

Equipping for the biblical prayer of healing and deliverance

Outline

1 Preface.....	1
2 Introduction.....	1
3 God's will to heal.....	4
3.1 Jesus is perfect theology.....	4
3.2 By his stripes.....	8
3.3 A work of the devil.....	11
4 Thy kingdom come, thy will be done!.....	18
5 Difference authority and gifts.....	23
5.1 "I do not have the gift of healing".....	23
5.2 The authority of the believer in Jesus' name.....	25
6 Nothing is impossible for you except.....	34
6.1 Unforgiveness.....	34
6.2 Unbelief of the Sick	36
6.3 And what if they do not want to be healed?.....	38
6.4 Paul's "thorn in the flesh".....	41
7 How to wield the sword - equipped for ministry.....	47
7.1 The biblical model of prayer for healing.....	47
7.2 Faith with perseverance receives the promise.....	51
7.3 Laying hands.....	53
7.4 Casting out demons and deliverance.....	54
8 The way to strong faith.....	61
8.1 How faith grows.....	61
8.2 Obstacles to faith.....	62
8.3 Faith works through love.....	64
9 Appendix and final words of the author.....	66

1 Preface

The purpose of this script is to equip Christians for healing and deliverance by providing a biblical basis for it while addressing practical experiences on the subject.

I am aware that there is no topic in the Christian world as sensitive as this one. Just about every Christian has a negative experience to share on this topic, which makes it all the more difficult to talk about because it is emotionally charged. Who has not lost a family member to a serious illness? There are a lot of different opinions and books written about it, and the normal Christian usually has a big question mark about healing. The title was called "Equipment for Biblical Healing and Deliverance Prayer" for this reason, because ultimately only one book should shape our opinion on this subject: the Word of God. What would I think about healing and deliverance if I were to draw solely on the Bible for that purpose? What would my healing and deliverance prayer look like? For this reason, more than 250 biblical passages have been quoted and analysed in this script to lay an immovable, biblical foundation for this subject. For this purpose, only the Elberfelder and Schlachter translations (the German equivalent to the King James Version) are quoted in order to be as close as possible to the original text. In the script, however, the topic will not only be illuminated on a purely theological level, but also on a practical level, in order to equip the believer for this ministry.

One or the other may wonder why healing and deliverance are treated together in this script and not separately. This question will be answered in more detail as we go along but let me say in advance that anyone with experience in this area knows that these two subjects are impossible to separate from a biblical and very practical point of view.

But I must warn the reader that if he is looking for purely theological answers - without the practice of this ministry - he should think twice about reading this script. When people realize what massive (positive) influence can happen through them on sick and bound people, then automatically a sense of responsibility arises to go to the front and fight for such people. However, if you don't approach this with this intention, it will simply be unpleasant to deal with it, knowing in retrospect how much good can be done, but not intending to get into the heat of the battle, which involves sweat, tears and constant learning. If you are not ready for this, then much of what you will find in this script would not please you but would load you with an unpleasant responsibility. To get around this, there is a high probability that much in this script will be rejected simply to relieve one's own conscience.

Therefore, I ask the reader again: do you want to be equipped or just receive theological answers on the subject? The answer to this question will have a decisive influence on how you will take things in this script.

2 Introduction

I was 12 years old and sitting in my youth group at church. The topic was about miracles and healings that Jesus had done. A question was asked around the group about what we thought about it. When it was my turn I said, "I think miracles and healings God used to do for a special reason but not anymore." The reason I and many others had this attitude was because I had simply never experienced such things. Ergo if something doesn't exist in my little world, it probably doesn't outside of it either. Growing up in a Baptist church, this attitude was not far

from most either. When we prayed for healing, we usually prayed that the Lord would bless the hands of the doctors and give comfort to the person in question. When I met God at the age of 18, he changed my life completely and I decided to follow him, I had a drastic experience. I found myself in prayer and had the impression that the longer I prayed, the more I could perceive a tangible presence that settled on me. At that time, I had the impression that God's voice was speaking to me in my heart about my future as a missionary. I could not do much with it at that time. However, that night he told me to go out into the streets of my city to preach his gospel to the homeless. I should show them the same love he had shown me and pray for their sicknesses, and he would heal them. With the background that I had never experienced anything like this, this had been a very wild statement for me. I then thought about it for a long time but decided to follow him. So, the next day I went out alone with a backpack, a Bible and something to eat. With soft knees I walked through the city and could hardly believe that I was really doing this - all alone. I met a beggar and asked him if he had any pain that I could pray for, and he told me quite frankly that he had problems in his back. After a short prayer he looked at me puzzled and said that all his pain was gone at once! Tears came to his eyes and mine as well. I was speechless. I gave him something to eat, a Bible and tried to explain the Gospel to him.

As a result, I began to be very involved with the subject and to pray for the sick on a regular basis. I started with absolutely zero experience or knowledge, had no one to guide me, and depended on God to teach me personally on this subject through His Word. What God taught me in the following years through His Word on this subject were things I had never heard before - but which were clearly written in the Word of God. In the meantime, I have done a lot of missionary work and have been on over 23 mission trips abroad and see how God regularly heals and delivers people, whether in third world countries or in Europe. I have already experienced several times how blind eyes have opened, deaf people could hear again, lame people could walk again, demons were cast out, broken bones or bones that grew together wrongly were straightened with audible cracking sounds and how tumours instantly disappeared into thin air and the name of Jesus was always lifted up, just like in biblical times.

The things God revealed to me through His Word, I was already able to pass on to a host of others who are now seeing the exact same results or even better - without ever having to lay hands on them to receive a "gift of healing" or a specific "anointing." I merely taught what God had taught me from His Word. So, I know that the learned truths of God's Word are effective regardless of my person or personal talents. And this is already the first thing that many Christians cannot understand theologically. For many, the understanding of God's work on the subject of healing is merely limited to a 'gift of healing' that is only due to special people. But what does the Bible say on this subject? Can any Christian successfully pray for the sick and cast out demons? For this, we will devote this script to an in-depth study of the Bible on how every Christian can be equipped for this ministry.

3 God's Will to Heal

3.1 Jesus is Perfect Theology

The first thing Christians ask themselves when they want to pray for healing is, "Is it even God's will to always heal?" This is the most important point to clarify at the very beginning. Most Christians always treat God's will as a great mystery that will only be resolved in heaven. Often the following verse is quoted out of context:

"The things which no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man, which God has prepared for those who love Him." - 1 Corinthians 2:9

However, the next verse states:

"...But unto us God hath revealed it by the Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, even the depths of God." (Verse 10)

And further:

*"For whom of men knows what is in man but the spirit of man which is in him? So also no one has known what is in God except the Spirit of God. **But we have not received the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things which are given us of God.** [...] For "who hath known the mind of the Lord, who that could instruct him?" **But we have Christ's mind.**" - 1 Corinthians 2:10-12 & 16*

In the same way, Paul tells us in Ephesians chapter 5:17:

"Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is!"

or in Colossians 1:9-10:

*"Therefore, we also do not cease praying and asking for you from the day we heard it, **that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding**, to walk worthy of the Lord to all good pleasure, fruitful in every good work and **growing in the knowledge of God** [...]"*

*"And do not conform yourselves to this course of the world but be transformed [in your nature] by the renewing of your mind, **that you may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.**" - Romans 12:2*

So, we are even called to understand God's will and not remain ignorant of it. And this, of course, does not mean a comprehensive knowledge of every subject that exists, but the things that He has clearly established for us in His Word for all time. God has already revealed himself and his will, and that in the person of Jesus! How could we still say that God's will is fundamentally a mystery?

*"Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, So long time am I with you, and thou hast not known me, Philip? **He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.** And how do you say: Show us the Father? Do you not believe that I am in the*

Father and the Father is in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father abiding in me doeth his works." - John 14:8-10

*"God having spoken many times and in many ways formerly to the fathers in the prophets, has spoken to us at the end of these days in the Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds; **he who is the radiance of his glory and the imprint of his being** [...]." - Hebrews 1:1-3*

*"**He is the image of the invisible God** [...]." - Colossians 1:15*

The first thing we should do to answer the question of God's will is to look at the life of Jesus. Everything he did and said was the Father through him. The life of Jesus shows us human beings the best view of God's will and nature as we have never had before in human history.

*"**And the Word became flesh** and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, a glory as of one from the Father, full of grace and truth." - John 1:14*

When I first studied the life of Jesus with regard to healing in the Bible, I was struck by something that most Christians, like me, had not really been aware of until then:

Jesus healed everyone who came to Him, and everyone on whom He laid His hands was healed!

Again and again, we read unbelievable statements in a few verses, which we probably sometimes read over because we can't really imagine them very well. For example, this statement in Luke 6:17:

*"And when he had come down with them, he stood on a level place, and a great multitude of his disciples, and a great multitude of the people from all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases: and they that were afflicted with unclean spirits were healed. **And all the multitudes sought to touch him, for power went out from him and healed them all.**"*

Matthew 12:15:

*"But when Jesus knew it, he departed from there; and great crowds followed him, **and he healed them all.**"*

Matthew 14:34-36:

*"And when they had passed over, they came to land in Galilee. And when the men of that place knew him, they sent messengers into all that region, and brought unto him all that were afflicted: **and they besought him that they might touch the tassel of his garment only: and all that touched him were healed completely.**"*

Just imagine for a moment what is summarized here in just a few verses. Crowds from all over Judea, Jerusalem, Tyre, and Sidon came to him to be healed. It is likely that thousands came to Jesus here and each one was healed! You didn't even have to ask him for prayer, just to touch him was enough! We learn the same thing in the story of the woman with the issue of blood in

Matthew 9 who was healed when she touched Jesus secretly. Jesus did not even know who had touched her! What do all these biblical passages show? Healing was available in him at all times. One could rightly say that Jesus did not heal people, but that he himself was healing in person. There are just too many passages where Jesus healed whole crowds over and over again, and it is even reported that all who were suffering rushed to touch Him (Mark 3:10).

In two passages, Jesus' ministry and work is summarized as follows:

Matthew 4:23:

*"And he went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, **and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people.** And the news of him went out into all Syria; **and they brought to him all the afflicted with divers diseases and torments, and possessed with devils, and moonstruck, and paralytic; and he healed them.**"*

Acts 10:38:

*"Jesus of Nazareth, as God anointed him with the Holy Ghost and with power, who went about doing good, **and healing all that were overcome of the devil; for God was with him.**"*

The dimensions that Jesus' healing ministry took on are almost unimaginable to us today. Multitudes and multitudes of people came to him to be healed and he healed *them all*. When he even heard of threats from Herod, this is what he said in response:

*"And he said to them: Go and tell this fox, Behold, **I cast out demons and perform healings today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will be accomplished.**"*

Apparently, Jesus healed every day without exception, so the Pharisees even took offense because he made no exception on the Sabbath. In John 5, he said that he did only what the Father did. And the Father healed without ceasing all who came to him, and these were countless crowds who arrived even from neighbouring countries. So, when we look at Jesus' life, we immediately have a perfect view of God's will about healing and deliverance, because *he is the image of the invisible God and the imprint of his being*.

But when Jesus was at the Pool of Bethesda, didn't he heal only one lame man out of the many sick? Often it is argued in this way in order to put the above-mentioned Bible passages and the whole life of Jesus in a different light. It cannot be the case that Jesus always healed, because we do not experience it at all today. If Jesus always wanted to heal, why don't we experience it today? In order to be able to classify our lack of experience on this subject, there is always an attempt between the lines to relativize God's will on healing through very speculative assumptions. It is often simply assumed that the lame man reported in John chapter 5 was the only one Jesus healed there, and it is implied that Jesus could have healed the others but did not want to. However, both of these assumptions are pulled completely out of thin air and are not supported by the context. Nowhere does it say that Jesus healed or wanted to heal him alone of all the sick. *We simply do not learn what else He had done there*, which is why one should not build a theology from these speculations. If at other times people rushed to him to be healed wherever he went, why not here? One could just as well say that it confirms the will of the Father to want to heal everyone, since Jesus went especially to him, since it is said that he had no one who could have carried him either to the pond or to Jesus himself to be healed. Indeed, other biblical passages tell of how the lame and crippled were brought to him on stretchers or the like (see Matthew 4:24; Mark 6:56; Matthew 15:30 and Mark 2:3). All these multitudes of lame and crippled people had had friends, relatives, or other people to carry them to Jesus. Yet

he had been one of the few people who had absolutely no chance of being healed unless Jesus went to them personally to find them. In the story we don't know who else Jesus healed, but to assume that he didn't want to heal the others simply doesn't fit at all with the context of his ministry throughout the Gospels, nor is it clear from the context of this passage of Scripture, since it only says in verse 13:

*"[...] But he that was healed knew not who it was: **for Jesus had departed, because a multitude was in the place.**"*

Jesus had not departed because he no longer wanted to heal anyone, but because a crowd had formed in the place. Just as in other circumstances where Jesus was literally crushed by people, he often eluded the crowds. A few examples would be in Matthew 13, Mark 3:9 or Mark 4:1 where he had to sit down in a boat specifically because of the large crowds that gathered around him. Likewise, when Jesus multiplies bread and fish in John 6, the Bible gives us the clear reason why He had to remove Himself from large crowds at times. Thus, in verses 14-15, it states:

*"When therefore the people saw the sign which Jesus did, they said: 'This is truly the prophet who is to come into the world.' **Jesus therefore, perceiving that they were coming to seize him, to make him king, withdrew again into the mountain, he alone.**"*

The Schlachter translation says that they wanted to "make Jesus king by force" and that he had to withdraw because of this! Since this problem of large crowds is mentioned again and again, the most obvious explanation would be that he had to withdraw from the place for exactly the same reasons as mentioned in the other occasions. In the context of the whole gospels, it would also not make sense that Jesus permanently healed literally whole crowds, but in a hospital of that time he wanted to heal only one. So, to use this passage as a theological argument that Jesus does not want to heal everyone is nonsensical. Rather, it is a confirmation and sign of God's mercy in finding the one man among thousands who himself had no chance to be healed. What a merciful God!

We see that when Jesus healed everyone who came to him and everyone on whom he laid hands was healed, it was obviously the Father's will. And we know from Hebrews 13:8 that God does not change, because:

"Jesus he is the same yesterday, today and forever."

Jesus never made people sick and told them he was doing it to form their character. Very different from what we often hear preached in churches these days. There are people who claim that God wants them to be sick and that he caused this to happen. Can you imagine Jesus going to someone, laying hands on them and saying, "Be sick!" and that person getting sick? You just can't imagine that under any circumstance. If people really claim that God wants them to be sick, why do they take medicine or go to the doctor? Then wouldn't they be acting against God's will, who wants them to be sick?

To me, it shows much more that people don't really believe this at all, but try to explain their circumstances to keep their faith because they ask the question, "If God wants me to be healthy, why am I still sick even though I've already prayed for it?" Through lack of knowledge of God's Word, such ways try to rationally bridge this discrepancy. We will discuss this difference from what we read Jesus did then and what we actually experience today in more detail later. In this

chapter, however, we first want to clarify fundamentally what God's will is on the subject of healing. If you cannot find your theology about healing in Jesus' life, then you should discard it, whether or not your experiences confirm that theology in your life. The will of God is not defined by our experiences or lack of experiences, but by the life of Jesus and His Word. And Jesus is the Word of God made flesh! (See John 1:1-3; Rev. 19:13; 1 John 1:1)

3.2 "Through His Stripes"

Although the study of Jesus' life already gives such a clear answer to the question about God's will about healing, in this chapter I want to silence the last doubts on this subject. When I first started praying for people to be healed, I did not have a biblical understanding of this and did not know if God really always wanted to heal. Every time I prayed for the sick, I was not sure. I saw almost no success for some time after the first healing experience on the street. I kept praying for the sick, but nothing happened. More and more questions formed in my mind about this discrepancy I could see between my own experiences and the life of Jesus. At that time, I learned to hear God's voice better and better and experienced how He occasionally gave me prophetic words or words of knowledge as mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12. The Holy Spirit often gave me words or information about people while evangelizing that only God could know and that reinforced His gospel. An example of such a work of the Holy Spirit through spiritual gifts is found in 1 Corinthians 14:24f:

*"But if all prophesied, and there came in one unbelieving or ignorant, **he would be convicted of all, searched out by all; and so the hidden things of his heart would be made manifest, and so he would fall on his face and worship God, confessing that God is truly in you.**"*

Sometimes God would show me through this gift where people specifically needed healing. Then, when I asked people about it, they were naturally very puzzled as to how I knew this. When God supernaturally showed me where He wanted to heal people, I had no doubt at that moment that God wanted to heal. And it was the same way when I prayed for them. Just about everyone for whom God gave me such a word was healed because I had faith that God wanted to heal. Why else would He have given me such a word? However, if I did not receive a specific word from God, I always had doubts about it and *almost no one* received healing. Then when I was on my first mission trip to South Africa, Mozambique to be exact, I became very sick. Others from our team had also gotten malaria on the mission trip and I had the same symptoms. Severe fever, stomachache, nausea, sore throat, headache, aching limbs, etc. I felt very bad, and I asked the others to pray for me. However, nothing happened the first few times. But I did not want to give up and one evening I asked again to be prayed for. This time when I was being prayed for, I felt a slight warmth flowing from the hand of a woman in our team to the areas where I was in pain. Then suddenly I heard Jesus speaking to me, "Get up and walk around, for you are healed." I was lying on a mat and had hardly moved the last few days. I got up and walked around and all my symptoms were completely and immediately gone. All my fever was gone and I felt some kind of electric current still flowing through me. I could hardly believe it and burst into tears because of his kindness and love. It had been a really powerful experience for me, but not only because God had healed me in a supernatural way, but because something else happened that same evening that would shape my thinking about healing to this day. Just before going to bed, I prayed and read my Bible as I usually did. I had made it a habit to ask

God for scriptures to speak to me that night. Now, as I was listening to God for what to read, I suddenly saw clearly in my mind's eye the scripture "1 Peter 2:24" written out in front of me. It came suddenly and with such a strong clarity, as I knew it only from special experiences. Excitedly I opened my Bible to see what I would find there. I read:

*Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: **by whose stripes ye were healed.** – 1. Peter 2:24*

When I read the last sentence of the verse, I was speechless. By his wounds I had been healed? The healing I had experienced that night had something to do with Jesus' wounds? For me it was the first time I had ever read such a Verse in the Bible. Immediately I saw cross-references in my Bible, which I looked up immediately. The first cross-reference was in Isaiah 53:4-5:

“Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of 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 with his stripes we are healed.”

I couldn't believe it, never having read or heard anything like this preached in the Bible. Here was healing, like forgiveness described as a part of the atonement! I had a real revelation that night that has shaped my whole life and ministry to this day. If Jesus had paid for our sin and our healing at the same time, then it was no longer a question of whether God would heal everyone. It was already decided - two thousand years ago. The healing I had experienced that same evening - as well as all the others - had already been paid for when Jesus was scourged and tortured in the cruelest way.

It says in the verses before Isaiah 52:13f:

"Behold, my servant will act understandingly; he will be exalted, exalted, and very exalted. As many were astonished at you - so much was his face disfigured, more than that of any man, and his form more than that of the children of men."

So, Jesus was disfigured more than any Jesus movie has ever tried to portray to us. And it happened so that we would be healed not only of the spiritual disease of sin, but also of the physical consequences that man's fall brought into the world in the Garden of Eden: Sickness. Yet all my life I was never taught such things. I didn't even know there were such passages in the Bible! And yet Isaiah 53 is one of the central and most important passages in the Bible about Jesus' atoning sacrifice on the cross. Some claim that Isaiah 53 is only about mental suffering and pain. But is that the case? The Bible clearly says otherwise. Matthew 8:16-17 should be able to refute this once and for all:

"And when evening had come, they brought to him many who were possessed with devils, and he cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying, "He has taken away our infirmities and borne our sicknesses."

Matthew quotes Isaiah and relates all the healings and deliverances that Jesus did to Jesus' atoning sacrifice on the cross! The Bible thus interprets itself in this passage of Scripture. It is clear that Jesus paid for the restoration of spirit, soul and body with His wounds and death. God

gave me the revelation that evening that the healing I had experienced that day was brought about by Jesus' wounds and suffering and had already been paid for. This meant that every other healing was also already paid for. So, it was no longer a question of whether and whom God wanted to heal now. The question of God's will about healing was finally answered for me. If God had paid for all sins on the cross with his death, then also for all healings through his scourging and wounds. Nowadays, when someone is saved from and out of his sins, Jesus does not have to go to the cross again to pay for it either. No, it was already paid for two thousand years ago. It has always been there, ready to be picked up. Even David in the Psalms spoke prophetically of this day of Jesus' atonement that included healing:

*"Praise the LORD, my soul, and forget not all his benefits! He who forgives all your sin, **he who heals all your diseases.**" - Psalm 103:2-3*

It also made sense in terms of God's original state of creation in the Garden of Eden. Man was free from sin and disease. However, it was only through the Fall, when man was brought into separation from God, that the sufferings and the diseases, the bondages and the works of the devil as we know them today came into the world. This means that sin, as well as sickness, had no part in God's original plan of creation. It had never been His will. So, through the atonement of Jesus, He wants to restore us completely: healthy in body, soul and spirit - just as it was in the beginning.

