when we will cross the finish line. But it brings a deep peace and calmness when we know everything is in order, everything is prepared. Then we won’t be troubled by uncertainty. And when the Lord finally calls us to Himself, we can go home in peace—with the words that say more than a thousand explanations: “I am ready.”

*Harry Semenjuk
Wetaskiwin, Alberta*

Both experiences are from Harry and Doris Klinger, Winnipeg, MB

A Miracle of Healing

“[P]ray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.” (James 5: 16)

In 1995, we, with our four children, were called to serve in Neustädt, Mexico. After much prayer we accepted the call to leave the congregation in Barrhead, Alberta, Canada and switch with Pastor G. Thiessen and his wife, who were serving in Mexico. Our trip from Barrhead began with a number of obstacles. Our father had fallen seriously ill and was in a hospital in Edmonton and our two youngest children had contracted chicken pox just days before we left. Yet we started our way south and still visited our dad and prayed he would recover from his illness, which he did in the following weeks.

Days later, after having travelled through the USA, we arrived in Neustädt, Mexico. We settled into our new home, which was next to the church and the

mission school in the State of Chihuahua. In the days following, our six-year-old son began coughing. His cough became increasingly severe, and we realized he was suffering from whooping cough. One night our son was coughing so deeply he could no longer sleep. We sat him up in his bed and tried to comfort him with little success. Not knowing where else to call for help, we knelt at his bed and began to earnestly plead for God’s mercy on our little Thomas. As our heartfelt prayers continued, it was as if the Lord Jesus reached down and touched him. His coughing became less and less, until he rolled onto his side and fell asleep and coughed no more! My wife and I will never forget that night when the gracious Lord healed our son.

The Miracle of Rain

“Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.” (James 5: 17–18)

We served in the church at Neustädt, Mexico from 1995 to 1998. These were challenging years of pastoring a large congregation and mission school in the German language. We prayed for much wisdom and grace to faithfully serve the many families involved. During this time, we experienced a number of unforgettable events with our Lord Jesus. One of which was a prayer meeting during the time of forest fires.

As we gathered for our Wednesday night prayer meeting, a fire was visible on the nearby mountain of Schönberg. It was slowly descending down the moun-

tain towards the village below called Schöndorf. We realized that this was a serious situation that could burn down the Mennonite villages below. Our prayer meeting that evening was focused on: “O Lord, have mercy on us and send rain to put out the fire and save the villages!” We prayed earnestly in faith and after the service, we went outside to see about the fire.

There, many of us stood outside the church, looking toward the mountain where the fire was still descending towards the village below. As we gazed on this dangerous scene, a small cloud appeared from behind the mountain and settled over it. Then it began to rain on the fire. In minutes the fire was extinguished! Many of us stood in awe at what had just happened. Some asked how this could happen. The answer I gave was that we had just prayed in faith and God answered our prayers for rain to put out the fire! All praise and glory to Him!

Report From

10th Camp Meeting in Blaubeuren



We had the privilege of celebrating the camp meeting for the tenth time (August 15-20, 2025) together with many brothers and sisters from different congregations in Germany. During these days it became clear that God Himself had provided the motto for this gathering: “Teach me Your way, O LORD” (Psalm 86: 11). Everyone was able to sense God personally speaking to them through sermons, prayers, songs, testimonies, and many personal conversations. For many, it was a time-out from routine daily life, a source of spiritual direction, and at the same time, a wellspring of strength for practical living with God. It was a particularly blessed experience of genuine spiritual unity among the children of God.

God sent forth His Word through various brothers, and we clearly felt that He had something to say to each of us. God not only wants us to pray the motto, as the psalmist, David, did—He wants to personally guide us and His church into the future, strengthening our trust in His divine promises. Many returned home

with the decision to follow Jesus “bearing all consequences,” to sit more often at His feet like Mary, and to consciously place their daily lives under the leading of the Holy Spirit. Scripture was not only expounded upon, but practically applied.

The many prayers, both public and private, had a powerful influence on these days. Already the opening service, held as an hour of worship and praise, directed us toward this focus: We are in the presence of God, and we should expect His powerful speaking and working. Because many brothers and sisters participated in public prayer, we found ourselves in the presence of God in every service. Livestreams are valuable when no other option is possible, but nothing can replace the immediate presence of God in the assembly of the saints, when the Word and prayer interweave.