1 Thessalonians 5:23:

*"But He Himself, the God of peace, sanctify you completely; **and completely may your spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ!**"*

3 John 1:2:

*"[...] I desire that it may be well with you in all things, **and that you may be in health, even as it is well with your soul.**"*

All the effects that sin has done to man as a consequence, God wants to undo and restore his original state of creation. I want to clarify again for the reader that I do not think that every illness was caused by the sin of the person involved, but by the fact that he grew up in separation from God - in a fallen world - and we are no longer in the original state of creation as in the Garden of Eden.

I now began to think completely new about healing and deliverance. No longer as a matter that God had to sovereignly decide anew in each case, but that had already been decided two thousand years ago. When someone becomes a believer through the preaching of the gospel and receives forgiveness of sins, he gains access to a grace that has already been available for two thousand years. God does not have to send His Son to the cross again. However, although God has paid for forgiveness for everyone, and not everyone receives forgiveness when the gospel is preached to them, *it is still available*. God's Word clearly states:

*"[...] for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, **who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.**" - 1 Timothy 2:4*

It is God's will that everyone be saved and receive forgiveness of sins, yet not everyone has received this. It is the same with physical healing. God wants everyone to be healed, yet not everyone has received this. Interestingly, in Greek the word "saved" here is the same word as for "healed," but more on that later. How exactly the healing that was paid for two thousand years ago is received in the now and today will be discussed further in the chapters to come.

When I had this revelation on the evening that the healing I had experienced had been paid by Jesus' wounds, my belief about God's will in praying for others to be healed changed immediately. Now I no longer doubted that God wanted to heal them and prayed with a whole new confidence and faith in God's will and promise. And suddenly from one day to the next, people for whom I had not received a direct word from God began to be healed! From one day to the next, my success rate shot up from about 2-3% to 40-50%! It had been such a huge jump that I knew I had identified perhaps the most important cornerstone in success for healing in praying for others. Only in hindsight did I learn that just about everyone who experiences long-lasting success in praying for the sick has the exact same theology about healing. For you readers, this truth may already be known, however, you must know that I am from a Baptist church and had heard virtually no sermon on this subject ever. I was honestly a little disappointed when I thought about the fact that it was never talked about or preached in my environment at that time, even though it was so clearly established in the Word of God - even by two or three witnesses in the Scriptures themselves, as I was always taught. I believe to this day that the reason for this is that the great discrepancy of Scripture and our own personal experiences simply seems too great, which is why ambiguity exists about it and a great deal of avoidance is made about these passages.

3.3 A Work of the Devil

In this chapter, I would like to go a step further and use the Bible to show that healing and deliverance are often one and the same, because there is often one and the same behind it.

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and have it more abundantly." - John 10:10

When Jesus talks about the thief, he is talking about the devil. He comes to steal, murder and destroy. For Christians, the devil should be as real as God is, however, from my experience, this is definitely not the case. The Western worldview, which is strongly influenced by secularism and materialism, has since had a strong impact on Christianity in the Western world. The supernatural and the devil quickly become part of the "fantasy" category, although it should be clear to every Christian: If there is God, then there is also a devil and vice versa. When praying for the sick, one will find that some illnesses suddenly disappear when demons are cast out. And also, the Scriptures show us that sickness is not a work of God, as some claim, but a work of the devil. Sickness *steals* health, *kills* people, and *destroys* and *corrupts* the body and fits therefore into the devil's sphere of work as it says in John 10.

1 John 3:8:

"For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil."

We see in the Gospels non-stop how Jesus casts out demons and heals the sick. Often deliverances and healings were one and the same.

*"[...] how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went about doing good **and healing all who were overcome by the devil**, for God was with him."
- Acts 10:38*

Peter makes it unmistakably clear here that sickness is not a work of God, but a work of the devil that Jesus was destroying on a regular basis by setting the captives free and healing the sick. An example of how the devil can be behind sickness is found in Luke 13:10-16:

*"Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. **And behold, there was a woman who had had a spirit of sickness for eighteen years**, and she was bent over and could not straighten up at all. When Jesus therefore saw her, he called her unto him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands on her, and she immediately became straight again, and praised God. But the ruler of the synagogue was indignant that Jesus healed on the Sabbath, and he took the floor and said to the crowd, "There are six days on which to work; on these come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day! And the Lord answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, dost not every one of you on the sabbath day loose his ox or his ass from the manger, and lead it to watering? **But this one, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan, behold, had already kept bound eighteen years, should she not be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?**"*

Here Jesus says that the source of her suffering was a spirit of sickness (or "spirit of infirmity"), a work of Satan, who had kept her bound for 18 years. But one would not have been able to see this from the outside if Jesus had not mentioned it explicitly. For when he laid his hands on her we read nothing of a demonic manifestation or the like, but she was immediately healed and straightened up. From the point of view of modern medicine, we would say that she had had a severe kyphosis or something similar. Some modern Christians claim that because people at that time did not know what caused sickness, they simply attributed it to evil spirits. But Jesus says that the origin of this woman's illness was spiritual. Either he was right, or poor Jesus apparently had not yet had any medical training. No, the spiritual world is just as real today as it was then, and we Western Christians should be aware of that.

I have experienced very similar situations to Luke 13 several times. I once prayed for a woman who had a very strange and severe curvature in the middle of her spine. While praying for healing, an evil spirit or as it says in Luke 13 a "spirit of infirmity" revealed itself behind her affliction. When the spirit was cast out, her back began to straighten. For some Western Christians reading this, this may be hard to believe because they have never experienced anything like this in their lives - let alone demons being cast out. But how real the spiritual world is will not be experienced unless one comes face to face with it. In most cases, however, where there is a spiritual origin behind illness, it has nothing to do with "possession." Rather, it is a purely physical bondage. Possession talks about ownership. A Christian, for example, can be bound but not possessed. We see the same thing in the story of Luke 13. Jesus calls the woman a daughter of Abraham - unlike some Pharisees, whom he called sons of Satan. All Jews come from the bloodline of Abraham, yet Jesus says in John 8 that only those are true children of Abraham who also do God's will, as Abraham did. So, it can be assumed that she had not lived a sinful life or a life far from God. A sinful life was also punished much more harshly and

publicly at that time. There are reasons why Christians can be physically afflicted by the devil, however, this is not always due to personal sins in their lives. But more on that later.

I assume that if Jesus had not mentioned that a spirit of sickness was behind their suffering, no one would have known - including themselves. A spirit of sickness or infirmity often manifests itself from my experience in that when we pray for healing, the pain or symptoms suddenly become stronger or move in the body - that is, completely unnatural. Often this is enough to recognize the root behind it and to loose the spirit in Jesus' name through a prayer of authority. When this spirit of sickness then detaches from the body, those affected often feel a sense of lightness in the region and literally describe this as "as if something had gone away from them", along with all their symptoms. Most of the time, nevertheless, they themselves do not know what has happened to them and that a spiritual cause was behind their physical problems. From their point of view, they are simply experiencing a healing. However, the situation in Luke 13 was not an exception. There are several examples in Scripture where the devil was the cause of illness:

Mark 9:17ff:

"And one of the multitude answered him, Teacher, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; [...] But when Jesus saw a multitude gathered together, he threatened the unclean spirit, and said unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I command thee, depart out of him, and enter no more into him. And he cried out, and tore him violently, and went out; and he became as dead, so that most said, He is dead. But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up, and he arose."

Matthew 9:32:

*"And when they departed, behold, they brought unto him a dumb man possessed. **And when the demon was cast out, the dumb man spake.**"*

Matthew 12:22:

*"Then was brought unto him **one possessed with a demon, blind and dumb: and he healed him, so that the dumb man spake and saw.**"*

Luke 4:40f:

*"And when the sun was going down, all those who were suffering from various diseases brought them to him; and he laid his hands on each of them and healed them. **And demons also departed from many**, crying out and saying: Thou art the Son of God. And he threatened them, and would not let them speak, because they knew that he was the Christ."*

Luke 6:18:

*"[...] who came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; **and those afflicted with unclean spirits were healed.**"*

Matthew 4:24:

*"And the news of him went out into all Syria; and they brought to him all the afflicted with divers diseases and torments, **and possessed with devils, and moonstruck, and paralytic; and he healed them.**"*

Matthew 8:16:

*"And when evening was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: **and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were afflicted.**"*

Matthew 15:21ff:

*And, behold, a Canaanite woman coming from that region cried out, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David: **my daughter is badly possessed.[...] And her daughter was healed from that hour.**"*

Matthew 17:14ff

*"And when they came to the crowd, a man came to him and fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is moonstruck and suffers greatly; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water!'[...] **And Jesus commanded the demon, and it departed from him, and the boy was healed from that hour.**"*

Mark 1:32:

*"Now when evening had come and the sun had set, they brought to him all who were sick and possessed. And the whole city was gathered at the door. **And he healed many who were suffering from many diseases, and cast out many demons, and did not let the demons speak, because they knew him.**"*

Mark 5:1-15: The healing of a possessed geraser.

In this story, Jesus sets a possessed man free. According to today's medicine, he would have been diagnosed with a mental illness because he obviously had psychological problems. However, after Jesus sets him free from demons, he is completely normal again.

Luke 9:42:

*"And while he was still coming toward him, the demon threw him down and dragged him. **But Jesus commanded the unclean spirit and made the boy well, and gave him back to his father.**"*

Luke 11:14:

*"And he cast out a demon, and it was dumb. **And it came to pass, after the demon was cast out, that the dumb man spake. And the crowd was astonished.**"*

Acts 5:16:

*"Now also many from the surrounding towns came together in Jerusalem, bringing sick people **and those afflicted with unclean spirits, all of whom were healed.**"*

I believe all the above scriptures can clearly show that healing and deliverance are not easily separated. While not all diseases are demonic in nature, they were nevertheless treated equally by Jesus. Both do not come from God's kingdom and therefore should be treated similarly. From my own experience I can say that on some mission trips or evangelism campaigns where I have prayed for literally hundreds of sick people at times, there were sometimes up to 80-90% demonic causes behind sicknesses or infirmities. This deviates in different regions or continents. The more the culture has opened itself up to spiritualism and demonic practices such as ancestral worship, occultic practices and the like, the more people suffer with spirits of infirmities. There is a direct link that I can confirm through experience which is sometimes really astonishing.

I have taken special time for this topic in this chapter because I wanted to show that sickness and the devil can be put in the same category. It is unlikely that any Christian would ever claim that God wants us to be demonically bound. However, when one realizes that sickness or physical suffering and demonic bondage are often exactly one and the same, it may become easier to understand that they cannot be separated. The Bible calls sickness one of the works of the devil, and therefore we must learn to hate sickness and bondage and not accept them as God's work. Those who think that illness is a blessing should go to a children's hospital once and then try to make such a statement again.

If Jesus never said the things we say about healing, why do we say them? If Jesus never told anyone that it is the Father's will that they suffer from a disease to build their character or anything like that, then why do we say it? Imagine if when you were a child your father had suddenly pushed you under the bus or physically abused you and then told you that he was doing it because he wanted to shape your character. Now how twisted is it to make God out to be such a father?

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things unto them that ask him!" - Matthew 7:11

Over and over again we read that Jesus stood before crowds of people with the sick and suffering and had strong compassion in His heart for them. This is the character of God! Why? Sickness was never originally intended in the plan of creation. It came only after the Fall.

*"And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, **and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick.**" - Matthew 14:14*

*"And there cometh a leper unto him, and prayeth him, and kneeleth down, and saith unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. **And he was moved within,** and put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will. Be cleansed!" - Mark 1:40-41*

*" And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and **was moved with compassion toward them,** because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things. - Mark 6:34*

*" And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people. Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. **And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her,** and said unto her, Weep not. And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother. [...]." - Luke 7:11-15*

*" And Jesus departed from thence, and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee; and went up into a mountain, and sat down there. And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed them: Insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel. Then Jesus called his disciples unto him, and said, **I have compassion on the multitude,***

because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way.- Matthew 15:29-32

*“And, behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David. And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David. And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye that I shall do unto you? They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened. **So Jesus had compassion on them**, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him.” Matthew 20:30-34*

This was the heart of our Savior! Full of love, compassion and mercy. However, some claim that Jesus healed solely and only to testify to His sonship with God. However, this contradicts Scripture in many passages. Healing was not just a sign of his sonship with God or his message, but also of his character. If Jesus was full of compassion and inwardly moved over the sick, so was the Father. So, it was not just a means to an end, but an expression of his loving and saving nature. Sometimes he even healed people and forbade them to tell that he had healed them, because public attention to his miracles could sometimes even hinder his mission. An example of this would be in Mark 1:43ff:

*"And he threatened him, and sent him away immediately, saying unto him, See, tell no man anything. [...] **But he went away, and began to proclaim and spread the cause diligently, so that he could no longer go publicly into a city**; but he was out in solitary places, and they came to him on every side."*

If Jesus had compassion on the sick and weak, so did the Father. This is the image of our God. Healing, deliverance and salvation are part of His character. In Matthew 12:9-13 we read that Jesus healed a man with a crippled hand on the Sabbath:

*"And behold, there was a man with a withered hand. And they asked him, saying: Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath? that they might accuse him. And he said unto them: **What man will there be among you who has a sheep and, if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, does not seize it and pull it out? Now how much more valuable is a man than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.**"*

The Pharisees objected to Jesus healing on the Sabbath. But Jesus described the man's condition with his sickness as when a sheep or son falls into a well! Of course you pull him out (of that sickness), even if it is Sabbath! We find the same story in Mark 3:1-5:

*"And he went again into the synagogue; and there was a man there with a withered hand. And they lay in wait to see if he would heal him on the Sabbath, that they might accuse him. And he saith unto the man that had the withered hand, Arise, and stand in the midst. And he saith unto them: Is it lawful to do good or to do evil on the Sabbath, to save life or to kill? But they were silent. **And he looked on them round about with wrath, grieved at the hardening of their heart**, and saith unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored."*

In the same way, we read here that Jesus puts the urgency of healing on the Sabbath on the same level as saving lives! He finds it so natural to heal the sick even on the Sabbath that Mark tells us that he even became angry and grieved at the hard-heartedness of the people. So, to say God wants us sick would be, according to Jesus' logic, just like saying he wants to push us into a well. Quite twisted, isn't it?

*"Now when he had come down from the mountain, great crowds followed him. And, behold, a leper came near, and prostrated himself before him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst cleanse me. **And he put forth his hand, and touched him, and said: I will. Be cleansed!** And immediately his leprosy was cleansed." - Matthew 8:1-3*

When Jesus said to the leper, "I will." he was saying more than just, "Yes, with you I will, the Father has permitted me." as if he had to check with the Father first to see if it was now his will to heal the man in this situation. His statement, "I will." should have gone much deeper. He literally healed crowds of people and everyone who touched him was healed. He felt compassion and mercy for the sick and suffering. *All of this was the Father through him.* I can very well imagine that when Jesus saw the leper, who was excluded from society and physically disfigured, he immediately felt compassion. I believe he was inwardly moved over him, looked at the man full of love, and said with a clarity, "I will!" or in other words, "It is my will and nature to heal." I believe that Jesus was not hesitant there.

In order to be fully equipped to pray for the sick, we must first know the will and nature of God so that we can also represent it adequately. For prayer 'in Jesus' name' means nothing other than praying on His behalf - and doing His will. That was the first thing I had to learn when I started praying for the sick. *Jesus is perfect theology.* I know God's will by His life and actions, not by my life or experiences (or lack of experiences). For all deliverances or healings, he himself had paid with his welts and wounds. All the healings Jesus ever did - before or after the cross - are due to this. If the apostles Matthew or Peter were here, they would give us exactly this answer, because they quoted moved by the Spirit from Isaiah 53 for physical healings that Jesus did. And who after Jesus experienced as many healings as Peter? He wrote in his first letter about how physical healing was part of Jesus' atoning sacrifice. It glorifies Jesus' suffering and work on the cross, and every healing points back there. This is why healing is such an effective tool in evangelism, because it points to the restorative and redemptive power of the cross, which brings not only physical or spiritual healing, but also spiritual healing, that is, forgiveness and cleansing from sin and a new creation (see 2 Corinthians 5:17). In the story of the lame man in Mark 2 and many other passages, we see how Jesus coupled healing and forgiveness of sins.

Are you, reader, aware that the Greek word for "healing" and "salvation" are even one and the same word? It is the Greek word "sōzō" and, according to Strong's Concordance (G4982), means to save, to set free, to make whole/restore, to heal, and to be whole. When Jesus said to people that their faith saved them from sins (e.g., in Luke 7 where the sinner anointed him), he used the same word when he said to people that their faith healed them (e.g., Mark 10:52 where he healed blind Bartimaeus). Forgiveness of sins and healing are also used in conjunction over and over again. His power to forgive sins was made clear and visible through his healings (see Mark 2:1-10). So, when it says in 1 Timothy 2:4, or in many other passages:

"This is good and acceptable in the sight of our Savior-God, who desires all men to be saved [...]" - 1 Timothy 2:4

Then one could also translate:

"This is good and acceptable in the sight of our Savior-God, who desires all men to be saved, set free, made whole/restored, and healed [...]"

Just as the word "sōzō" also means healing, it also includes the meaning liberation. This chapter should show us what God's will is in terms of healing and deliverance. Jesus embodied the Father's will through his life and ministry. Before his crucifixion, he already forgave people their sins and healed their diseases, thus pointing ahead to the meaning of his mission to the cross of Calvary, where he paid for the restoration of man before the Fall: body, soul and spirit. Not without reason, the word Jesus used for "save" also meant deliverance, healing and restoration. The Bible clearly categorizes sickness as one of the works of the devil and not a work of God. And Jesus himself said that if Satan cast himself out, his kingdom could not stand because it would be divided. In the context where Jesus said this, the deliverance had also been a healing at the same time. If Jesus had liberated the sick whom the Father had bound, he would have been at odds with Him, and his kingdom would not be able to stand. The Scriptures could not give God's will about healing and deliverance through Jesus more clearly.

I can tell you that it was only after I gained these insights from God's Word that I really experienced success in praying for the sick and bound. And likewise, no one who has not fully understood this matter will really get far in praying for healing or deliverance. I understood that it was no coincidence that anyone who really experienced steady success in praying for the sick or the bound/possessed had exactly the same theology. And it is still the same: people who have success in praying for the sick and bound have, in almost all cases, a different theology in this area than those who do not see success. That alone should be telling that it is not a coincidence. The only problem is that many make their theology dependent on their experience or lack of experience. According to the slogan: because I have not experienced it yet, it must be to be understood differently. However, they do not understand that their wrong theology is the reason for their lack of experience and not the other way around.

"We should never let our experiences determine God's word, but always let God's word determine our experiences."

4 Your kingdom come, your will be done!

As already described in the last sentence of the previous chapter, we must not determine God's will about healing by our own experiences or lack of experiences, but only by the life of Jesus and his Word! Nowadays there exists a perverted idea of the sovereignty of God. According to this, everything that happens in your life is willed by God, because "he allowed it". This is a faulty and dangerous conclusion. If you think this way, you will misinterpret all the works of the devil as works of God. God suddenly becomes the devil too, because he is to blame for everything the devil has ever done and for everything bad that has ever happened to us. So, because he "allowed" it to happen, it must also be his will. If you continue this twisted way of thinking, then you might as well stop praying, because otherwise you would want to 'pray away' God's will with it and interfere his plan. There would be absolutely no reason to pray anymore because everything that happens is allowed by God and therefore also wanted.

But Jesus shows us in his prayer in Matthew 6 that there is a discrepancy between the will of God in heaven and on earth. His perfect will is already visible in heaven, but not yet on earth. Therefore, Jesus tells us to pray as follows:

"Pray ye therefore thus: Our Father, who art in the heavens, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." - Verse 9-10

When he tells us to pray like this, it means that his will is obviously not yet complete on earth. In heaven there are no sick or demonically bound (Rev. 21:4), but on earth there are. When Jesus healed the sick and cast out demons, then He spoke of his kingdom being at hand. Likewise, when he sent out the disciples to heal and cast out demons in his name, they too were then to say, "The kingdom of God has come near to you!" (cf. Luke 11:9). Why should they say this? In God's heavenly kingdom, there is no sickness or demonic bondage. So, where God's kingdom is, the king's domain has also come and his will is made visible as people are healed of sickness and delivered from demons. But more and more, a wrong understanding of God's sovereignty has crept into the thinking of Christians. Who has not heard someone say, "God is in control."? As already described above, it is fundamentally unbiblical to claim that the condition here on earth reflects God's will. Virtually everything evil and bad that happens here on earth or in your life must therefore be God's will, because "he is in control." If that were so, then Jesus had better not have healed the sick, because God was already in control. He would also have better not told his disciples to do this. Actually, we would not have to do anything today. Pray for the sick or the bound and preach the gospel? Why should we? God is under control. You see, through a perverted form of God's sovereignty, we are again completely handing over to God the responsibility that He has given us.

There is some truth behind the statement that God is in control, but it is completely misinterpreted. He is in charge but not in control. We will take a closer look at this in a moment in scripture. It is true that God will have the last word, but the Bible tells us that this day has not yet come when God will have his last word. All evil will be judged only in the final judgment. Even the demons have not yet received their final judgment. They have not yet been cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10). When the demons saw Jesus in the possessed man they were filled with fear, for they knew that the day of their judgment was yet to come.

"And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Son of God? Hast thou come hither to torment us before the time?" - Matthew 8:29

The Bible clearly tells us that the world is currently still under the influence of the devil. Here are just a few examples:

John 14:30:

*"I will no longer speak much to you; for **the prince of this world** is coming, and in me he has nothing."*

2 Corinthians 4:4:

*"[...] to unbelievers, in whom **the god of this world** has blinded the mind, so that they do not see the shining of the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."*

Ephesians 2:1-2:

*"even you who were dead in trespasses and sins, in whom you once lived according to the course of this world, **according to the prince who rules in the air, the Spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience** [...]."*

*"We know that we are of God, **and the whole world lies in the evil one.**" - 1 John 5:19*

Anyone who takes a good look at the world should see this immediately. Wars, wickedness, sickness, suffering, injustice, sin, etc. have nothing to do with God's will and His kingdom. Therefore, a legitimate question is: where did the devil get this power and influence? Because Luke 4 tells us that *it was handed over to him!*

*"And he brought him up into a high mountain, and showed him in a moment all the kingdoms of the world. And the devil said unto him, Unto thee will I give all this power and the glory thereof: **for it is delivered unto me, and unto whomsoever I will I give it** [...]" - verse 6*

Who gave the devil power over this earth? God? Certainly not. It was man! For to man God has given authority over the earth:

***"The heavens are the LORD's, but the earth he has given to the children of men."**
- Psalm 115:16*

When God gave man the earth, He told him to till it and keep it (Genesis 2:15) and He was likewise to rule over all the earth (Genesis 1:26). In the beginning, everything was good. Because man followed God's commandments, God's blessing and will could be with man. Only when man sinned and followed Satan instead of God did the curse of sin enter the world. Since then, the earth has been full of sin and wickedness, and therefore full of the devil's sphere of power, because he can rule only in the absence of God. Man was in charge of the earth and this man, by breaking with God, gave the devil his space in this world. Through sin the devil got power over death, because the wages of sin is death. (cf. Romans 6:23).

*"Therefore, since the children are partakers of blood and flesh, he also in like manner partook of the same, that through death he might bring to nothing **him who has the power of death, that is, the devil**, and might set free all those who through fear of death were subject to bondage all their lives." - Hebrews 2:14-15*

Therefore, Jesus came to restore the dominion of God and bring man out of separation to God. He took away the keys of death and the kingdom of the dead (cf. Rev. 1:18) and destroyed the works of the devil (cf. 1 John 3:8), ransoming us from the power of sin and death (cf. Rom. 8:2). We are therefore in an interim period in which God's kingdom has dawned on earth but has not yet come to completion. Only when Jesus returns will his kingdom be fully established (Rev 20f).

"And when he was asked by the Pharisees: When is the kingdom of God coming?" he answered them, saying, "The kingdom of God does not come in such a way as to be observed; nor will it be said, Behold here! Or, Behold there! For behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you." - Luke 17:20-21

When we have accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior, we have literally been transferred to another kingdom and are no longer a part of this world.

*"[...] he has rescued us from the power of darkness and **transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of his love**. In him we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." - Colossians 1:13*

*"**Therefore, since we receive an unshakable kingdom**, let us be thankful, whereby we serve God well with timidity and fear!" - Hebrews 12:2*

*"I have given them thy word, and the world hated them, **because they are not of the world, as I am not of the world**. I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. **They are not of the world, as I am not of the world**." - John 17:14-16*

*"**For our citizenship is in the heavens**, from whence also we look for the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior [...]." - Philippians 3:20*

Peter writes in his first letter that we are now sojourners and strangers in this world, which means something like being a sojourner or a stranger who no longer has citizenship rights (cf. also Hebrews 11:13). So, we know that Jesus brought the Kingdom of God on earth and healing and deliverance were one of the signs of His Kingdom.

"But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then indeed the kingdom of God has come to you!" - Matthew 12:28

*"And into whatsoever city ye come, and they receive you, eat that which is set before you, and heal the sick therein, and say unto them: The kingdom of God has come near to you."
- Luke 10:8-9*

The reign of God was manifested on this earth through Jesus. If we now follow Jesus and do His will, then the kingdom of God also comes through us as it did through Jesus by the Holy Spirit. Jesus even spoke this very thing to the disciples before ascending to the Father.

"As the Father has sent me, I also send you." - John 20:21

The mission with which Jesus commissioned all His disciples is found in Mark 16:15-19:

"And he said to them: Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. But these signs will accompany those who have believed: In my name they will cast out demons, they will speak in new tongues, snakes they will pick up, and if they drink anything deadly, it will not hurt them; sick people they will lay hands on, and they will be well. Now the Lord, having spoken with them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God."

Just as He was sent to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8) and to proclaim God's kingdom, so now He sends us to carry on His work in His name and authority! And we read that the same signs of God's kingdom through Jesus will now follow us, because He now works through us, since He lives in us.

"[...] Christ in you, the hope of glory." - Colossians 1:27

Though He has left the earth and sat down at the right hand of God, yet He has now come into us through His Spirit. Now the kingdom of God is coming to earth through us! The same Jesus who did His works two thousand years ago now wants to continue to do His works on earth through us.

John 14:12:

"Truly, truly, I say to you: He who believes in me will also do the works that I do, and will do greater works than these, because I am going to my Father."

We see in Acts that this is exactly what happened, and the disciples did Jesus' commission in Mark 16 with the exact same signs that Jesus did. The kingdom of God now continued to come through his disciples. Jesus was now no longer working through his physical body on earth, but through his Spirit in the believers - whom he again calls his body, namely the body of Christ! **We are now the body of Christ on earth.** He the head, we the members.

*"And all things he has subjected to his feet, **and has given him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.**" - Ephesians 1:22*

In a body, the head and the members must work together so that the will of the head is carried out - so we also must be obedient to Christ so that His will is done through us.

We often quote the following verse incompletely in the following way:

"It is God who is able to do above all things, beyond measure, more than we can ask or conceive."

However, it reads in full:

*"Now to Him who is able to do above all things, exceedingly more than we can ask or conceive, **according to the power that works in us**, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever! Amen." – Ephesians 3:20-21*

Where does this exceeding power, which is more than we can ask or conceive, work? It works in us and through us, as Christ dwells in us and works through us. Amen!

Every believer is still in the world, but no longer of the world, but belongs to God's kingdom. We are now the light and salt of the world, just as Jesus was! (Matthew 5:13-14). And Jesus clearly says: if we do not shine, who will? So the earth is dark only if we do not shine.

"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become insipid, with what shall it be salted? It is good for nothing more than to be thrown out and trampled on by men. You are the light of the world; a city that is on top of a mountain cannot be hidden. Neither do you light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on the lampstand, and it shines to all who are in the house. So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in the heavens."

God's will on this earth is now made visible through the deeds of His children, who are His body on earth. We have now been sent into a fallen world ruled by the devil to do God's will and advance His kingdom on earth. We have become part of His army and have been sent into battle against the kingdom of darkness.

Ephesians 6:12:

"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the heavenly realm."

And we have been given an armor! Why do I need armor if I am not going to be sent into battle?

Verse 13ff:

"Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having well directed all things, to stand your ground. Stand fast therefore, your loins girded with truth, and clothed with the breastplate of righteousness, and your feet booted with readiness [to witness] to the gospel of peace. Above all, take hold of the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the fiery darts of the evil one, and take also the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, watching for this purpose with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints [...]."

We have been sent into this battle with armor that includes a shield and a sword. For defense and for offense. But instead of using their armor, most Christians put it down and put the responsibility back on God - "He is in control, after all." The sword is put down and all the consequences are simply accepted. So, when a Christian gets a fiery dart from the devil, we say, "It was God's will, because He allowed it." No, we have not learned to handle the armor, because the shield of faith quenches all the fiery darts of the enemy! And so, we wrongly blame God for things the devil does. God will not do what He has told us to do. God will not resist the devil for us, wield the sword or lift the shield. God told us to resist the devil so that he would flee. God has given us everything for battle and equipped us with His power but we have to use it.

"Since his divine power has given us everything for life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and virtue, through whom he has given us the precious and greatest promises [...]." - 2 Peter 1:3-4

It is not God's will that we just accept everything that comes our way and happens to us. How does Peter say we access God's power in our lives? It is the knowledge of His Word! But with us there is often a lack of this knowledge. And this brings us down. But most Christians do not understand at all that they have a responsibility to fight because they are in a war and therefore are absolutely passive.

"You then endure adversity as a good soldier of Jesus Christ! Those who do military service do not become entangled in business of living, so that they may please the one who commissioned them." - 2 Timothy 2:3-4

Now, when the devil comes to steal, murder and destroy, the average Christian is not even remotely equipped to oppose him in the Faith and Word of God. That is why so many of God's people are afflicted and oppressed by the devil. Not because God wills it, but because we do not follow God's instructions, as we often have a lack of knowledge. What happens is what Hosea already reported:

"My people perish for lack of knowledge." - Hosea 4:6

We have been given armor and His Word is our sword wielded by the Spirit. If we do not know the Word, then we do not know our sword. Now how are we to win victories if we do not even understand our authority and equipment? For this reason, this script has been written so that every Christian can be equipped to minister to the sick and bound. In the coming chapter, we will now look at how to use God's sword - His Word - and bring God's will to the earth in terms of healing the sick and deliverance.

5 Difference between authority and gifts

We are now the body of Christ. It is not for nothing that the Bible uses this image because the healing and liberating power of Jesus now flows through our hands. Jesus is the head, and we are his members. And we know that a head without its body can do nothing, just as the body without its head cannot. If we no longer see healings or deliverances, it is not because Jesus no longer wants to do so, for Scripture itself says that "*Jesus is the same, yesterday, today, and forever.*" (cf. Hebrews 13:8 & Malachi 3:6). No, we have stopped following the Head because He said to lay hands on the sick and cast out demons! Why are we surprised that we don't see Jesus' work through us as we did with the disciples back then, *when we don't do the same thing they did?* Why should we expect Jesus to heal and deliver through us if we no longer lay hands on anyone as He did, His disciples did, and we were told to do? The very fact that we no longer lay hands on the sick as the early church did or command evil spirits shows us how far we have strayed from the biblical model. This is where we now want to come back to and learn from Jesus and the early church to experience the same results for the Kingdom of God on this earth.

5.1 "I do not have the gift of healing".

In the Word of God, we find several scriptures on how God heals or delivers through us. However, even though there are so many scriptures on this, most Christians still have the understanding that only the one who has "the gift of healing" can be used by God for healing. However, this script is not about spiritual gifts. To this day, a very meager understanding exists about 1 Corinthians 12. What most do not even know is that literally the "gift of healing" does not even exist as such in the Bible. We read from 1 Corinthians 12:

"But to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for a benefit. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith in the same Spirit; to another gifts of grace of healings in the one Spirit; to another miraculous works. [...] But all these things worketh one and the same Spirit, dividing to each specially as he will."

Many modern translations translate it in the singular, "gift of healing," instead of the plural, "gifts of healings," as in the original text. The problem is that the former translation gives the wrong picture. When we say someone has received a "gift of healing," we think it means he has received a "gift," which is to be understood similarly to a worldly gift or talent. It is given once and you have it forever. However, that is not what Paul is talking about here. If we look a few verses earlier, we notice that it does not say "gift of wisdom" or "gift of knowledge," but "word of knowledge" and "word of wisdom." There is no one who has a spiritual "gift of wisdom" in the sense of a comprehensive Solomon wisdom that he now possesses for the rest of his life. So, the word "gift" must not be understood in the sense of "talent", but in the sense of "gift/present". Correct translation of the Greek word "χάρισμα *chárisma*" is 'gift of grace', 'gift of grace' or 'gift given out of benevolence' and not 'talent', which means something else. A Talent is something you have or you don't have, and it remains throughout your life, like having the talent (gift) of singing. A gift/present, however, is given for a specific purpose. That means, in the biblical context, a 'gift of healing', equals *one healing*. It is given by the Spirit and is then "used up" when someone has received a needed healing in their body. It is the same with the

word of knowledge or word of wisdom. The Spirit gives for the benefit of someone in the congregation a word of knowledge or wisdom for another person. Suppose you ask God for wisdom about what decision to make in a certain situation and a brother or sister comes to you who knows nothing about your situation and gives you a word from the Lord that fits your situation exactly and gives you your needed answer. I could tell many such stories where I have received such a word for others or others have received such a word for me. For example, I remember an incident when I once met a group of Christians in a hotel and had a conversation with them. During the conversation, I had the impression that the Holy Spirit was giving me a word of wisdom for a young woman in the group. I suddenly had the sense that the Lord was revealing to me that she had a younger brother, and he was facing a decision about whether or not to go on a longer mission trip. I strongly felt that the Lord wanted to say to him, "You should go. I want to send you." I knew nothing about this woman but relayed the impression to her just as I had received it. She was visibly puzzled, because she actually had a younger brother who was facing this very decision and was not sure whether to go or not! As I recall, the family had actually asked God for wisdom for this decision. The Spirit had given me a word of wisdom for the benefit of a brother. I could give examples for each of the nine "spirit gifts" listed showing that they are not gifts for a lifetime, but God-given gifts at a particular moment. The "gifts of the Spirit" are nothing but workings and manifestations of the Spirit through us, not talents.

*" And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the **manifestation of the Spirit** is given to every man to profit withal."*

From experience, I know what it means to receive "grace gifts of healings." An example of this is when I once preached in a local church on a mission trip. When I went to pray for the sick afterwards, suddenly a strong power came palpably into my hands - as if an electric current pulsed through them. Now when I laid my hands on the sick, this current flowed through them and they were healed on the spot. They reported that something flowed from my hands into their bodies, whereupon all physical ailments disappeared. It was quite dramatic with a woman who had a cancerous tumor in her abdomen. She came back a few days later and testified that she had been completely healed. After praying for the sick in the church, that power disappeared from my hands again. I knew the Spirit of God had given me grace gifts of healings and I had merely passed them on. However, healings that I experience in this way are very rare and out of all the healings I have ever experienced, I would suppose they make up just about 4-5%. To me, this is not the 'normal way' people are healed, but a very special way. I could not teach anyone to walk in such gifts since, as it is said, they are given by the Spirit as He wills (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:11). However, I can only say that when I am particularly sensitive and attentive to God's activity, I experience this more often in churches. For example, I remember once praying and fasting a lot before a mission trip to prepare spiritually for that time. Then on the Sunday before I left, I was sitting in worship and the Spirit suddenly gave me prophetic words and words of wisdom for various people around me. I was quite amazed because that was not normally the case like that. So, I can only conclude that I had become more sensitive and receptive than I usually was because of all the time spent in prayer and fasting. I believe the Spirit of God wants to work through us and edify the church through His gifts far more than we experience. However, we are not always receptive to His working or speaking because worldly things often occupy us more than the question, "Lord, here I am, what do you want to do through me?" I believe that this is what Paul means when he speaks of us to earnestly desire spiritual gifts (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:31 and 1 Corinthians 14:1).

In this script, however, I do not want to talk about spiritual gifts. This detour was only necessary to clear up misunderstandings and to show that the normal way people are healed is not through gifts of healings. Rather, I see them as a jump-start or a special grace for special occasions.

5.2 The Authority of the Believer in Jesus' Name

Sometime before the disciples received the Spirit and His gifts at Pentecost (cf. Acts 2), we read that they *already healed the sick and cast out demons*. This they did not do by gifts of the Spirit; they had not even received the Spirit yet. In Luke 9 we read:

*"And when he had called the twelve together, **he gave them power and authority over all demons and to heal diseases**. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to make the sick well. [...] And they went out and went through the villages one by one, preaching the good news and healing everywhere."* - Luke 9:1-2 & 6

In the next chapter, He even sends out 70 more disciples with the same commission:

*"Now after these things the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them two by two before his face into every city and place whither he himself would come. And he said unto them: The harvest is great, but the laborers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out laborers into his harvest. [...] And into whatsoever city ye come, and they receive you, eat that which is set before you, **and heal the sick therein, and say unto them: The kingdom of God has come near to you.**"* - Luke 10:1-2 & 8-9

When the disciples returned, they were quite excited because indeed the demons were subject to them in His name. Jesus then says the following to his disciples:

*"But the seventy returned with joy, saying: Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name. But he said to them: I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. **Behold, I have given you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you.** But do not rejoice over this, that the spirits are subject to you; but rejoice that your names are written in the heavens!"* - Luke 10:17-20

But what Jesus says here to the seventy disciples applies not only to them, but also to us. For in the Great Commission, Jesus tells them what to do with the new converts, "[...] *teaching them to keep all that I have commanded you!*"(Matthew 28:20). This means that if Jesus had said something to His disciples then, He says it to us today! In his name we also have power over the enemy! Otherwise, one could also claim Jesus' Sermon on the Mount was addressed only to the disciples then and not to us today. However, it is clear that all these things were written down for us, because Jesus said: teach them to keep all that I have commanded you. But to make it even more clear, Jesus appends the following words again in Mark 16:

*"And he said to them: Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. **But these signs will accompany those who have believed: In my name they will cast out demons,***

[...] snakes they will pick up, and if they drink anything deadly, it will not hurt them; sick people they will lay hands on, and they will be well. - Mark 16:17ff

Now this should be clearly evidenced from Scripture that it was not just to the disciples at that time. For here He not only repeats the same thing as in Luke 9 and 10, he even says explicitly that these signs will accompany those who have become believers! And the first thing he says was that they will cast out demons in his name. Have you ever noticed that there is no "gift of casting out demons" in 1 Corinthians 12? Every believer has now been given "[...] *authority over all the power of the enemy*" (Luke 10:19). And Jesus even repeated again and again what authority He has given us:

"But I also say to you, You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." - Matthew 16:18-19

In this context, Jesus asked His disciples who they thought He was. To this Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." In response, Jesus says that on this rock - that is, the revelation of his identity as the Christ - he will build his church. He is not speaking here of the person of Peter, but for what Peter was to stand for: the rock of the revelation of the person of Jesus Christ. The church that would now stand on this rock - this revelation - could even overcome the gates of hell. I once read an interesting commentary on this passage and made an exciting discovery. It says here that the gates of Hades, will not overwhelm the church. Who has ever seen someone take their gates to the battlefield on the offensive? Jesus is talking here about how the defensive of the enemy would not overwhelm us! This means that the church of Jesus is on the offensive! If we are founded on the rock of the revelation of Jesus Christ, then we can storm any spiritual stronghold of the enemy and his gates will not overwhelm us. What a promise! As if that were not enough, Jesus repeats it again two chapters later for all his followers:

"Truly I say to you: If you bind anything on earth, it will be bound in heaven, and if you loose anything on earth, it will be loosed in heaven." - Matthew 18:18

Our words that we speak on earth have an effect on the spiritual world that the devil influences on this earth. We can bind demonic spirits and loosen their bonds over people! What I find amazing is that there is a man in the Bible who apparently understood this even before Jesus officially gave this commission to heal the sick and cast out demons to the seventy, and later to all the disciples.

"But John answered and said, Master, we saw a man casting out demons in thy name, and we refused him, because he followeth not thee with us. And Jesus said unto him, Resist not. For he that is not against you is for you." - Luke 9:49-50

The twelve disciples were apparently jealous and even irritated because they thought it had merely been a privilege for them to cast out demons and heal the sick in Jesus' name. This was before he sent out the seventy. This man apparently understood that he had the same authority as a believer in Jesus. For it is not said here, "We saw someone *trying* to cast out demons in your name," but that he was *actually casting* out demons. Jesus also confesses this and even

says that they should not stop him from doing so! So, it was quite different from the seven sons of Skeva the high priest in Acts 19:

"But some also of the wandering Jewish conjurers undertook to call upon the name of the Lord Jesus concerning those who had evil spirits, saying, 'I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches!' Now there were seven sons of a Jewish high priest Skeva who did this. But the evil spirit answered and said to them: Jesus I know, and of Paul I know. But you, who are you? And the man in whom the evil spirit was sprang upon them, and overcame them together, and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded." - Acts 19:13-16

So, it is visible that authority in Jesus' name comes by believing in Jesus and belonging to Him—not like the sons of the high priest. In Mark's Gospel we find the same account of the man who had this revelation:

"John said to him, Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name; and we resisted him because he did not follow us. But Jesus said, Do not resist him, for there is no one who can do a miracle in my name and soon after speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is for us." - Mark 9:38-40

Jesus does not deny that the man did miracles in his name and that he also belonged to him, even though he was not in the immediate circle of disciples who followed Jesus on foot. He had understood what Jesus had said in John 12:14:

*"Truly, truly, I say to you: **He who believes in me will also do the works that I do, and will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father.**"*

He understood that the commission in Luke 9 was not an exclusive one. Yet many Christians today do not believe that Jesus can work through them as He did then. Everything Jesus ever said was true. However, when he added "Truly, truly" before a statement, he meant to say that he really meant what would come after it, because he knew it would sound so fantastic to his disciples that they might not take it literally. In other words, every time Jesus used this phrase, he said, "I know what I am about to say will be hard to believe, but I am serious." The statement in John 14:12 is consistent not only with Mark 16:15ff, but also with the book of Acts, where we see Jesus' followers doing the same things He did. Just as in Mark 16, in John 14 the only requirement is that you believe in Jesus! If you believe in Jesus, then these signs can or should follow you too!