The second very special element was the personal fellowship. Because we were together for several days, many deep conversations could be had. Time and again we realized: our brothers and sisters face ►



similar struggles, see the same needs, and have experienced God's leading in comparable ways. Out of these conversations new prayer requests were born. Even if we had not known each other before, we got to know the brothers and sisters by name and through their

shared experiences. This created familiarity, and everyone experienced how mutual encouragement is a strong source of strength.

We were privileged to witness that God truly leads when we give Him control. He ensured that the sermons (without prior coordination) built on each other and that the shaping of the days was very diverse. Many brothers and

sisters allowed themselves to be used by God in various tasks, so that He could (from a human perspective) spontaneously shape the content of the gatherings. The organizational framework was beneficial, yet deliberately remained in the background: a relaxed, family-like atmosphere where our physical needs were well taken care of. Because everyone stayed and dined in the same place, connections and encounters were made easier; the beautiful landscape was ideal for walks, and there were simple opportunities for the children and youth to offset all the times of sitting during the services.

We took away so much inspiration, such as the importance of "freedom in Christ." It became clear that we may also find joy in Christ in our everyday lives. We learned to humbly acknowledge that we are at different levels of understanding—yet heartfelt love unites us. The Bible is our guide, our map. But the Holy Spirit navigates us to our destination. The path He shows us is our path—my path—not that of my neighbor. This attitude preserves us from judgmentalism and strengthens us, allowing us to grow together.

These days were very valuable for the church in Germany. When individual members are strengthened, comforted, and realigned, the whole Body ben-





efits. Smaller congregations in particular experienced that they are not alone. Common prayer, singing, and spiritual conversations foster unity and protect us from drifting apart. God prepared a feast for us. Many felt the awareness of being part of something greater—yes, something “eternal and glorious.”

The camp meeting 2025 is now history—an extraordinary time. Much will only become visible in

daily life—in small decisions, renewed faithfulness, and new intercession. But the direction is clear: to follow Jesus, led by the Spirit, as one body—to the glory of God and for the good of His church.

(A number of brothers and sisters contributed to this report; this is a summary of their thoughts. All sermons and additional pictures can be found at www.lagerversammlung.de)



Prayer Week Topics 2026

Call Upon the Name of the Lord

Who would not like to receive good gifts from the heavenly Father above? He is the Father of lights, and all blessings flow from Him to us as James writes:

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.” (James 1: 17)

He alone can shower us with perfect and holy gifts through His Spirit, as we call upon His name in faith. With what gifts of answered prayers has the Lord Jesus blessed you in the past year? Let us bless the Lord daily and not forget His good gifts to us (Psalm 103: 1–5). With such praise our hearts will be filled with gratitude. Despite any trials we may face in the New Year, let us call upon the name of the Lord and be encouraged!

Harry Klinger, Winnipeg, Manitoba

1. Call Upon Me

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.” (Matthew 7: 7–8)

Call upon the name of the Lord Jesus and you will be saved (Acts 4: 12). Once saved, we can ask the Lord in faith for whatever we need to live a holy life day by day. When we seek Him in Spirit, we will discover God’s will for our lives. Jesus says to knock, and the door of blessing will be opened to us. Let us be like the persistent widow, who did not lose heart in her efforts to find help. She continued to knock until her prayers were answered (Luke 18: 1–8). If

we also ask in faith, Jesus makes this wonderful promise:

“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!” (Matthew 7: 11).

Let us call upon the name of the Lord:

- To seek His will and grace for our daily lives, our families, and our local church.
- To never lose heart in praying for God’s guiding providence.
- To glorify His name throughout the land.
- That revival may come.

2. Follow Me

“Then He said to them all, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.’” (Luke 9: 23)

In today’s world, there are some who claim that a Christian life can be continually filled with health, wealth, and prosperity. Yes, the good Lord may richly bless us, but as His followers we are to take up our cross daily. Such a cross includes self-denial, persecution, sickness, and many trials. We are to deny ourselves and dedicate our lives fully to serving our Lord and spread-

ing the Good News of the gospel (Mark 8: 35). Let us remember that Jesus has overcome the world and fills us with a peaceful heart and good cheer (John 16: 33).