Now we come to perhaps the most exciting question: If Jesus has given us His authority to do miracles and cast out demons in His name, why do we experience this so rarely?

I believe the most common reason has already been discussed in previous chapters: we often do not know what authority we have in Jesus' name. We have a lack of knowledge. If you don't know that God has given you a sword, how can you use it?

But when I had already realized this, I saw some success, but still not always. What bothered me the most was that I could not cast out every demon as easily as Jesus did. In the beginning, when I started to use my authority against sickness and demons, I had to face defeats. I remember one such day - I was annoyed and a little frustrated at the same time. "God, if you have already paid for all the deliverances and healings and given me your authority, why do I

see so few mountains moved when I speak to them?" Something like that was my condition and I honestly brought it to God. I didn't want to dump this frustration on God but tried to bring it honestly before Him. When I asked for an answer to this, the same thing happened in Mozambique after my healing. I clearly saw "Matthew 17:20" written in my mind's eye. Often God speaks to me in Bible passages, but as with 1 Peter 2:24, this impression had been much stronger than it usually was. I immediately picked up my Bible and began reading from the beginning of the 17th chapter, first looking at the context of the verse. If you are reading this, then I ask you dear reader to take your Bible and go to this verse once together with me. If you have an Elberfelder or Schlachter translation (equivalent to King James Version in English), then please take these, because they are especially close to the original text and important for theological questions. First, we read how Jesus goes up the mountain with John, James and Peter and have the experience with Elijah and Moses. Now as they come down from the mountain the following happens:

*"And when they came to the crowd, a man came to him and fell on his knees before him and said, 'Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is moonstruck and suffers greatly; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water!' And I brought him to thy disciples, but they could not heal him. Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation! How long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to me! And Jesus commanded the demon, and he departed from him: and the lad was whole from that hour. **Then the disciples came to Jesus alone and said: Why could we not cast him out?(Verse 20:) But Jesus said unto them: Because of your unbelief! For truly I say to you: If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye would say unto this mountain: Lift yourself up from here to there, and it would lift itself up; and nothing would be impossible for you. But this kind does not depart except by prayer and fasting.**"*

The verse 20 that God gave me was the exact verse that Jesus gave the disciples in response to the same question I had: "Why couldn't we cast him out?!" I'll be honest, when I read this I for one was first surprised and confused at the same time. I was surprised because this Bible passage fit so perfectly and I knew that God had answered me, but at the same time I was confused because of the answer that Jesus gave to the disciples and therefore to me. Because of my unbelief? I did not find this answer very pleasant (for my ego). Until that time, I had never heard these verses preached from a pulpit. But now let's take apart this text together.

First of all, it should be said that the disciples could not cast out the demon even though they had the authority to do so. They even had experience in the field with success. Jesus' reaction when he heard this is also quite clear:

"And I brought him to your disciples, but they could not heal him. Then Jesus answered and said, O unbelieving and perverse generation! How long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to me!" - Verse 17

If this is how the Lord responds, then it must have been absolutely possible for the disciples to cast out this demon and heal the boy. Jesus sends for the boy and casts out the demon. We know that when Jesus did something, he represented the Father's will. So, it had been the Father's will to heal the boy, because Jesus healed him. And although it was God's will and his disciples, who were endowed with the authority of his name, prayed for him, the boy was not healed! I ask you to think about this fact for a moment. The disciples prayed for something that was in the will of God and it did not happen. But instead of saying what we would say today, Jesus

says something completely different. Jesus doesn't say, "Look, it wasn't God's timing that the boy should be healed now by your prayer. That was reserved for me." He also didn't say, "You should have broken and bound the generational curse in the family first," or "He couldn't be healed because he had unforgiveness in his life." All these things we say when we do not experience answers to prayer. So, one thing to note is what we need to understand fundamentally about prayer and the will of God:

It is possible for us to pray in the will of God and still not experience any results!

For me, this thought was completely new. I grew up with the understanding that if we pray for something and it happens, it must have been God's will - and if it doesn't happen, it obviously couldn't have been His will. But this passage shows us that this view is not biblical. I now know that there are other passages in the Bible that say the same thing as here in Matthew 17, but I didn't know them at the time. Jesus said that because of their unbelief, they could not cast out the demon and heal the boy. So, there is something that makes our authority in Jesus' name ineffective.

"But he says to them: Because of your unbelief. For truly I say to you: If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye would say unto this mountain: 'Lift up from here to there,' and it would be lifted up; and nothing would be impossible to you." - Verse 20

Jesus says that if we have faith, we will speak to the mountain. Yes, you read it right. We are to speak to the mountain! We are not to speak to God about the mountain, but to the mountain about God! That was the next thing that surprised me. I had never talked to a problem before - let alone a disease. If I may put it this way: We, the church, almost always do the exact opposite of what Jesus told us to do. When we pray, we ask God to move the mountain for us. And if He doesn't move it, we conclude that it couldn't have been His will or timing. But that we are to speak to the mountain makes it clear that he has given us his authority to command in his name. But what confused me the most was the last sentence of the passage when Jesus added:

"[...] But this kind goeth not out except by prayer and fasting." - Verse 21

Now what was it? Was it unbelief or because there was too little prayer and fasting? It sounded like a contradiction, like the fine print on a package. 'With faith you can move all mountains...except this one, because it is too powerful. For that you must also do something and pray and fast.' It just didn't make sense. I had no other option but to ask God for understanding. Then I had the impression he spoke to my heart and said (paraphrased):

"Flo, praying and fasting is not a recipe to get rid of certain demons, but your unbelief."

And then all of a sudden it made sense again. By praying and fasting, I turn to God, "the beginner and perfecter of my faith" (Hebrews 12:2). There are not special kinds of demons where authority in Jesus' name is not enough, and works would have to be done in addition. For when Jesus gave the disciples authority over unclean spirits, we read the following:

"And when he had called the twelve together, he gave them power and authority over all demons and for healing diseases." - Luke 10:1

The disciples had authority to cast out *all* demons! Did Jesus heal him immediately or fast for a week first? No, Jesus had already fasted and prayed. His faith was already complete. Jesus gave the disciples the answer on how to strengthen their faith and get rid of their unbelief. In this context, unbelief also fits better than small faith, since in the next sentence Jesus talks about how a mustard seed of faith is enough for a mountain to move. The mustard seed was the smallest of the grains (Matthew 13:32). The problem was not faith, but rather doubt. Most people think that you cannot have faith and unbelief at the same time, but the Bible teaches otherwise. Indeed, the man in Mark 9 said to Jesus in verse 24:

"[...] I believe. Help my unbelief!"

So scripturally it is possible to have faith and unbelief at the same time. If you harness two horses of equal strength against each other and let them pull, they will not move from the spot. Their strength cancels each other out. It is not a great faith that is needed, but a childlike faith that is sufficient here - one that has not yet been littered with doubt and unbelief in God's Word. But the best part is that Scripture also confirms this truth in other places with even more than 2 or 3 witnesses. Let's go to Mark 11:20 and listen and read intently what Jesus says:

*"And as they passed by early in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots. And Peter remembered, and saith unto him, Rabbi, behold, the fig tree, which thou cursedst, is withered. And Jesus answered and saith unto them: **Have faith in God! Verily I say unto you: Whoever shall say to this mountain: Lift thyself up, and cast thyself into the sea! and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass, it shall be done unto him. Therefore I say to you: Whatsoever ye pray and ask, believe that ye have received it, and it shall be done unto you.**" - Mark 11:20-24*

The exact same thing is written again in the Gospel of Matthew with the same words:

*"But Jesus answered and said unto them: **Verily I say unto you: If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not alone do that which was done to the fig tree, but if ye shall also say unto this mountain: Lift yourself up and throw yourself into the sea!" it will be done. And whatever you desire in prayer believing, you will receive.**" - Matthew 21:21-22*

As if these passages were not enough, the same thing is written with a mulberry fig tree in Luke 17:5ff. So, we see, what Jesus told the disciples was nothing new or something he once said in passing. It was a central theme of his preaching, how prayers would be answered according to His will. And yet, in my life up to that point, I had never heard a sermon on this topic - at least not in my circles.

Because I didn't know in the beginning that God in Jesus had paid for every sickness and bondage, I was never sure if God really wanted to heal this time. Only when I received certain words from God for others, I had faith to pray because then I was convinced that it was His will. That is why I always had doubts when I prayed for someone with whom I had not received a specific word. That is exactly why then almost no one was ever healed or delivered. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God (cf. Romans 10:17). Through the revelation of 1 Peter 2:24 in Mozambique, faith suddenly came that God also wanted to heal those where I did not receive a specific word from Him. As I mentioned once before, my success rate shot up abruptly from about 2-3% to 40-50%. This alone should speak volumes.

If I don't know at the time of prayer if it is God's will, how can I pray with faith without doubt?

*"Therefore I say to you: **Whatever you pray for and ask, believe that you have received it, and it will be given to you.**" - Mark 11:24*

The problem is that most Christians today do not believe it was God's will until the person is visibly healed. However, the prayer of faith works exactly the other way around. We must first believe that we have received and so it will become us. However, we often do not believe that we have received it until we see it! This means that such a prayer was not prayed in faith, but in sight, and does not agree with the words of Jesus. Indeed, faith is "[...] *being convinced of things not seen.*" (Hebrews 11:1). Nothing can be spoken in faith unless these two things are first anchored: That God wants to heal everyone and that He can heal through you. Only when you understand these two things can you pray with a confidence, as it says in 1 John:

"And this is the confidence we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have what we have asked of him." - 1 John 5:14-15

Again, John writes that by knowing God's will, the one praying has a confident faith that he has already received what he asked for - before this became apparent! However, this strong confident faith comes from already knowing God's will.

However, just as faith comes from hearing from the Word of God (Romans 10:17), unbelief also comes from hearing. If we look at hours of content filled with unbelief and doubt every day, why are we still surprised when we want to pray for someone and find doubt? We are practically surrounded in a society soaked in unbelief. What mountains would begin to move if the body of Jesus Christ, instead of watching two to three hours of television a day, spent two to three hours soaking up the Word of God?

When you read the story in Matthew 17, you might wonder why the experienced disciples suddenly doubted while praying for this boy - hadn't they already experienced God's supernatural work? I think the answer to this is known only to those who have had some experience with deliverance. If you ask someone who has experienced an epileptic seizure, they will tell you that it can be really intimidating. Then imagine you command in Jesus' name and he still keeps foaming at the mouth. By now I can well imagine what must have gone through the disciples' minds, because the same thing has often happened to me. Questions come up like, "Why doesn't anything happen when I command? Am I doing something wrong? Why is it taking so long? If Jesus were here, the demon would have gone out long ago." Visual problems can intimidate the person praying when they can't see any change from the outside at first. Doubts begin to run through the mind and the more you command, the less you believe your words carry the same power. Especially when I started praying for deliverance, I experienced such situations more often. Imagine you command the demon to go and the first thing that happens is that the demon laughs at you loudly and tells you that he will not go. You think you are not hearing right. Anyone who has had experience with deliverance will understand what I mean. The demons know full well how fragile our faith is sometimes and use every tactic to make us believe that we have absolutely no power over them in Jesus' name. When you believe the bluff, you begin to doubt in your authority in Jesus' name. It is the same when you pray for certain diseases that you would often classify as very great: cancer, blindness, deafness etc. Is it more difficult for God to cure cancer than a headache? Certainly not, but we often categorize diseases and infirmities according to their greatness in our eyes. If we hear that someone was

delivered from a headache after prayer, we are probably not quick to doubt it. But when someone claims to be delivered from cancer, we are critical at first. But why? We act as if cancer is harder to cure than a headache. For God, however, everything is the same. Funnily enough, I have experienced the greatest miracles where I did not know exactly how bad the disease was. That is why it is not always advisable to get a detailed description of the problem and what exactly would have to happen for the person to be healed now. In fact, you may let the mountain in your eyes get bigger and bigger until your head tells you, "Forget it, this is way too big for your faith."

Perhaps the greatest miracle I ever experienced was because I had misjudged the magnitude of the whole disease. I was once invited to Nigeria to speak at a pastors and leaders conference. Evangelistic services were then held in the evenings with prayer for healing and deliverance. Many bound people were set free and sick people were healed. Then a woman came up to me and said that she had hip and knee problems. When I asked if there was anything else I could pray for, she told me that she had an abdominal tumor. I thought she meant a small tumor that they might have found once during a physical. My faith was already strengthened by the many signs and wonders that happened at the conference, and I told her full of faith with a smile on my face, "No problem for Jesus." I remember one of her eyebrows going up when she saw my confidence and firm assurance that Jesus would heal her now. Apparently, many had prayed for her before, but to no avail - why should it be so easy this time? I commanded all the causes of the hip and knee problems to disappear in Jesus' name, then pointed my finger at her abdomen and said in a loud voice, "Tumor, I command you in the name of Jesus: *go!*" When I pronounced this, it was as if she had been struck by lightning. She fell into the arms of the woman standing behind her. After a few seconds she regained consciousness and I asked what happened and she started screaming, "all my pains in my hip and knee are gone!". Then I asked about the tumor in her abdomen. She started palpating her abdomen. A stare of shock spread across her face. Then without saying another word, she dropped to her knees and started crying and sobbing profusely, crying, screaming and praising God. It was actually more of a screaming than a weeping and she was praising God - she was completely beside herself. I don't think I have ever witnessed such a violent reaction to a healing as I did with this woman. We all started praising God together with the woman. A few days later she came back and gave the testimony of her healing in front of everyone. What I learned then I could almost not believe. The woman said that the tumor had been growing in her abdomen for over 20 years and was steadily increasing in size. Other family members suffered from the same problem as her and some of them had already died because of it. (In Africa, many people don't have access to good treatment, let alone surgery, as they do in Europe). She said that the tumor had grown to a size about 2-3 times the size of my fist! It was so large that she could always feel it and when she turned in bed, the tumor always "slid" with her due to its heavy weight. But when the woman stood in front of me that evening, she was wearing a long and wide robe, which is usual for African women. I had thought the tumor was small like a lump in a certain place. When I, with authority, ordered the tumor to disappear, she felt a strong force come into her abdomen and the tumor had completely disappeared into thin air! For this reason, she began to scream so violently in front of everyone. I was speechless because I had not asked how big the tumor had been. Two days had passed and not only was her tumor still completely gone, but so was her hip and knee pain! The name of Jesus was mightily lifted up and many people can testify to this miracle on that day of the conference.

I am quite honest: if I had known about the size of the tumor in advance, I would never have prayed for her with the confidence with which I prayed for her that night. I also suddenly understood why at that time she contorted her face so when I said in complete confidence, "No

problem for Jesus," as if it were something small. But the truth was: for Jesus it was something small! Just not in our eyes. I'm sure if I had known how big the tumor had been, I would have prayed something like this: "In Jesus' name, I command that the tumor die and completely wither away in the next three months." The words of Ephesians 3:20 suddenly became more real to me than ever:

*"But to him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, **according to the power that works within us** [...]."*

God's power works in us and through us! This strengthened my faith in such a way that the limits I had unconsciously given God up to that point on what He can do through me were shifted anew. How often we put God in a box that we have made in our head! As a result, other miracles of similar magnitude occurred that evening, which would be difficult to recount in many Christian circles because they are simply unimaginable to us. And what we cannot imagine, we often find difficult to believe. Yet God says that He is able to do more through us than we could ask or even conceive! The same thing happened when the Israelites were chased by the Egyptians and came to the Red Sea. They panicked and Moses prayed to God.

*"And the LORD said unto Moses, Why cryest thou unto me? Command the sons of Israel to set out! **But lift up thy rod, and stretch forth thine hand over the sea, and divide it**, that the sons of Israel may go in upon dry land into the midst of the sea!"*

Isn't it surprising that God doesn't say, "Don't be afraid Moses, I will split the sea," *but tells Moses to split the sea?* It sounds just like Matthew 17! In this case, he is not to speak to God about the sea, but to the sea about God! And God confirmed his action. We read exactly the same thing in the story where Jesus multiplies the bread and fish in Mark 6:35-37. When the disciples came to Jesus because they saw that the need of feeding the people had become too great, he thereupon said to them, "Give ye them to eat!" whereupon the disciples greatly wondered, since they did not have enough bread.

Since then, I have resolved not to find out too much about the problems before, so that I will not have to believe through all these problems. A childlike faith is the best faith in prayer for the sick. Has every tumor I have prayed for disappeared like this woman's? No. But that will not stop me from continuing to speak to the mountains anyway. Often after a defeat, whether in healing or deliverance, I have withdrawn into prayer and fasting, asking the Lord to strengthen me in faith through His Word and Spirit. Then I faced the mountain again in Jesus' name and the breakthrough came! For me, the words in Matthew 17:20 are no longer theology, but have become my everyday life. And the more I grow in experience and faith in Jesus' words, the more success I see. And my experience shows me that Jesus' words absolutely meant what He said. In exactly the same measure as I grow in faith, I see success in praying for the sick and bound. The things I saw in the beginning when I freshly started praying for people do not compare in any degree to the things I am experiencing today. There is a steady process of growth to be seen. However, the faith muscle will not grow if one merely becomes a hearer but not a doer of the Word!

"But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves! For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror. For he has looked at himself and gone away, and he has immediately forgotten how he was constituted.

But he who has looked into the perfect law of liberty, and has abided in it, not being a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, he will be blessed in his deeds." - James 1:22-25

When Christians say, "I have never seen blind eyes or deaf ears opened," I would reply, "How many have you prayed for?" When we pray for people, we like to do it in the comfort of our home, away from the person and without taking a risk. We completely surrender our authority and responsibility to God in most cases, and thus all the results that come from that. But Jesus did not command us to pray like this. How many have you laid hands on and commanded the eyes, ears, etc. to open in Jesus' name? It takes a lot of courage, faith and humility to do this because you may look like a fanatic or a complete idiot. The fear of nothing happening just doesn't do our ego any good. Then, when there is no improvement, you often hear charismatic people in particular say, "It can't be because of my faith." When humility is lacking, the sick person is simply blamed for his lack of faith: "You just need to believe more." But how insensitive is that to say directly to the face of someone who, after all, has just sought out your prayer? If his faith were perfect, why is he still asking you for prayer? Isn't it obvious that he is looking for support in his faith?

It takes time to learn to wield the sword of the Spirit and to use the armor of God effectively. For this reason, sick Christians are also urged in James 5 to go to the experienced - the elders - if they personally do not experience a breakthrough in prayer for healing.

*"Is anyone sick among you? Let him call the elders of the church to him, and let them pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. **And the prayer of faith will heal the sick** [...]" - James 5:14f*

(Some translations here translate "[...] will save the sick", which however is the same word "sozo", which as explained before means to save, to set free, to make whole/restore, to heal and to be whole).

Here we read clearly that the elders can pray the prayer of faith for the sick person. There is an important insight to be found here. Other believers can pray the prayer of faith for you when your faith has become weak and you ask for support.

We are all in a process of growth! However, God wants us to grow in Him and not just special people who have one of the so-called 'five-fold ministry' of Ephesians 4. Rather, these are so that we can all be equipped for the work of ministry.

*"And he hath given some to be apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, **for the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, until we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto perfect manhood, unto the measure of the full stature of Christ.** That we may no longer be babes, tossed to and fro, and driven about with every wind of doctrine by the deceitful play of men, by the craftiness with which they deceive into error; but, being truly in love, grow up in all things unto him who is the head, the Christ. "*
- Ephesians 4:11-15

We will look in the next chapter at what obstacles have crept in when praying for the sick or the bound that biblically do not exist.

6 Nothing is impossible for you except....

"... the person still has unforgiveness in his life. Then they cannot be healed."

You hear sayings like this all the time among people who pray for the sick. But are they biblical at all?

6.1 Unforgiveness

When sick people are not healed, it is often attributed to certain sins or unforgiveness in their lives. And indeed, when some persons do forgive, they are subsequently healed. Why is this so? Was it because their sin blocked God's healing?

If we look into the Word of God, we do not find this theology. Jesus first healed the people and then told them to sin no more.

"After this Jesus finds him in the temple, and he said to him, "Behold, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest something worse happen to you!" - John 5:14

Sin in people's lives, then, had not been an obstacle for Jesus. If the person must first live holy in order to be healed, then healing would no longer be a grace, but a reward for holy living. If time and time again Jesus healed all the sick among them in whole crowds, then according to this theology it would mean that not a single one had been involved in unforgiveness or sin. I think you can see how quickly this approach ceases to make sense. Once when I was preparing for a mission trip to England, I had a dream one night. There (in the dream) I was sick and sought prayer from a well-known American healing evangelist who espoused this theology. He prayed for me, but I was not healed. I was quite uncomfortable because I thought he would immediately start asking me what sins I had yet to confess in my life or what person I had yet to forgive. To my astonishment, however, he did not ask me this, but looked at me in my dream and said to me, "What is the truth God is saying to you?" When I closed my eyes, I heard God's audible voice saying, "My blessings are without repentance." and I immediately woke up. I was immediately reminded of a Bible passage that sounded similar in English:

"My gifts and callings are without repentance." - Romans 11:29

German translations also write, "For the gifts of grace and the calling of God are without repentance," which means He will not take them back, repent, or withhold them from you for any reason. God knew exactly why He had to tell me this. Because on that mission trip I met a man who had so much unforgiveness, unwillingness and sin in his life that when I went to pray for him, I actually thought, "My Lord, who would be harder to be healed than this man?" But I remembered this dream through which God wanted to say to me, "My love, which I want to give to people through my healing power, as I did in the days of old, is not dependent on their repentance toward me. No, rather my goodness is to lead them to repentance." (Romans 2:4). It was this dream that helped me to have faith also for this lost man who had turned his back on God because he believed it was God who had taken away his family through illness. He was the last of his family left. He was bitter and full of unforgiveness. But when we prayed for him, he was completely healed and all his pain that he had had for years instantly was completely

gone. He even argued with us before that he didn't believe God would heal him - let alone that He even existed. But I was able to tell him about the Love of Jesus, who himself went to his death for us so that we could live forever and who was not responsible for the death of his family members, but the devil who comes to murder, steal and destroy. Because of this lie, he had lost his faith in God, but God's goodness did not stop at his unbelief, unforgiveness, bitterness and sin.

"[...] and do [you] not know that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?" - Romans 2:4

Not only this experience, but hundreds after it, have shown me that all these things we say stop God's healing are simply not true. If they didn't stop Jesus then, they can't stop Him now. But if you begin to believe that they must first forgive in order to receive healing, then logically only then will you see healings. For Jesus said:

"Let it be done to you according to your faith!" - Matthew 9:29

So, the obstacle to healing is not unforgiveness, but that you believe unforgiveness is an obstacle to healing.

"[...] and so you have made void the word of God because of your tradition." - Matthew 15:6

Jesus did not dig into the past of all the hundreds of thousands He healed to uncover obstacles to their healing. Yet for some reason, we give all kinds of answers as to why our prayer is not answered - just not the one Jesus gave. And most of the time we blame it on the sick person himself, which Jesus never did. I think the reason for this is a lack of humility on our part: "Well, it can't be me - there must be something wrong with the sick person." If Jesus never gave such an answer, we have no right to give it either, because we pray in His name.

6.2 Unbelief of the sick person

As we read in James 5:14f, Christians can pray the prayer of faith for others. Yet it is still common to tell the sick person, if he is not healed, "Come again when you have more faith." But did Jesus ever say this to a sick person? The only thing he did was praise and highlight the faith of some. For some, Jesus didn't even have to pray for them, because they were healed by their own faith - see as an example the woman with the issue of blood in Mark 5 who didn't even wait for Jesus to lay hands on her or turn to her, "For she said to herself, "If I can at least touch his clothes, I'm sure to get well."" And indeed, the bleeding stopped immediately, and she felt that she was freed from her suffering." When Jesus found out who it was, he said, "My daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace. You are well." If you can pray in faith alone, then you don't need the elders to pray for you. Unfortunately, nowadays many elders have never learned to pray the prayer of faith, and instead of anointing them with oil and following the example of James 5, they often just pass the sick on to the doctor. God is certainly not against doctors, because without doctors most Christians would probably be dead. God is not against doctors, but simply *for* his word. And he takes his word very seriously.

"For thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name." - Psalm 138:2

So, the unbelief of one person cannot stop God's healing power either, if the other person nevertheless believes and does not doubt.

"But couldn't Jesus himself do miracles in Nazareth because of unbelief?"

This story is often mistakenly used to paint the picture that Jesus laid hands on people, but they did not receive healing because they had unbelief. But the text does not say that either. We read in Mark 6:3-6:

*"[...] Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us? **And they took offense at him.** But Jesus said to them: A prophet is nowhere despised except in his father's city, and among his relatives, and in his own house! **And he could do no miracle there, save that he laid his hands on a few sick persons, and healed them.**"*

It says here that He could not do miracles because their unbelief caused them to take offense at him and to reject him. So, they did not come to be healed or to hear from him, but quite the opposite. The last sentence confirms this and makes it unmistakably clear that because of this He could only lay hands *on a few to heal them*. If he could lay hands on only a few, it logically means that *only a few sought his help*.

That the sick person himself does not have to have faith to be healed also shows us Matthew 15, where a girl is healed by the faith of her mother. Jesus said to her: *"Woman, your faith is great. Let it be done to you as you wish! And her daughter was healed from that hour."* The daughter was not even there. Likewise with the centurion who asked Jesus for healing for his servant. Jesus commended his faith. When I evangelize on the street, praying for the sick, people often tell me to my face that they do not believe in God and therefore do not believe in God's healing. Then I answer them that this is not a problem, because it is written in Mark 16 that these signs follow the believer and not the one who is prayed for. If am honest, I even find it easier to pray for non-believing people than for Christians. Because people who are not believers are usually easier to be prayed for! Christians, on the other hand, often try to convince you that God wants them to be sick and that many others have already prayed for them. Or they say that it is their "thorn in the flesh" or other statements, which we will look at in more detail below. So many times, I have experienced that Christians I have met on the street while evangelizing want to stop me from praying for them because dozens had already prayed for them, but to no avail. So, if it had been God's will, they would have been healed long ago. Then I just lovingly ask them to let me pray again anyway. When they suddenly notice a change in their body, they are often confused as to why this happened all of a sudden. It was the same with a Christian woman I once met at the main train station, she was wearing a knee brace on her right knee. At first, she wanted to convince me of exactly that, since so many had already prayed for her, "What should be different about your prayer?" she asked me. Actually, a good question. I told her I would tell her in a minute. I prayed for her, and power went through her knee and all the pain was completely gone. She took off her knee brace and was stunned. She said that her surgery was scheduled the next day! I was then able to show her the passages in Matthew 17:20, Mark 11:22 and James 5:14-15 that it was the prayer of faith that made the sick person well and not the 'prayer of many people'. We, on the other hand, from our human and earthly thinking, think that the more people pray, the better. But biblically, it is a childlike faith that moves mountains and not a high number of people praying. I explained to her that we

simply have almost never learned to pray such a prayer and out of lack of knowledge we settle for less or then try to adapt our theology to our experience. I explained to her that I too had to learn this and was still learning. Unfortunately, no one around me could teach me either or take me by the hand as I had often wished. I did not know any elder with experience in praying the prayer of faith, as it says in James 5. If a person guides you in this, it is often much easier. That's why I like to take people on outreaches, so they can experience it firsthand and then be encouraged in faith to do the same. And the results speak for themselves. When I lead others to pray in faith for the sick or the bound, they see success much more quickly than I did in the beginning. However, I am also still growing, and my faith continues to grow in maturity from year to year. Faith is like a muscle. You can train it and make it grow with the nutrient of God's Word or not use it and not add any nutrients. However, the easiest thing is when the sick person and the person praying have faith and expectation together. We can see this, for example, in Acts 14, where Paul discovers the faith of a man and specially stops his preaching to take advantage of the situation.

*"And there sat in Lystra a man with infirm feet, crippled from birth, who had never been able to walk. This man heard Paul speak; **and when he looked upon him, and saw that he had faith to be healed**, he said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he sprang up, and went about."*

Unfortunately, however, I experience these cases more rarely.

6.3 And what if they do not want to be healed?

People often refer to the story of the lame man at the Pool of Bethesda, where Jesus asked, "Do you want to be healed?" as proof that Jesus could not heal unless they first agreed. According to this, God cannot heal anyone who does not want to be healed. And even if this sounds logical at first, it cannot be said from this passage that Jesus said this for this reason. Because if that was the case, he would have had to do the same to everyone, which he obviously did not do. And I also believe independently that when people claim something like that, they don't necessarily know what they're saying. I just can't imagine anyone being cured of a disease, getting upset, and then saying, "Oh, no! But I wanted to be in pain! Give me back my disease!" But it could possibly be a reason for how the sickness, or the bondage can return. Jesus says Himself:

"When the unclean spirit has gone out from a man, he wanders through dry places seeking rest; and not finding it, he says: I will return to my house from whence I came out. And when he comes, he finds it swept and adorned. Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they go in and dwell there; and the end of that man becomes worse than the beginning." - Luke 11:24-26

In the same way, I see unforgiveness, as well as other willful sins when not repented of (see 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Ephesians 5:5; Colossians 3:5-6; Galatians 5:19-21, etc.) as an open and wide gate for the devil to bring harm or sickness back to a child of God, but not as a hindrance to that child being healed. So, these are the things to watch out for, not so that one can be healed,

but stay healed! The parable of the unmerciful servant makes this clear. The background: he is forgiven a huge sum of debt by the king, but he himself does not want to forgive others their debt, which was only a fraction compared to his own.

*"And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the torturers, until he had paid all that he owed him. So will my heavenly Father do to you, unless you each forgive his brother from the heart."
- Matthew 18:34-35*

Whoever as a Christian does not want to forgive, Jesus says he will be handed over to the torturers. We immediately think of hell, but why couldn't it also be that he is already talking about this life? Just about everyone I have met so far who has had unforgiveness or bitterness in their life has been plagued by sickness and demonic bondage without exception. He falls from a grace that God has given him to be saved from. In other words, if we open the door to the devil, we should not be surprised if he tries to take the same space again.

"[...] and take heed lest any man come short of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness spring up and become a burden to you, and by it defile many." - Hebrews 12:15

I have had just such cases of people being delivered from demons. They turned back from certain sins that had been an open door for the enemy. But after some time, they went back into the same patterns and sins and all their demonic problems returned. The devil can only take the space given to him with us Christians.

*"[...] Be angry, and sin not thereby! Let not the sun go down on your wrath, **and give no room to the devil!**" - Ephesians 4:26-27*

*"We know that everyone who is born of God does not sin; **but he who is born of God preserves himself, and the evil one does not touch him.**" - 1 John 5:18*

Paul writes this to Christians, which is why it must be possible for Christians to give room to the devil. So, to deliver a person in Jesus' name, it does not matter what the person thinks about it or what sins the person is in. Because deliverance or healing in itself is a *gift, not a reward*. I know that there are endless books on deliverance that would say completely different and put 20 conditions on what a person must first do in order to be set free from demonic bondages. However, I disagree with this because I do not find these conditions in the Word of God. These books and theologies usually arise from one's own experiences rather than from the Word of God. The best example of this is found in the book of Acts where Paul and Silas are in Philippi. This story should absolutely destroy all these supposed "deliverance theologies".

"Now it happened, as we were going to the place of prayer, that we met a maid who had a spirit of divination; she was bringing great profit to her masters through divination. This one followed after Paul and us, and cried out, saying, These men are servants of God Most High, which tell you the way of salvation. And this she did many days. But Paul became unwilling, and turned and said to the spirit: I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to depart from her! And he departed the same hour. But when their masters saw that the hope of their gain was gone, they took Paul and Silas, and dragged them into the market to the rulers.[...]" - Acts 16:16-19

Here this maid with the spirit of divination runs after Paul and Silas for days and at some point Paul runs out of nerve, turns around and casts out the demon in one word. This woman did not even come to them to be delivered! The deliverance of this spirit of divination had even been so undesirable that Paul had thus destroyed the source of income of their business. The masters became so angry at this that they brought them before the city and were even thrown into prison because of it. So, this story shows us that our authority over unclean spirits is completely unrestricted and not dependent on the person involved! Yet how many books are there about what supposed steps one must first go through in order to be liberated: one must first willingly renounce occultism, then break all curses and close doors, ask God's forgiveness and repent of it, until one can subsequently bind and cast out all spirits. None of these steps would ever be called bad, yet they are not biblically necessary before deliverance! Not one of these steps had been present in the woman with the spirit of divination. We can even read that apparently it was no longer so easy for the woman to get this spirit back either! Otherwise, they would have simply told the woman again to call upon this spirit again to be able to prophesy again and their business would have continued. Although Jesus talks about the return of unclean spirits in Luke 11, there are apparently circumstances where even this can be prevented.

Mark 9:25:

*"But when Jesus saw a crowd gathering, he threatened the unclean spirit, saying to him, "You dumb and deaf spirit, **I command you, depart from him, and enter no more into him.**""*

So, there were also moments when Jesus could command the spirits never to enter the possessed again - no matter what the person concerned did afterwards. And I find that amazing. The Bible does not give us a complete understanding of why Jesus said this to only a few, but these passages show the power and authority that was given to us. The Bible clearly shows us that the person does not have to give consent or take special steps to be healed or delivered. Rather, these must be done in order for a person to retain freedom - but not to gain it. Is consent sometimes meaningful and wise? Absolutely. It is not always wise to pray for liberation for a person who does not want it - for that person may soon be worse off than before. It is necessary to deal wisely with the authority that God has given us. However, the prayer of faith works even without the consent of the other person. Diseases and demons must obey when a child of God speaks in the authority of Christ!

Also, in my personal experience I can confirm exactly this. Therefore, I would like to tell a story about this. I was once with others in a refugee center praying for the sick or the bound and sharing with them the Good News, the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Among those I prayed for was a young woman from Iran. She asked me if I could also pray for her mother in Iran because she had had an accident. She could no longer drive because of it, because her leg and back were affected. She also asked me if it was a problem that her mother did not believe in Jesus and was a Muslim and did not know that we were praying for her now. I told her that it didn't matter at all. After we prayed for her, I was sure that her mother was healed at the same moment that we prayed for her. So, I told her to call her mother as soon as possible and ask how she was doing, expecting that God had touched her during our prayer. The next time we were back at the refugee center, the young woman came up to me and excitedly told me that she had called her mother and without telling her a word that we had prayed for her before, she asked her how her body was. Her mother told her in amazement that in the afternoon suddenly all her pains had disappeared almost immediately, and she could suddenly walk better again. She was so well that she could drive again, which had not been possible before! She could not explain how this

had happened. And so, the daughter could testify to her mother about Jesus and that we had prayed for her in Jesus' name at that time.

I could tell other such stories where at the same time the person concerned even felt a healing power come into their body as we prayed for them, without them even knowing that someone had prayed for them at that moment. Once we prayed for a woman's mother in her absence. She had back pain and incurable nerve damage in her left leg and foot that caused her pain continuously. There was nothing the doctors could do about it. As we prayed for her, I felt a deep confidence that God had heard us. I felt faith without any doubt. I remember saying to the friend I was praying with, "For some reason, I believe it is accomplished." Because her mother was from India, I thought she was in India at the time of the prayer. However, the woman told me that her mother lived here in Germany not too far away and invited us to come along to see what had happened to her mother. We were excited about what we would hear. When we arrived, the woman asked her mother how she was today - we had not told her about our prayer. She said that her back and leg were especially bad that day. The pain was so severe that she had to put a bandage on her foot again. But then she told us in amazement that while she was cooking, her back and left leg suddenly became very hot, as if something was happening there, and all of a sudden, all her pain was completely gone! Before we arrived, she had already removed the bandage because she didn't need it anymore! We asked what time this had happened, and it had been *exactly* when we had been praying for her! We were then able to tell her that we had prayed for healing for her at that exact time and we were all speechless praising the Lord together and giving Him the glory. This experience encouraged me so much that since then I also built up much more faith to pray over distance for people who were not present and did not know.

"And there was in Capernaum a royal official whose son was sick. When this man had heard that Jesus had come from Judea into Galilee, he went to him and asked that he would come down and heal his son, for he was dying. [...] Jesus said to him, "Go! Your son is alive. The man believed the word that Jesus said to him and went. But even as he went down, his servants came to meet him and reported that his boy was alive. Now he inquired of them the hour when he was better; and they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. Then the father perceived that it was at that hour that Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth. And he believed, he and all his household." - John 4:46ff

But now Jesus lives in us and continues to do His works through us. Jesus was serious when He spoke of everyone believing in Him doing the same works as Him! Not out of ourselves, but through his Spirit, which he has given us. It is done in his name. We are his body!

6.4 Paul's "thorn in the flesh"

Again and again, I have seen people sometimes claim their disease is their "thorn in the flesh," referring to 2 Corinthians 12. Therefore, they say, God would not want to heal them. When I realized all the revelations of God's will in His Word and that Jesus had already paid for our healing and freedom, this passage confused me at first. It didn't fit together in my eyes. I heard sermons that used this passage as proof that God did not always want to heal and Paul's "thorn in the flesh" was interpreted as a disease. This connection has been made so many times that it was hard to imagine anything else when reading this passage. What else could the "thorn in the

flesh" be? But are we sure that Paul is talking here about a physical, chronic illness from which Jesus would not heal him?

The discoveries I made as I looked more closely and studied this passage of Scripture were very surprising to me and will probably be very surprising to you reader, too. Let's take a look at this passage together and analyze it.

2 Corinthians 12:1-10:

*"Vaunted must be; though it profit nothing, yet I will come upon appearances and revelations of the Lord. I know of a man in Christ that fourteen years ago - whether in the body, I do not know, or outside the body, I do not know; God knows - that this one was caught up to the third heaven. And I know about the person in question - whether in the body or out of the body, I don't know; God knows - that he was caught up into paradise and heard unspeakable words, which it is not a man's place to utter. Of this I will boast; but of myself I will not boast, but of the infirmities. For if I will boast, yet will I not be foolish, for I will speak the truth. But I refrain from this, lest anyone think more highly of me than what he sees in me or hears from me, even because of the extraordinary nature of the revelations. Therefore, so that I do not exalt myself, **a thorn for the flesh was given to me, an angel of Satan, to strike me with fists, so that I do not exalt myself. For this cause I called upon the Lord three times, that he might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Very gladly will I now rather boast of my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell with me. Therefore I am well pleased with infirmities, with abuses, with hardships, with persecutions, with anxieties for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong.**"*

Before we look more closely at the word "thorn in the flesh," we will look more in detail at the context as a first step. The first thing Paul describes in this chapter is that he had received "extraordinary revelations" from the Lord and because of this he was given a 'thorn in the flesh'. So, if someone says to me that God will not heal him because it is his personal "thorn in the flesh," I would first ask the person what extraordinary revelations did the Lord give him so that the Lord would have to give him a thorn in the flesh? What revelations have you received from the Lord that are on the same level as those from the famous apostle Paul, who wrote more in the New Testament than any other author? So, you see that in order to claim such a thing, one must first prove to have received "extraordinary revelations" from the Lord on the same or similar level as Paul. I don't know if there is anyone on earth who could even claim this. We wouldn't even have to analyze the broader context or do a close word study on the historical phrase "thorn in the flesh" to rule out the possibility of just about anyone on earth having a thorn in the flesh that Paul is talking about here. Even if this had indeed been a disease, there would be practically no problem with praying for the sick. Let that be said first before we dive deeper into the text. However, we want to find out if the interpretation is even justified.

We therefore look further at the context, and we notice that in the next sentence the 'thorn in the flesh' is equated with *an angel of Satan who "beats him with fists."* Since the word 'angel' can also be translated as 'messenger', this passage can also be translated as 'messenger of Satan'. So first of all, it should be noted that Paul's thorn in the flesh was not a messenger of God, but a messenger of Satan. So, God had allowed the devil to "strike him with fists" so that Paul would not exalt himself. But did Jesus ever say in the Gospels that he would allow the devil to make us sick for this purpose and that we should boast in our sicknesses? Did he not give us all authority over this, that we might be delivered from it? Has he not himself healed all diseases

and infirmities? Has he not promised and pledged this to us in His Word? That would be just like your father promising something and then not keeping it. You could not trust his word one hundred percent. Yet in the same letter where Paul also tells of the thorn in the flesh, he writes just the opposite:

"For the Son of God, Christ Jesus, who was preached among you by us, by me and Silvanus and Timothy, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea done. For as many promises of God as there are, in him is the Yes, therefore also through him the Amen, to God's glory through us." - 2 Corinthians 1:20

"Paul I know what I have promised and pledged, but I have made an exception in your case. I want the devil to make you sick, that will help your character. If you are sick, then I am strong through you. Please just accept that, I am God, and you are not. My grace for you is enough." If God suddenly acts against His own promises, then there is something wrong with that alone, because it is simply contradictory. God makes promises but doesn't always keep them? No, Jesus never said that he would use spirits of sickness to try to make himself strong through us. Rather, He cast them out - every single time and told us to do the same! So, what afflictions from the devil is God allowing to happen to Paul? The context could not be clearer. And that's what we want to look at now.

Before we do that, it is important to know that the epistles originally did not have chapters, but are a complete, coherent letter. We added chapters and verses after the fact to bring structure into it. What Paul says in chapter 12, he writes in a flow from the previous chapter. At the end of chapter 11, the verses just before this passage, the heading of the subchapter is "Proving the Apostle in Sufferings and Infirmities." So, what were Paul's sufferings and infirmities in which he boasts?