Let us follow Him and pray for strength:

- To take up our cross daily and cast all our cares upon Him who cares for us (1 Peter 5: 6–7).
- To humble ourselves and dedicate our lives fully to His will (Romans 12: 1–2).
- To be found faithful in serving the Lord Jesus until we inherit the crown of life (James 1: 12).

3. Come to Me

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” (Matthew 11:28)

What a beautiful invitation from our Lord and Savior. He is calling all people to come to Him and find spiritual rest and peace for their souls (John 3:16). The lost can bring their heavy burdens of sin to the cross and find grace and forgiveness. Whom the Son sets free from bondage and addiction, will be truly free (John 8:36)! We are to take up His yoke of discipleship and learn from His holy life (Matthew 11:29). Our new life in Christ has an easy yoke and a burden that is light (v. 30). In following Him, we have

the promise that we can come to Him with all of our daily burdens and that He will hear our prayers and give us rest. Like little children who have faith in the heavenly Father, we are to approach Him and He will hear and bless us (Matthew 19:13–15).

Let us come to Him in prayer:

- For the lost around us, that they may be saved by grace (1 Timothy 2:1–5).
- For our governments, that we may lead peaceable lives in all godliness.
- With all of our daily sorrows, burdens, temptations, and trials, to find rest for our souls.

4. Abide in Me

“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.” (John 15:7)

What an amazing promise of the power of prayer! If we delight ourselves in the Lord, He will give us our heart’s desire as promised in Psalm 37:4. Jesus reaffirms this in John 15:1–11. However, the conditions to such blessings are that we abide in Him and His living Word. In other words, our inner man must be filled with the Holy Spirit and our lives formed by the Word of God; then we will bear much fruit to the Father’s glory. Jesus

said that if we do not abide in Him, we will be cast out and wither. Let us always remember that without Him we can do nothing. Let us abide in His grace and love, and we will bear much fruit as His disciples.

Let us abide in prayer and:

- Allow the Lord to prune our lives so that we bear more fruit to His glory (John 15:1–4).
- Become like a tree planted by living waters that bears much spiritual fruit (Psalm 1:1–3).
- Mature in faith and align our will with His, so that our prayers are answered (v. 7–8).

5. Love Me

“Jesus answered and said to him, ‘If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.’” (John 14:23)

All of us gladly receive a special guest who blesses us and our home. Jesus is promising that if we love Him and His Word, He will come with His Father to make our hearts His home. What an amazing promise fulfilled through the Holy Spirit dwelling in our hearts (Romans 8:9)! If God is with us, what untold blessings of peace, grace, and hope are ours. Do we as God’s children abide

in His love? We know that faith, hope, and love remain, but the greatest of these is love (1 Corinthians 13:13). Jesus commands us to demonstrate our abiding love by keeping His commandments (John 15:9–11).

Let us in love thank God that:

- He wishes to live in our hearts through His Word and Spirit.
- We can serve Him out of love and thank Him daily for His saving grace and untold blessings.
- We can prayerfully petition Him and He will answer us (John 14:13–15).

The Lord Will Come Again

When the Lord will be returning
How will you behold that sight?
Will you welcome Him with pleasure
Or be filled with dread and fright?
Oh, I praise you, precious Savior,
Since you saved my soul from sin
Fear and worry have departed,
For you gave me peace within.

When the Savior will be coming
Are you ready for that day?
Are you sure of your salvation,
Are your sins all washed away?
Yes, all glory to the Saviour;
His blood has washed my sins away.
My heart is pure, I am forgiven.
I walk upon the narrow way.

When the Lord returns in glory
Will you welcome Him with joy?
Are you free from sin and anguish,
Free from habits that destroy?
For many years I was shackled,
Had goals not worth living for;
But through grace the Savior saved me.
Now I need to sin no more.

As the Judge for all the nations
Christ will come in majesty;
Will you cry in desperation:
Hills and mountains, cover me?
No, oh no, I'll shout with gladness,
Praise and glory to the Lord
Then forever join the triumph
Of the saints who love His Word.

Yes, the Lord will be returning
With His angels in the clouds.
He will hold the final judgment
For both humble and the proud.
If you're not ready for that day
Let the Savior save you now;
Yes, ensure your sins are washed away,
Faithfulness to Him avow.