"You are servants of Christ?" - I speak nonsensically - I exceedingly. In labors the more, in prisons the more, in beatings exceedingly, in dangers of death often. From Jews I have received five times forty blows less one. Three times I have been beaten with rods, once I have been stoned; three times I have been shipwrecked; one day and one night I have spent in distress at sea; often in travel, in dangers from rivers, in dangers from robbers, in dangers from my people, in dangers from the nations, in dangers in the city, in dangers in the desert, in dangers on the sea, in dangers among false brethren; in toil and complaint, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness; besides the rest, those things which daily come upon me: The care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who takes offense, and I do not burn? If boasting is necessary, I will boast of the signs of my weakness. The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, who is blessed forever, knows that I do not lie. In Damascus the governor of King Aretas was guarding the city of the Damascene to take me captive, and through a window I was let down through the wall in a basket and escaped his hands." - 2 Corinthians 11:23-33

Paul's sufferings and weaknesses were his abuses, hardships, fears and persecutions! He specifically lists the signs of his 'weakness' here: Trouble, dangers, discomfort, waking, hunger, thirst, frequent fasting, cold, nakedness, worry for all the churches, and that he is permanently whipped and beaten for Jesus' sake. Not once does "sickness" appear in it. He even boasts in this chapter about his many weaknesses and afflictions, proudly enumerating them as he suffered for the Lord. And I find it quite remarkable what he can list there. Now that Jesus has

told him that His grace is sufficient for him, he even repeats what he already listed in chapter 11 and is now content with his 'thorn in the flesh':

"For this reason I have called upon the Lord three times to depart from me. And he has said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my strength comes to perfection in weakness.' Very gladly will I now rather boast of my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell with me. Therefore I am well pleased with **infirmities, with abuses, with hardships, with persecutions, with anxieties for Christ's sake**; for when I am weak, then am I strong." - Verses 8-10

He literally repeated the exact same thing that he listed all in 2 Corinthians 11. This was what the Lord would not take from him! His thorn in the flesh was the constant abuse, weaknesses, hardships, persecutions and fears for Christ's sake. If it had been a sickness, he would have written, "Therefore I have found pleasure in my sickness [...]" but instead he enumerated all the afflictions he had encountered in his apostolic work. The context could not be more obvious.

Imagine you are on a mission for the Lord and everywhere you go you are either whipped, stoned or thrown into prison. He was beaten five times with 39 blows, beaten three times with rods, and even stoned once and left like dead! The scourgings and floggings were so severe in those days that some even died in the process. Now imagine you are on the way on behalf of the Lord and then something like this happens to you. Your back is covered with open wounds and you are hanging in a dungeon covered in blood because you followed God's instructions to preach His gospel. It takes days for the wounds to heal completely. You go to the next town and the same thing happens there again! And now imagine that you go to the third city and again they want to do this to you! There everybody would ask God: "Lord, I am now on the way in your order, could you not perhaps once watch my back?"

There are so many confirming clues that could not make it any clearer. For example, that he equates 'thorn in the flesh' with 'being beaten with fists'. This strange comparison suddenly makes sense because he literally recounts in a few verses earlier how often and excessively he was repeatedly beaten and mistreated while evangelizing. Not only that, but he mentions that he called on the Lord exactly three times because of it. Why? Because he experienced such fierce persecution and mistreatment in exactly three cities! In fact, he mentions this in the Second Epistle to Timothy:

"But you followed my teaching, [...] my perseverance, my persecutions, my sufferings, which happened to me in (1.) Antioch, in (2.) Iconium, in (3.) Lystra. These persecutions I endured, and from all of them the Lord saved me. But all also who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted." - 2 Timothy 3:10-12

Now when he asked Jesus to take these away, Jesus could not do so because he had promised that not only Paul but also all his disciples would have to suffer for him in this way and therefore Paul promises that every true follower of Jesus will not be spared persecution either. In the Acts of the Apostles, we read how for Paul even from Jesus again extra such sufferings were announced by persecutions, when he spoke to Hananias about Paul:

"But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way. For this man is a chosen instrument of mine to bear my name both before nations and kings and sons of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name." - Acts 9:15-16

The only sufferings God has promised is persecution for His name's sake. This He has announced over and over again. (See Matthew 5:10; Matthew 24:9-10; 2 Timothy 3:12; Mark 13:9-13; Luke 21:12-17; John 15:18; Luke 6:22; John 16:33; Romans 8:35; Matthew 5:44; Matthew 5:11; Mark 10:29-30; Romans 12:14; John 16:1-4; Revelation 13:10; Revelation 2:10; John 21:18-19, etc.).

I think we can all agree that it is hard to become proud when you instead of being cheered by crowds, rocks start flying in your direction. We also never see anyone boasting about their illness. But we can certainly read how the disciples boasted in their suffering for Christ's sake. Thus Paul writes:

"In the future do not trouble me! For I bear the marks of Jesus in my body." - Galatians 6:17

*"And when they had sent for the apostles, they beat them, and commanded them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and dismissed them. They therefore departed from the high council, **full of joy that they had been made worthy to suffer shame for the name [of Jesus] [...]**."*
- Acts 5:40-41

The persecution was so fierce that the Holy Spirit showed Paul that shackles and afflictions would await him in almost every city:

"[...] except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me from city to city, saying that fetters and afflictions await me. But I do not count my life worth mentioning, that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus: to testify to the gospel of the grace of God." - Acts 20:23-24

So if we look at the context alone, it is impossible to argue that Paul could have meant sickness by the "thorn in the flesh." In the context of the entire New Testament, it makes equally little sense because it would directly contradict the statements and actions of Jesus. Now the only question is why Paul used just this expression to summarize all these sufferings he experienced. We do not know such an expression in our time and therefore cannot immediately understand what it stands for. However, before drawing your own conclusions, you should first investigate whether this expression, that a pointed object stuck in your body, was already known in the biblical context and had a concrete meaning. Once you research this figure of speech in the Bible, it turns out that this expression was by no means unknown at that time. It had a concrete meaning at that time and the listeners knew what it meant, unlike us today, because it was already used repeatedly in the Old Testament scriptures. Paul was an excellent student of the scriptures and a Pharisee who had been taught under Gamaliel, a very well-known Jewish teacher in Jerusalem.

"And he saith, I am a Jewish man, born in Tarsus of Cilicia; but brought up in this city, at the feet of Gamaliel, instructed according to the strictness of my father's law, I was, as ye all are this day, a zealot for God." - Acts 22:3

So, he was more than familiar with the language of the Old Testament. Now anyone familiar with the Old Testament will notice that human persecution is repeatedly compared to a pointed object stuck in your body! Here are just a few examples:

Deuteronomy 33:55:

*"But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then those you leave of them will **become thorns in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and they will afflict you in the land where you dwell.**"*

(Here thorns and thorns in eye and side stand for human persecution).

Joshua 23:13:

*"then you shall know for certain that the LORD your God will not continue to drive out these nations before you. **And they shall then become a snare and a trap to you, a scourge in your flanks and a thorn in your eyes, until you are taken away from this good land which the LORD your God has given you.**"*

(Here the expression scourge or thorn in the flank or eye stands for the contestation of hostile nations. Flank in anatomy describes the lateral abdominal region).

Judges 2:3: *So I also said, I will not drive them out before you! **They will become scourges for your sides[1], and their gods will become a snare for you.**"*

(Footnote [1] of the Elberfelder translation says the following: cf. Jos 23:13; some add after Deut 33:55: thorns; others change to: they will be your enemies.

Here the expression scourge or thorn in their sides stands for human persecution by other nations).

Ezekiel 2:6: "And you, son of man, do not fear them, nor be afraid of their words, though thorns surround you and you sit on scorpions. Do not be afraid of their words, and do not be frightened by their face. For a rebellious house are they."

(Here the expression "to sit on thorns and scorpions" stands for human temptation and persecution.)

Human persecution is equated with expressions such as thorn, sting or scourge in the body regions such as the eye, flank (side abdominal region) or side. Thus, the suffering under human persecution is always compared figuratively with the pain of a sharp object stuck in the body. This figure of speech is not as common in our time as it was in those days. If you now compare this together with the context in 2 Corinthians 12, it should now be clear for absolutely everyone, because the context is exactly the same as in the other Bible passages! It should now be unmistakably cleared up that Paul here could not possibly have been speaking of a God-given disease from which Jesus did not want to heal him, but of all the persecutions, afflictions, mistreatments, hardships, weaknesses, and fears for Christ's sake that He had already promised Paul before. Paul suffered greatly from these and asked the Lord to take them away from him, however, the Lord said to him that His grace was sufficient for him and in his weaknesses His power came to completion. We learn from this that we cannot pray away things that He has already promised us.

"For to this you were called; for Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his footsteps; [...]" - 1 Peter 2:21

Paul was now content with these things and even spoke of now having pleasure in them. Peter also spoke of the fact that whoever suffers for Jesus' name should be blessed and rejoice! For us, however, this is sometimes still difficult to imagine.

"Beloved, do not be alienated by the fire of persecution among you, which is happening to you as a trial, as if something foreign were happening to you; but rejoice, insofar as you are partakers of the sufferings of Christ, so that you may also rejoice in the revelation of His glory! If you are reproached in the name of Christ, blessed are you! For the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you." - 1 Peter 4:12-14

"Very gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell with me. Therefore I am well pleased with: Infirmities, in abuses, in distresses, in persecutions, in anxieties for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." - Verse 9-10

In the first letter to the Corinthians, he also mentioned these sufferings that he must go through as an apostle of Christ.

*"For it seems to me that God has set us apostles as last, destined as it were to die; for we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ; we weak, but you strong; you honored, but we despised. **Until this hour we suffer hunger and thirst and nakedness, being beaten and having no place to stay, laboring laboriously with our own hands. When we are reviled, we bless; when we suffer persecution, we endure; when we are blasphemed, we comfort; the refuse of the world we have become, the dregs of all until now.**" - 1 Corinthians 4:9-13*

7 How to wield the sword - equipping for ministry

7.1 The biblical example

Now that we have laid a theological foundation for healing and deliverance based on the Word of God, let us look at how to pray for the sick or cast out demons in a concrete way. We will therefore take a look at how the first disciples carried out the orders Jesus gave. We read from the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 3:

"Now Peter and John went up together into the temple about the hour of prayer, the ninth. And a man who was lame from his mother's womb was brought; and they set him daily at the gate of the temple, which is called the Beautiful, that he might ask alms of them that went into the temple. When the latter saw Peter and John about to enter the temple, he asked to receive alms. But Peter with John looked steadfastly toward him, and said, Look upon us. And he watched for them, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not possess, but what I have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, Walk about. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up. Immediately his feet and his ankles became strong, and he sprang up, and was able to stand, and went about. And he entered the temple with them, and went about leaping and praising God. And all the people saw him going about praising God; and they knew him to be he who had sat at the beautiful gate of the temple for the alms; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. And while he held Peter and John, all the people ran together in amazement to them in the portico called Solomon's Hall."

This event in front of Solomon's portico is one of the best stories to illustrate prayer for the sick. The very first thing that stands out in this story is that the sick man did not ask for healing, but for alms (see verse 3). He had not even asked for prayer! How could he have been full of faith then? It was obvious that he had no faith for healing, otherwise he would have asked for healing. Instead, he hoped to receive little alms. Peter also does not ask him if he had faith or wanted to receive healing. What Peter then claims would probably get him kicked out of most churches today: "[...] but what I have, I give to you!" Who does Peter actually think he is to say such a thing? He should rather say, what the Lord has, the Lord gives to you! And then he doesn't even pray! He commands the lame man to walk instead of praying for him! Is he trying to command God? And now comes the best part of all: apparently it took Peter too long for the lame man to straighten up, and he took him by the right hand and straightened him up himself! Thus, Peter had done all the "no-go's" of today's Christianity regarding healing. But what happened? When Peter raised him up, his feet and ankles became strong, and he jumped up and walked around. He was completely healed! I find this passage to be one of the best passages to teach healing in Jesus' name because it completely dismantles any customs or traditions or theologies that have crept in. We would consider Peter's actions in our day to be presumptuous, unwise, brash, insensitive, encroaching, and even arrogant. Yet it was he who probably experienced more healings than any Christian since the time of Jesus. In fact, so many sick people were healed through him that the streets were filled with the sick and suffering.

"But the more were added such as believed in the Lord, multitudes of men and also of women, so that they carried the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and camps, that when Peter came, even his shadow might overshadow one of them. But crowds also came together from the towns around Jerusalem, and they brought sick people and those afflicted with unclean spirits, all of whom were healed." - Acts 5:14-16

This sounds almost exactly like the Gospels when Jesus healed people. Whole crowds of people were even laid out in the streets with beds and camps for Peter to take notice of them to be healed. I think we should learn from Peter and throw out our own ideas and traditions that often don't even come from the Bible.

*"[...] and you have made (so) the word of God void because of your tradition."
- Matthew 15:6*

No matter how long we have believed it or grown up with it. Perhaps we should not be surprised that if we do almost everything differently in praying for the sick as the disciples did then, we also therefore do not see the same thing as they did. We can see that it was apparently irrelevant to Peter whether the sick person actively verbalized that he wanted to be healed or even had faith for it. We can also see that Peter spoke that he had the healing power within himself that the sick person needed to be healed. He did not look to heaven and say, "Lord you can do anything, but we can do nothing - please heal this man." While this is not wrong theologically, this was not Peter's approach, nor was it the approach of the other disciples. Instead, he was completely convinced that God wanted to heal him, and he had all the authority in Jesus' name to heal this sick man. For this reason, he did not even pray. He knew Jesus had already paid for his healing through his wounds and welts. Remember that in his letter, just like Matthew, he quoted from Isaiah and revealed his theology for healing to us:

*" [...] **who bare our sins in his own body to the wood, that we, being dead to sins, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes [o. wounds] ye were healed.**" - 1 Peter 2:24*

He knew that it was God's will and that he himself could now continue this work in His name. He had been present at Jesus' ministry and had heard all His words and promises. I think many of us Christians today wonder why Peter commanded healing instead of praying. But where did Peter get that from? It will be a very surprising discovery for some once they look up what Jesus did and told us to do. Did he even instruct us to pray for the sick?

*"And into whatsoever city ye come, [...] **heal the sick** therein, and say unto them: The kingdom of God has come near to you." - Luke 10:8-9*

*"**Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons!** In vain you have received, in vain give!" - Matthew 10:8*

Jesus had not told the disciples then to pray for the sick, but to heal the sick! In most circles today, it would be on the verge of blasphemy to claim such a thing. "We cannot heal anyone. It is the Lord who heals!" I don't think anyone would disagree - no one would claim they heal on their own, not even Peter. Yet Jesus said that we should heal the sick in His name! Of course, it is not our power, but God's power that works in us and through us, speaking to the mountain in the authority of Jesus, as it says in Matthew 17, and not to God about the mountain. So, we

are not speaking out of ourselves, but on Jesus' behalf and in His place. Now where do you think Peter got his way of 'praying' for the sick. From none other than the Lord Himself. Read the Gospels sometime and you will be surprised that most of the time Jesus does not pray for the sick at all, but commands sickness or demons.

*"And he came to her, and bowed himself over her, and **commanded the fever**, and it left her."
- Luke 4:39*

*"[...] **be cleansed!**" - Matthew 8:3*

*"Then he arose and **threatened the winds** and the lake, and there was a great calm." - Matthew 8:26*

*"**Go your way**. But they went out." - Matthew 8:32*

*"**Get up, take up your bed, and go [...]**" - Matthew 9:6*

*"**Stretch out your hand!**" - Matthew 12:13*

*"**Be it done to you as you wish!**" - Matthew 15:28*

*"And **he threatened him**, saying, **Cease, and depart from him.**" - Mark 1:25*

*"**Be cleansed!**"-Mark 1:41*

*"**Go thy way, and be it done unto thee**, as thou hast believed." - Matthew 8:13*

*"**I command you: depart from him!** [...]" - Mark 9:25*

*"Young man, I say to you, **get up!** And the dead man sat up and began to speak [...]" - Luke 7:14-15*

*"For he said unto him, **Come out, thou unclean spirit, out of the man.**" - Mark 5:8*

*"[...] **Be opened!** And immediately his ears were opened, and the **fetter of his tongue was loosed**, and he spoke rightly." - Mark 7:34-35*

*"And when he had said these things, he cried with a loud voice, **Lazarus, come out!**
- John 11:43*

*"Jesus saith unto him, **Arise, take up thy bed, and walk about.**"- John 5:8*

I believe the above scriptures are enough to see that Jesus always commanded in authority the sickness as well as the demons. Just as He had told us to speak to the mountains, He did so in the same way. But not only He, but also the disciples in the book of Acts did the same and imitated him. Here are a few examples:

*"**Get up and make your own bed!** And immediately he got up." - Acts 9:34*

*"And he turned to the body, and said, **Tabita, arise.** And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up." - Acts 9:40*

*"[...] he said with a loud voice, **Stand up straight on your feet.** And he sprang up and went about." - Acts 14:10*

*"**I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to depart from her!**" - Acts 16:18*

*"**In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, go about!**" - Acts 3:6*

The commanding tone in Jesus' name shows that they were speaking in authority of the kingdom of God and were given command authority. The early church understood that they were given authority. The passage where Jesus heals the servant of a Roman centurion shows that he immediately understood that Jesus had authority because he himself was under a higher authority and also had people under him. He immediately recognized the parallels and understood that Jesus had authority over diseases and demons:

"And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. But the centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof; but speak but a word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man under authority, and have soldiers under me; and I say to this one: Go, and he goes; and to another: Come, and he comes; and to my servant, Do this, and he does it. But when Jesus heard it, he marveled, and said unto them that followed, Verily I say unto you, With none in Israel have I found so great faith."

Therefore, the seven sons of the high priest Sceva could not cast out demons either, since they used the name of Jesus but were not under his command. Thus, they also did not have the authority in the name of Jesus. They tried to use the name of Jesus like a magic word that has a magical effect. However, what matters is not that you add "In Jesus' name..." out loud when you pray, but that you pray in Jesus' name - that is, on His behalf and with His authority. Saying it out loud is not for the demon, but for the people, so that they know in what authority you are speaking and who is bringing about this healing or deliverance. Now when I pray for the sick or cast out demons, I am usually not praying to God, but speaking in His name to the sickness or demon and commanding them to leave. It is not fundamentally 'wrong' to pray to God, but it depends on how you do it and what you believe in the process. It is the prayer of faith that heals the sick, not the 'prayer of right words'. Now when the people in Acts 3 saw this healing of the lame man, they were beside themselves. Then Peter raised his voice and explained how and why this had happened:

*"And when Peter saw it, he said unto the people, Men of Israel, why marvel ye at this, or **why look ye so anxiously on us, as though by our own power or godliness we had caused him to walk?** The God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied before Pilate when he had decided to let him go. But ye denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked that a murderer should be given unto you; but the Prince of Life ye slew, whom God raised from the dead, whereof we are witnesses. **And by faith in his name his name hath made strong this one, whom ye see and know; and the faith wrought by him hath given him this perfect health in the sight of you all.**"*

- Verses 12-16

The authority in Jesus' name to heal and cast out demons has nothing to do with our piety or holy lifestyle. Signs and wonders do not confirm the one who prayed, but the name of Jesus on whose name it was prayed! God can even speak and work through donkeys (see Deut. 22:28). Some commit the great error that if they see God working mightily through them, He must agree with all areas of their lifestyle or theology. By doing this, the devil has managed to bring down many men and women of God who were being used mightily by God. Jesus said the following about this in Luke 10:

"But do not rejoice over this, that the spirits are subject to you; but rejoice that your names are written in the heavens!" - Luke 10:20

*"But which of you, when he comes home from the field, will immediately say to his servant who is plowing or feeding, 'Come here and sit down at table'? Will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare me supper, apron yourself, and serve me until I have eaten and drunk, and after that you shall eat and drink?' Will he thank that servant for doing what he was commanded? I mean not! **So shall ye also, when ye have done all that was commanded you, say: We are useless servants; we have done what we were commanded to do!**" - Luke 17:7-10*

At the end in Acts 3, Peter again tells everyone how the lame man had been healed. It summarizes what we have already worked out in the previous chapters. It had been *faith in the name of Jesus!* The faith brought about by the name of Jesus had given the sick man perfect healing. It was not the faith of the lame man, but the faith of Peter! And from where did he have faith? Because he knew his authority in the name of Jesus, for "freely had he received, and in freely did he impart" (cf. Matthew 10:8). That is why he also said, "what I have, I give to you". Do you know that you have the same power that Jesus raised from the dead in you? (Romans 8:11) The same Jesus who two thousand years ago made people well and set the bound free now lives in you and has commissioned you in His name to cast out demons, heal the sick and proclaim the good news!

*"To you God willed to make known what the riches of the glory of this mystery are among the nations, and that is, **Christ in you, the hope of glory.** Him we proclaim, exhorting every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ, **for which also I labor and strive according to His working in me in power.**"*
- Colossians 1:27-29

The only way the sword of the Spirit can be wielded is by faith. But instead of recognizing our authority in Jesus, we still beg to God just like the boy's father in Mark 9:

*"But if you can do anything, have mercy on us and help us! But Jesus said to him, "If you can? **All things are possible to him that believeth.**"*

7.2 Faith with Perseverance Receives the Promise

But what if one tries to speak in faith but sees no change at first? What is to be done then? When praying for the sick, one will encounter the situation that either no change occurs, or only partial change occurs. Therefore, it is important to have a persevering faith or in other words "a faith that does not give up".

*"[...] that ye be not slothful, but imitators of them which **through faith and perseverance inherit the promises.**" - Hebrews 6:12*

*"Do not therefore throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. **For perseverance ye have need of, that, having done the will of God, ye may inherit the promise.**"*
- Hebrews 10:35-36

Most of the greatest miracles I have ever witnessed occurred after the second or third time of prayer. One may be surprised at this, but we must remember that we are not actually praying to God, but speaking to the mountain in Jesus' name and wielding the sword of the Spirit. If I don't see a mountain moving, I just speak to it again. And I do this until it moves or until the time runs out. Did you know that even Jesus once prayed twice for a blind man? Yes, that's right, the Son of God prayed twice for a blind man because he wasn't completely healed the first time!

*"And they come to Bethsaida; and they bring him a blind man and ask him to touch him. And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the village; and when he had spit in his eyes, and laid his hands upon him, he said unto him, **Seest thou anything? And he looked up, and said, I see the people, for I see them going about like trees. Then he put his hands on his eyes again, and he saw clearly, and he was restored and saw everything clearly.**"*
- Mark 8:22-25

If even Jesus was allowed to pray twice for a blind man, we are also allowed to pray several times for the sick when the full manifestation of healing has not yet occurred. I once prayed for a man who was more than 80% blind. I laid my hands on him and commanded his eyes to open. When I asked him what he saw, he looked around and said that he could suddenly see much better. But it was still blurred. So, I prayed more times and each time it got better. In the end he could see completely normal again and was completely healed. Not only did he have to fight tears when he experienced this miracle from God, but so did everyone who was there and witnessed this miracle. Once when I was on a mission trip and evangelized with a team in a village, a blind woman was introduced to us. She was almost completely blind and had only about 5% of her sight left. If you stood right in front of her face, she could not recognize you. When I started praying for her, a small crowd had already formed. People knew this woman and testified of her blindness. She often had to be led by the hand. I laid my hands on her and commanded her eyes to open. Little happened, but I did not give up. After about the 7th command, the woman suddenly looked around and said, "I can see again!". With her mouth open, she continued to look around. Then suddenly she pointed to a girl standing about four meters away from her and said, "You have a red top on!". Then she pointed to the person next to her "You're wearing a gray and black t-shirt!" and so she went through the crowd of people, telling almost everyone what they were wearing. It was glorious! The name of Jesus was raised. Also, to really make sure she was completely healed, someone stood about thirty feet away

from her and held up their fingers. Without fail, she could tell each time how many fingers he was now showing.

What if I had just stopped after the sixth time of prayer? It was a persistent and persevering faith that had inherited the promise. I could tell countless stories like this about not giving up when mountains refuse to move. I learned this more than in any other situation when I was once in Burkina Faso at a crusade praying for the sick and the bound afterwards. A woman was brought to me by her mother. She could not speak and was deaf. As a baby, she had had meningitis in her brain, which is an inflammation of the brain that was probably caused by an infection. Since she was a baby, she could hear absolutely nothing in both ears – completely deaf. She had never learned to speak because of it and was 38 years old. When I started to pray for her and put my hands on her ears, nothing happened. Again and again nothing. But I was seized with a holy anger against this deafness and a love for her that said through me, "No, you will bow in Jesus' name!" I thought to myself, "Jesus paid for this woman and this mountain will move no matter how long I have to be here." I swung the sword of the Spirit, which is God's Word - over and over again. About half an hour to three quarters of an hour passed and I can't even count how many times I commanded the ears to open. But I was far from ready to give up. I had never seen a woman, who had been completely deaf for 38 years, hear again, but this was to be the first time. When I laid my hands on her for the last time and told her ears to open, I felt something happen. Full of faith, I said aloud, "I tell you, you are healed, in Jesus' name!". For some reason, I knew it had happened. At that moment, both of her ears opened and she could hear perfectly! She closed her eyes and when someone behind her flicked his finger several times in one direction, she could indicate not only the flicking, but also their number. We were all thrilled and in awe at the miracle God had done for this woman. The name of Jesus was exalted! If I had given up the first few times, that woman would still be deaf.

The Word of God must become more real in your heart than what you can see with your eyes. Only then can you speak of faith.

"But faith is a reality of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen." - Hebrews 11:1

7.3 Laying on of hands

If we look in Mark 16, we read how Jesus again did not really command us to 'pray' for the sick, but to lay hands on them.

"[...] They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." - Mark 16:18

Again, we see that it is merely a call of what Jesus Himself also did. It is amazing how nowadays people try to explain this passage away, since it is so clear and plain. So, in some translations it is added in footnotes that in Mark 16, verses 9-20 are missing in some old manuscripts. Since they are to be found here, it is said that they are nevertheless present in some manuscripts! Besides: do we really want to presume that God cannot preserve his word? If this passage was not intended by God, then he could not preserve his word, because it is in every Bible. Either we believe that his written word was inspired and instituted by him or not. But what makes the whole thing even more absurd is that if verses 9-20 were not in this chapter, then Mark's Gospel would stop with verse 8:

"And they went out and fled from the tomb. For trembling and dismay had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid."

If anyone thinks this is how Mark ended his Gospel, it is absolutely absurd. Why? Because it is only in the verses after this that Jesus is reported as appearing to the disciples as the Risen Christ - just as it is in the other Gospels! So, if you want to relativize these verses, you also relativize the verses of the risen Christ, which is what the Gospel was written for in the first place. Besides, all these verses are a repetition of things that are already written in many other places. Even as much as one would like these verses to be relativized, one must acknowledge that they are not absent from some manuscripts, that is, they have been handed down one-to-one in this way. Whoever rejects these words rejects God's word, who can and does keep his word himself. Listed below are a few Bible passages where it says that Jesus also laid hands on the sick.

*"Then Jesus had compassion on him, **and put forth his hand, and touched him, and said unto him, I will; be cleansed.**" - Mark 1:41*

*"**And he took hold of the child's hand, and said to him, Talita kumi!**" which is translated: Girl, I say to you, get up!" - Mark 5:41*

*"[...] **except that he laid hands on a few sick people and healed them.**" - Mark 6:5*

*"And they brought to him a deaf man who could hardly speak, **and asked him to lay hands on him. And he took him aside, away from the crowd, and put his fingers in his ears, and touched his tongue with saliva.[...]**" - Mark 7:32-33*

*"And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the village, and spit on his eyes, **and laid his hands on him, and asked him if he saw anything.**" - Mark 8:23*

*"**And he touched her hand;** and the fever left her, and she arose and ministered unto them." - Matthew 8:15*

*"**Then he touched her eyes, and said, Be it done unto you according to your faith. And their eyes were opened.**" - Matthew 9:29-30*

*"Then Jesus had compassion on them **and touched their eyes, and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him.**" - Matthew 20:34*

*"And when the sun was going down, all those who had sick people with various infirmities brought them to him, **and he laid his hands on each of them and healed them.**" - Luke 4:40*

*"**And he laid his hands on her, and immediately she became straight again, and praised God.**" - Luke 13:13*

And again, we see that the early Christians did the same (Acts 3:7; Acts 5:12; Acts 9:17; Acts 14:3; Acts 19:11; Acts 20:10; Acts 28:8). Jesus, as well as the disciples did not *always* do this. So, there is no need to always lay hands on the sick person, as we saw with the Roman centurion, for example. I think that the laying on of hands is a sign to show that God's power is working in us and through us by His Spirit, that we carry Jesus in us. Likewise, anointing the sick with

oil, as it says in James 5:14 or Mark 6:13, is a sign of the work of the Holy Spirit. Laying hands on the sick, however, can also help you better imagine in faith how God's power flows through you into others. Often when praying for healing, people will perceive a stream of heat, electricity, or even rivers of living water flowing out of your hand, exactly as Jesus had predicted:

*"He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, **out of his body shall flow rivers of living water**. Now this he said of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive." - John 7:38-39*

But one should not focus on such things when praying for the sick, however. Jesus also heard that when the woman with the issue of blood was healed, "power went out from him." If you pray regularly for the sick, sooner or later you will notice it, but it is not about what you feel or say, but what you believe.

We do not live in feelings or in looking, but in faith (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:7). Therefore, what one sees or feels should never be the primary concern.

7.4 Casting out demons and deliverance

We have already found out in the first chapters that many physical ailments are caused by "spirits of sickness," as it says in Luke 13. However, this is different from a person who is completely possessed. The enemy can have room in your flesh, in your soul, or in your spirit. In the Christian, the spirit is sealed by the Holy Spirit, but in the soul and body we can give room to the devil. That is why Paul also said in Ephesians 4:27, "[...] and give no room to the devil!". This was addressed to Christians! From my experience, Christians are usually more embattled than non-Christians. Many Christians today have never learned what it really means to resist the devil and therefore the devil does not flee from them.

"But resist the devil! And he will flee from you." - James 4:7

Non-Christians are already on their way to perdition, so the enemy concentrates all his power especially against the church of Jesus Christ and the children of God. Indeed, these are truly a threat to the enemy. We have been given all power over demons, which is why the enemy wants to prevent at all costs Christians from finding this out and from starting to use their authority in Jesus' name. Even in writing this script, I have clearly experienced demonic challenges that show me that the enemy does not want Christians to know their authority in Christ. If you would ask the average Christian, especially here in Germany, the probability is very high that he has never cast out a demon in his life. But Jesus said very clearly in Mark 16 that the first sign that should follow believers is to cast out demons.

*"But these signs will follow those who believe: **in my name they will cast out demons** [...]." - Mark 16:17*

Most deliverances are from spirits of sickness or infirmities. These are often behind physical ailments and are usually not discovered to be the cause until prayer. Often, but not always, these are chronic illnesses or those that doctors can neither detect nor cure. When one then prays for healing, one of two things usually happens: either the pain moves in the body, or it suddenly

becomes stronger. However, this should not upset the person praying, as it is a sign that the enemy has become manifest and is on his way out. We see the same thing in Mark 9, for example:

*"And when Jesus saw a multitude gathered together, he threatened the unclean spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I command thee, depart out of him, and enter no more into him. **And he cried out, and tore him violently, and went out;** and he became as dead, so that most said, He is dead." - Mark 9:25-26*

At first you might think it got worse when Jesus commanded the spirit to go out. However, this was only a sign of his last resistance before he went out. So, if suddenly all the symptoms increase, the spirit has made itself known and you can solve the root of the problem. However, if one only prays for healing, often the symptoms may go but soon return because the root has not been removed. The more experience one gains, the easier it will be to identify the cause of a physical ailment. One will not believe behind which diseases there are almost exclusively such spirits. However, it is necessary to separate such a physical affliction from a spiritual one. Most of the time, in the case of a physical bondage, the spirit has no influence on the mental well-being of the person. It is purely physical, and one would probably not know the difference from a natural origin. Then when they leave, they also do not manifest as they do with other bondages. Just like in Luke 13 with the woman who had a bent back, she is simply healed without being able to recognize anything from the outside as demonic. She is not dragged to the ground by a demon or screaming or anything like that. The person who is now healed usually describes this as if the affected part of the body feels especially light. Sometimes they even say that "something has gone from them" without really understanding what just happened. Just like the woman in the synagogue who Jesus called a "daughter of Abraham", I experience that especially Christians are affected by this suffering. The enemy has no access to their spirit, usually rarely room in the soul, but often in their body, because most Christians have not learned that they also have to resist physical attacks or symptoms. A good example of this would be once in a mission trip in Africa. I saw the Lord deliver people from demons on a continuous basis. Suddenly one evening, my left hand, with which I normally prayed for the sick, began to hurt badly. I knew this was a demonic attack and was able to pray against it and break the power of the enemy. I resisted the devil and he had to leave again. However, many Christians just don't know that, that the devil works through sickness, and just accept it completely. I'll just give you some more clues from my experience that it is a spirit of sickness or infirmity. We have already mentioned the first two, that the pain suddenly intensifies or shifts in the body. Other signs would be, for example, that the person suddenly perceives a strong cold in the body part. But not a healing cold, as would be the case with a cold pack for swelling, but an uncomfortable cold. In chronic diseases, where not even the doctors can identify the cause, this is usually an obvious sign. If a natural cause is the reason, then the body will eventually heal itself. Not all chronic ailments are demonic in origin, but just about all origins that are spiritual in nature are chronic because of course the devil does not want the person to get well. Sometimes such spirits of infirmity try to attach themselves unto accidents or the like, so the affected body part does not heal properly although by natural means it should have already been so. I have also experienced this many times on the field.

Another level of deliverance is soul bondage. When the enemy has gained space in the soul of a person, then usually in the body as well, which is why physical ailments are almost always present then as well. When the person is then freed, all physical ailments go with it. When I have a short conversation with this person, I usually find out quickly whether the problems are

of a spiritual nature or not. Sometimes God gives me a gift of discernment of spirits. Then, when I look into people's eyes, I can sometimes see evil spirits in them or the Holy Spirit. Marks of demonic burdens on the soul are:

- strong, unnatural fear; sometimes also related to regular nightmares
- frequent or regular dreams interacting with the dead or deceased (caution: usually this alone is not a main feature, but only accompanying with others)
- chronic depression along with chronic headaches or neck pain
- regular and severe fits of rage or uncontrolled outbursts of anger
- strong sexual desire and much consumption of pornography or constant sexually changing partners
- regular homicidal or suicidal thoughts (although these are often not wanted by the person)
- strong addictions to drugs, alcohol or similar things
- an occult past exists (for this it is enough that the person *once* tried Ouija boards or similar practices)
- a past in far-eastern religions, which have a lot to do with spirits and spiritual practices
- Practice of spiritual or near or far eastern practices, such as meditation and yoga (there are also forms of yoga that have no spiritual connection and are simply stretching exercises, however, it becomes spiritual very quickly and one should generally give the field an absolute wide berth)
- Visits to a fortune teller, a „medium“ or other occult practice such as card reading, coffee grounds reading, etc.
- intense self-hatred and self-injury, or an unnatural pleasure in seeing suffering or blood in oneself or others
- regular hearing of voices (usually in a package together with a past in far eastern spiritual practices)
- strong involvement in willful sins (fornication, witchcraft and occultism, unforgiveness, fraud, murder, acts of violence, or the like)
- sees or speaks with the dead or deceased while awake

There are probably more markers of a demonic origin that could be mentioned here. However, these often come in "packages", so it becomes pretty obvious very quickly. However, one must be careful not to demonize everything right away, so words like "regular or chronic" are especially important to recognize. As a Christian one will experience waves of attacks from the enemy every now and then, where he will experience one of these characteristics in his thoughts. However, these must simply be resisted. If a Christian suddenly gets suicidal thoughts or feelings, this does not mean that he is bound. No, if these are not resisted in the Word of God for quite some time, but rather welcomed, then a demonic bond usually develops from this. I will give an example: in a time when I was evangelizing a lot, I saw God doing many great things. People's lives were changed, and people found Christ as Lord and Savior. My spiritual life was stronger than ever. However, one day I had a spiritual attack in a dream. On the same

day, I felt a very strange and strong sadness or depression lying on me. I wondered where it came from, but I thought it came from myself and did not resist it at first. Then the night after, I had a demonic encounter where a demon literally came into my room and tried to intimidate me into stopping preaching the gospel with power. However, when I commanded him to leave in the name of Jesus, he immediately left my room and never returned. Only then did I understand that the sadness that same day had not come from me! It had been a spirit of depression trying to attach himself to me and see if I resisted it or not. That day had been a real breakthrough for me, I had now clearly understood the way in which the enemy tries to get space. The enemy can give you thoughts or feelings that do not come from you, but he cannot cause them to really stay unless we allow this to happen and do not resist these thoughts or feelings through God's Word. I once heard the following statement about this that illustrates this, "You cannot prevent a bird from settling on your head. You can, however, prevent it from building a nest there." Some Christians who think they need deliverance often just need to learn to resist the devil and recognize his annoying interferences by renewing their mind. However, one can confront the devil only by believing in God's Word and can resist the devil only in this way.

"Therefore, take hold of the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and when you have straightened everything out, stand! Stand therefore, your loins girded with truth, clothed with the breastplate of righteousness, and shod on your feet with readiness for the preaching of the gospel of peace! With all this, take hold of the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the fiery darts of the evil one!" - Ephesians 6:13-16

"Be sober, watch! Your adversary, the devil, goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. **Resist him steadfastly by faith, knowing that the same afflictions are being carried out on your brotherhood in the world!**" - 1 Peter 5:8-9

Even Jesus, when tempted by the devil, gave as an answer each time, "It is written...". He held nothing but faith in the Word of God to resist the devil. With Christians, the devil pretty much only has access to their lives through lies and sin. When the lies are exchanged with truth and repentance from sin happens, the devil usually loses his power on the Christian immediately.

"[...] and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." - John 8:32

This script, however, is not meant to be about how we as Christians resist the devil but break demonic bonds and set others free.

The above often accompanying marks of a demonic origin are simply meant to be indicative. Then, when praying for the person, if there is a spiritual cause behind it, it often happens that the person begins to tremble, (which in some charismatic circles is often mistakenly always considered a manifestation of the Holy Spirit), sweat profusely, suddenly become very tired, suddenly breathe very fast or badly, feel very uncomfortable, or suddenly feel strong pressure in the chest or head area. If the person's eyes suddenly roll into their head and heavy panting begins, there is probably no need to tell anyone that they are facing a demonic cause. What also often happens is that this person suddenly falls over during prayer. In some charismatic circles, however, this is again always understood to be a manifestation of the filling of the Holy Spirit. In my experience, however, this happens for the most part when an evil spirit is cast out. One cannot evaluate this in principle, however, as it is not clear from Scripture either. In my view, there are two extreme views there that I would avoid. In many anti-charismatic circles this is

always labeled as something demonic, but in some super-charismatic ones it is always labeled as a manifestation of the Holy Spirit. Scripture itself shows us examples on both sides (cf. Matthew 28:4; Rev. 1:17; Matthew 17:6; Luke 4:35; Luke 18:6; Acts 9:4) You should ask the person what they feel about it. If it is peace, joy, love and the fruits of the Holy Spirit, then this is the Holy Spirit. However, if the person has severe dizziness, headache, discomfort and a negative experience, then this is a demonic reaction to the presence of the Holy Spirit, but not His work itself. We read exactly the same thing in Luke 4:35:

"And Jesus threatened him, saying, 'Be silent, and depart from him.' And when the demon had cast him into the midst of them, he departed out of him without harming him."

When demons come out of persons, it sometimes happens in a dramatic way, as described in this passage or other places in the Bible. The person sometimes has to cough heavily, vomit, go to the bathroom, belch, yawn, and in some situations they also get sudden nosebleeds. However, this happens very rarely when one casts out a spirit of sickness. Over the years I have understood that it is wiser not to let the evil spirit manifest, as is common in some charismatic or Pentecostal churches, but to cast it out immediately, just as Jesus did. The person who then became free of a spirit, they often feel light as a feather and very relaxed or simply far better than before. Often they perceive that literally something has gone from them.

To give an example of how to recognize a demonic origin from the cues and manifestations during prayer:

I was once evangelizing with a friend in my city of Nuremberg in the pedestrian zone. While doing so, we met a young woman with whom I prayed for healing. She had back problems. As I prayed for her, the pain suddenly increased and moved in her back. I understood that there was a spirit of sickness behind it and commanded it to go in Jesus' name. Her back got better right away. Then her boyfriend joined her, who had been away for a short time, and we were allowed to pray for healing for his knee as well. He was healed immediately, and he was quite surprised by it. Then they both told us that they sometimes experienced panic attacks or severe anxiety, especially at night. They also had recurring nightmares. Then suddenly I got a word of knowledge from the Holy Spirit that the two of them had once played with a Ouija board. When I asked them, they confirmed this. They also told me that they performed Far Eastern spiritual practices and were strongly rooted in Buddhism. It was clear to me that there was a demonic cause behind it, and I first prayed for the young man. As I was praying for him, he suddenly began to shake badly with one hand, his eyes rolled up into his head, and he would have fallen over if my friend had not caught and supported him. One must not forget that all this happened in the pedestrian zone, where many people looked at us quite astonished as we passed by. You will always experience such things when you pray for the sick. I recommend not talking to the demon, not giving him a platform, but casting him out immediately. This will prevent him from getting opportunities to weaken your faith by being confident and bluffing. Jesus almost never talked to demons. He would not have had time for that even among the thousands. Only in exceptional cases do we see him merely ask the demons a question, "What is your name?"

"And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion. For many demons had entered into him." - Luke 8:30

This is the only passage where we can read something like this. And the conversation probably didn't even last a full minute. In fact, when the demons talked, he usually commanded them to be silent.

*"[...] And said, Ah, what have we to do with thee, Jesus, Nazarene? Hast thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. **And Jesus threatened him, saying, Be silent, and depart from him.**" - Luke 4:34-35*

Another reason not to let demons manifest is to preserve the dignity of the person in the process. *"All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them!"* I think that no one would wish to have a demon manifest and speak through them. Therefore, this should not be sought or provoked. Indeed, it is largely in the hand of the person praying whether or not to allow it. When I was praying regularly for the bound in Africa in the beginning, they manifested every time and I thought it had to be that way. The reason more of these kinds of oppressions occur in Africa is because of their culture, which is rife with demonic practices. People get much more involved with the spiritual world and live in the sin of occultism. In the beginning, some deliverances lasted for hours and had to be continued on subsequent days. My faith was still weak, and I thought that this was normal. But when I looked at Jesus' life, it became clear to me that he did not have to cast out a demon for hours. I would strongly challenge anyone who believes deliverance has to be hours at a time with a lot of counsel. We never see it in God's word.

*"And when evening had come, they brought to him many who were possessed with demons; **and he cast out the spirits with a word**, and healed all who were afflicted, that it might be fulfilled which is spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying, "He himself took our infirmities and bore our diseases." - Matthew 8:16-17*

He would have had practically no time for that either with so many crowds. But again and again I heard from Christian deliverance ministries that this sometimes takes hours. But in my eyes, Jesus' example should be our standard to grow toward, not the other way around.

"But let us speak the truth in love, and in everything grow up into him who is the head, Christ." - Ephesians 4:15

Jesus is our example in all things, including deliverance prayer. When I understood that I no longer had to pray every single demon "to the surface" and not give a platform, I changed my style of prayer in deliverance. I treated the demon as I now treated the spirits of sickness and commanded them to leave immediately, imagining in faith how they were now being cast out by the Spirit of God and had to leave the person - in silent obedience. What helped me was imagining God's Spirit binding and drawing them out, because that is exactly how it happens in the spiritual world. We read what Jesus said about his casting out demons:

"But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you! Or how can anyone enter the strong man's house and rob his household unless he first binds the strong man? Only then can he rob his house." - Matthew 12:28-29

Now when I pray for those who are bound, I often do so by gently placing my hand on their forehead with one or two fingers and commanding everything to leave now. After giving this command, I imagine with faith and expectation how each spirit is pulled out from the bottom to the top by the Spirit of God. Interestingly, people then feel exactly what I pray in faith. They then say that they feel something being pulled out of them from the bottom up. The more experience you gain, the easier it will be to notice when the demon is out. As I mentioned earlier, I am reporting from my own experience, which is not meant to be theology, but rather to give an example of what this can look like practically. I now often perceive when something has left someone. I have also mistakenly believed that the person must first cough or vomit, that is, show some outward sign, before it could be recognized. However, that is not necessary. If one starts waiting for it, then one will no longer pray in faith but in sight, so that the flow of power is prevented. In the past, people would sometimes vomit for hours during deliverances, which is not the nicest thing for the person. But with experience, you learn, and it goes faster and smoother for the person as the faith and thus the prayer of authority increases in maturity. However, I too am nowhere near where I want to be. As we have already looked at in the chapter "Unbelief of the Sick", Jesus never had a counseling session with the bound first, where he had to close all "doors or rights to the enemy" so that he could cast out the demon. He also never asked people to recite a prayer where he renounced things or broke generational curses. This is not wrong or wrong to do in principle, but to repeat, not necessary biblically. Rather, it is often a help for the prayers themselves to have more faith that the demon must now leave, because he has 'no right to stay anymore'. Mostly such theologies arise only because one would like to explain away why the success in the deliverance prayer is missing. As with the prayer of salvation, the lack of success is then blamed on the one who is bound, "He is not serious about his repentance" or has obviously not yet renounced everything". Admitting to oneself that one is still growing in one's faith is for some a problem with their ego. Yet Jesus gave His disciples only one answer as to why they could not cast out the demon. However, we often don't want to hear that one. Now I would like to close this chapter with a story that illustrates some of the things mentioned above. I was in Burkina Faso. It had already been my third mission trip there. In the past, demons had been manifesting steadily, but by now I was no longer allowing them to do so. And indeed, people now became free without demons manifesting. But one evening, at a small crusade in a village, I preached the gospel and made an altar call. About a dozen people responded, including a young woman. Even before I was about to lay hands on them according to the model in Acts, so that they would be filled with the Holy Spirit, the young woman began to tremble violently. Then, when I came near her, she immediately fell down and began to shout violently and manifest a demon. It became quite loud and it was a spectacle for those around. She suddenly had far more strength than one would expect from a young woman. She even went after people with chairs and strong men had to hold her down. The deliverance lasted almost an hour and she had to throw up several times. But I knew that it was not all and that we would have to pray for her again the next day. It was a very bad case of possession. She had a strong occult past, and many had already tried to cast out the demons, but without success. However, she accepted Christ as Lord and Savior that evening. When she came back the following day, she, and her mother, who accompanied her, said that during the night they had both had a dream where a large snake came out of the water and said to her, "You cannot leave us. We will not let you go. You belong to us." The mother also had such a dream, except that

she ordered the snake to leave in Jesus Name and it disappeared back into the water. We continued the deliverance. It was noisy and exhausting. At some point, however, I remembered that all the throwing up and coughing weren't necessary. After all, she had been doing it for what felt like half an hour. I didn't need to *see* the demon leave through my command, but *believe* it - simply because God's Word says so. Therefore, I asked her to stand once again, and I stood with my hands outstretched in her direction without touching her. In my heart, I now believed and expected that the demons just had to go quietly, without a big spectacle. All of a sudden, something extraordinary happened. The young woman suddenly said, "I see a man! I see a man!" I ignored her at first, spoke with authority one last time, and asked how she felt now. I had not been able to see anything from the outside. She told me that in the middle of the prayer a curtain suddenly opened and a man in a white robe with sandals and a beard walked towards her. He was shining full of light. Now when he came to her, he stretched out his two hands and all the darkness left her in an instant. Then the vision was gone again. She suddenly felt light as a feather. Then I asked her, "Who do you think that man was?". She replied, "A man of God?". I smiled and told her that it had been Jesus. The Savior had come Himself to set her free and when He came, it took only a moment, and she was free. I was really surprised and impressed. No annoying throwing up, coughing or anything like that. Jesus responds to the prayer of faith, not the prayer of yelling. I learned from this not to focus on outward manifestations, but to simply rest in faith in the power and words of Jesus.

8 The way to a strong faith

8.1 How faith grows

"[...] and run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the beginner and perfecter of faith [...]" - Hebrews 12:1-2.

"For I say by the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you not to think more highly of himself than is fitting for him to think, but to be careful to be prudent, as God has apportioned to each one the measure of faith." - Romans 12:3

Here we read that God is the beginner of our faith because He has given us faith. And how is our faith made complete? By looking to Jesus! If we do not give Him time in prayer and fasting, then we will not have much time to look to Jesus to be strengthened by Him.

"He gives strength to the weary and strength enough to the unable. Boys grow weary and faint, and young men stumble and fall; but they that wait upon the LORD get new strength, that they may mount up with wings like eagles, that they may run and not faint, that they may walk and not be weary." - Isaiah 40:29-31

He who does not wait on the Lord will not receive new strength. And especially in the ministry of deliverance and healing, such times are extremely important. One will experience great defeats and if one does not then refuel with the Lord, one can become discouraged. I have seen people who should probably be dead now, yet live through God's healing power today. Likewise, however, I have also prayed for people who have died. This can be very discouraging; however I know where to go to receive new power and to strengthen my faith so that this kind of thing happens less and less often. The following passage has become my theme in life:

*"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine dresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, but every branch that does bear fruit he purifies so that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I [abide] in you! Just as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. **He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for apart from me ye can do nothing. [...] If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be given you.**" - John 15:1-5 & 7*

Separated from Jesus, our faith cannot grow. We must surrender to Him so that He may prune our unbelief and purify our faith from doubt. Jesus says in this context "abiding in him" means that "his words abide in us." So, we cannot remain united with him if we do not remain in his word at the same time.

*"Accordingly, faith comes from preaching, but preaching comes through God's word."
- Romans 10:17*

No one can be mighty in faith unless he is mighty in the Word. The more you are rooted and grounded in the Word of God, the more mightily you will be able to wield the sword of the Spirit, for the sword of the Spirit is His Word!

"[...] the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." - Ephesians 6:17

It is not enough to have heard the Word of God once. You have to keep it and keep it alive in your heart so that it bears fruit in your life. This applies to all areas of your Christian life.

*"But the [word] in the good earth are they who in an honest and good heart **keep the word after they have heard it, and bear fruit with perseverance.**" - Luke 8:15*

"My son, pay attention to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the inward parts of thine heart. For they are life to those who find them, and healing to all their flesh." - Proverbs 4:20-22

What God told Joshua when he was now to lead the people of Israel, I call the "Joshua Principle":

*"Only be quite strong and courageous, that you take care to act according to all the law that my servant Moses commanded you! **Do not deviate from it, either to the right or to the left, so that you may succeed wherever you go! This book of the law shall not depart from thy mouth, and thou shalt meditate upon it day and night, that thou mayest be careful to do according to all that is written therein; for then thou shalt reach thy goal in thy ways, and then thou shalt prosper.**" - Joshua 1:7-8*

In order to succeed, God's word must not depart from our mouths, we are to ponder it day and night and be careful to do what it says and we will arrive at our goal and have success in doing so. However, it is not enough just to ponder over the word of God and try to keep it in our hearts, but we must also do it so that growth happens. For faith without works is dead.

"So also faith, if it has no works, is dead in itself. But someone will say, You have faith, and I have works. Show me your faith without works, and I will show you faith from my works! [...] But wilt thou acknowledge, thou vain man, that faith without works is useless?" - James 2:17-18 & 20

Your faith will not grow effectively until you begin to wield the Word of God as a sword and engage in battle. I had to do this all by myself, so it took me a little longer to make progress. But you readers, if you haven't had any experience with this, would recommend you find someone who is already doing this and can take you by the hand. If there is absolutely no one in your area, then you can also get encouragement from videos from experienced people. That's what I did in the beginning, and I drew a lot of faith and courage from seeing that there were other people already succeeding and putting the Word of God into action. In the appendix, I will give a few sources and sermons that strongly encouraged me to go out and pray for people at that time.

8.2 Obstacles to Faith

If we do all these things that strengthen our faith and give room to God's Word in us, but in the process permanently expose ourselves to sources of unbelief, this will work against us. Therefore, the Christian who has the goal of growing in authority and faith may need to reconsider some sources of entertainment. For me, it was television. Quite often in subtle ways it changes your thinking, and we know that to be transformed we must renew our mind in the Word of God (cf. Romans 12:2). Too many worldly sources of entertainment can re-pollute your thinking with doubt, unbelief or sin and bring the work of God in you to a halt. Instead, listen to sermons, read biographies of inspirational predecessors, and spend time in the study of God's Word and in prayer or fasting.

However, there are other things that are obstacles to our faith, such as seeking the honor of people.

"How can you believe, who take honor from one another and do not seek the honor that is from the only God?" - John 5:44

If you place too much importance on what people think of you, it can be a hindrance to your faith. In fact, I know that this plays a role in practice. After all, if you place value on what people think of you, you will become afraid of looking like an idiot in case nothing happens. The fear of failure increases, and one will want to take fewer risks. But faith is nothing more than taking a risk because you are acting on the basis of something you don't yet see. You go off in blind faith. So, pride can take away from your faith the willingness to take risks and the courage. However, if you put away your pride and keep humility, it will benefit your faith since you are now free to face any risk without fear. For you cannot humiliate a humble person. It simply doesn't matter if something happens or not, because nothing in your identity and self-esteem depends on it. That is why it is easiest for children to learn something, because they are not afraid of making mistakes or falling. They have no honor or ego to maintain. With me it happened in the beginning, when I saw more and more successes, that I transferred these successes to my self-esteem and identified myself with it. I was proud of it and all of a sudden I felt more and more pressure when I wanted to pray for someone. The Lord revealed to me what it was, and I had to go through a long period of pruning and discipline that was painful but liberating and fruitful. I had not realized that I was slowly making my identity dependent on my successes. Then, when I wanted to pray for the sick, something was suddenly at stake because my self-esteem suddenly became somewhat dependent on the outcome. I became inhibited and insecure because I was far too concerned with how the outcome affected me and made me look. The motive behind my prayer became more and more self-centered instead of Christ-centered. My success rate completely collapsed because my motive behind the prayer was no longer pure.

"[...] you ask and receive nothing, because you ask evil, to waste it in your lusts." - James 4:3

Our identity does not come from how well we serve the Lord, but that He has accepted us completely and unconditionally as His children through Jesus sacrifice on the cross. Those who allow themselves to be loved by Jesus alone and are willing to be donkeys for Jesus and give Him all the glory will have no obstacle in practicing their faith.

I would like to conclude by mentioning one more biblical reason that can hinder our prayers. This one will perhaps be unexpected to some, but is nevertheless found in the Word of God:

"You men likewise, dwell understandingly with them as the weaker, the female vessel, giving them honor as those who are also fellow heirs of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered!" - 1 Peter 3:7

If you don't honor your spouse in your marriage, don't be surprised if you don't move forward in your growth process, because your prayers can be hindered that way!

8.3 Faith works through love

Finally, it should be made clear what the most important thing is when ministering to the sick and the bound. The Bible says that you can move all mountains by your faith, but in doing so you have no love, everything is worth nothing.

*" [...] and if I have all faith so that I move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing."
- 1 Corinthians 13:2*

Why do we pray for the sick and the bound at all? Because he has commanded us to do it in his name and we are to represent him in doing so. The highest commandment is the commandment to love.

*"Owe no one anything but to love one another! For he who loves another has fulfilled the law."
- Romans 13:8*

Jesus was driven by compassion and love for people in His healing ministry on this earth. Therefore, we must pray in harmony with His heart because now we are His body!

"For the love of Christ urges us, since we have come to this judgment, that one died for all, and so all died." - 2 Corinthians 5:14

"All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them! For this is the law and the prophets." - Matthew 7:12

If you were sick, wouldn't you want someone to come and fight for you in faith so you could be delivered or healed? Be that person! Become one with the heart of Jesus and let His love fill your heart. I keep praying that God's love for people will fill my heart so that I can love them in His name too. I have already received two dreams from God about this, which have had a great impact on me since then.

On my first mission trip to Africa, I had an unforgettable dream one night. In the dream I was in my home church praying for the sick who were standing in line next to each other. I came to a man who had a two-year-old son in his arms. He had Down syndrome and his eyes were crossed. They were pointing in completely different directions. I prayed for him, but nothing happened. I was quite sad about it, and I was already turning away to leave. But the little boy grabbed me by the shirt and pulled me towards him and hugged me. When I had him in my arms, I felt the love of Jesus for that boy. It had been so strong that I began to cry in my dream.

My heart broke for that boy and God's love flowed through me. Then I looked at the boy's face and his eyes looked at me perfectly straight! He was completely healed. Then suddenly I heard an audible voice say, "Faith works through love." and I woke up immediately. I was very moved by this dream and knew that God had spoken to me. That day I prayed for the sick with a whole new love and saw more healings than I had ever experienced before.

"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any power, but faith working through love." - Galatians 5:6

"Beloved, if our heart condemns us not, we have frankness toward God; and whatsoever we ask, that receive we of him, because we keep his commandments, and do that which is well pleasing in his sight. And this is his commandment, that we believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, according to the commandment which he gave us."

- 1 John 3:21-23

Through love we gain an openness to God so that we receive requested things! The most powerful and greatest miracles I have experienced so far happened when God's love for the person in front of me filled my heart. With this strong love also comes an incredibly strong faith that God wants to and will do this now without doubt. It is as if all doubts can no longer stand in this love. I clearly remember an experience where I met a woman who had had partial paralysis from a stroke. She had regular nerve pain that seemed to have been damaged. When I saw her and her despair in her expression, I was overcome with an almost supernatural love for her. It was as if I sensed exactly what Jesus senses when He looks at this woman. I had not seen such healing up to that point. But because Jesus' love filled my heart, my faith literally exploded within me. There was no doubt in my mind what Jesus would do through me now. I took her hands and looked up to heaven with tears in my eyes and said "Thank you Father for always hearing me. And so also now." I said this with the full knowledge that I had not seen success with a stroke in prayer before, and I had prayed for such cases before. From the outside, that might have sounded arrogant or pretentious, but it was more the understanding of the Father's love as conveyed by Jesus in Matthew 7 that came out of me:

"For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks him for a loaf, will give him a stone? And if he asks for a fish, will he give him a snake? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in the heavens give good things unto them that ask him!" - Matthew 7:8-11

Then I looked at the woman and commanded in an authoritative tone, "In Jesus' name, paralysis and every spiritual cause behind it, as well as all the consequences of it, leave her **now!**" Again, it was as if she was struck by lightning. The healing power of the Holy Spirit shot out of me and into her body, something left her body. She was knocked out and fell into the arms of a woman behind her. When she got back up, she started crying and tears rolled down her face. She raised her arm and opened and closed her hand again and again without any problem, which she could not do before. All the paralysis and all the pain were completely gone and there was absolutely no sign that she had ever had a stroke. There were about 30 people standing around who had witnessed this miracle and knew the woman personally. Everyone burst into praise and rejoicing and praising God. Through the gift of discernment of spirits, I suddenly knew that a spirit of sickness had gone out that was behind her suffering. It is an experience that still

moves me to tears when I relate this, knowing that my faith was so strong only because I had had a brief glimpse of Jesus' love for a person.

Make it your mission to love people through the ministry of healing or deliverance. Let love drive you to do that. Healing and deliverance are just one of the tools God uses to love. When we have loved people, we have done our ministry, regardless of whether we always see success. You won't believe how much people appreciate seeing your authentic love for them in prayer. Even people who don't know Jesus, notice, and it sometimes has a greater impact on them than if they had been healed. And I really speak from experience on that. When I simply try to love people through this prayer, I can't go wrong because love never fails. Through love as motivation, every performance pressure falls away.

Also, don't be afraid of people not being healed and therefore God getting a bad reputation because of it. I often hear this way of thinking among Christians, which is why they are afraid to pray for people. However, I can say from experience that this is pretty much the case when people I pray for are not healed. One final story I would like to share about this:

Our church once took in a refugee who was to be deported. He came from an extremely Muslim country in Eastern Africa. I tried to pass on God's love to him and one day I wanted to pray for a tendonitis that he had had for a few days. But nothing happened during the prayer. He was visibly annoyed and said that of course it still hurt, as if it was ridiculous to pray in the name of Jesus, who was only a prophet to him. He immediately went to his room and locked the door.. However, it was a few days later that he called me at home. I picked up the phone and asked who I was talking to. He answered and apologized for his rude response. I was astonished. Then he actually said to me, "You know, I don't know why, but I feel a love that you radiate, and it moved me. Please pray again for my wrist next Sunday, ok?" I was speechless. But I tried to explain to him that this love was not from myself that he felt, but from Christ in me. I told him that only through Jesus did I have this love, without Him I would not. I paraphrased Galatians 2:20:

"[...] I am crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; but what I now live in the flesh I live by faith (faith) in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

The love I tried to pass on to him from Christ had touched him more than prayer without results. The following Sunday I prayed again for his wrist, and he was healed immediately! I will never forget how he even told others in amazement that after praying in Jesus' name all his pain was gone, from one moment to the next. Most people on the street don't expect healing anyway, so they don't mind if it doesn't happen. What they do notice is our sincere love that Christ shines through us. This often has a greater evangelistic impact than healing without God's love in us.

"[...] for the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us." - Romans 5:5

Are you willing to wield the sword of the Spirit for the sick and the bound? Are you willing to deny yourself so that Jesus may become great in you? How mightily God will use you depends on you. He has already given you everything - a complete armor.

Will you be the hands, the feet, the mouth of Jesus for your neighbor?

9 Appendix and final words of the author

Recommended teaching videos on the subject of healing and deliverance:

Curry Blake, Divine Healing Seminar:

[in English]:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WbZj8Bp7daA&list=PLmv8hnRBZcy_5PLT8eYKYaOjFP5pRpoWv

(in German):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZF5WKMO4M8E&list=PL2QIPbhHzPe6JEKWyZDsQFxlOfZeGjiQt>

At CFTN (Christ For The Nations):

(Part 1: "Spirit empowered living")

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kJKgSOPKuMk>

(Part 2: "The Truth about the anointing")

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BecE9Gqjc28>

(Part 3: "Lecture on the Prayer of Faith")

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z7bBbUXw_wM

(Curry Blake: "He gave us authority")

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CGPtI80jRmI>

(Dan Mohler - "Healing the right way")

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tP_cptVQals&t=349s

(Dan Mohler - "Healing and Deliverance")

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hCZQQ6T_DhI&t=4455s

(Tom Loud: Street Healing)

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDj3DJWloTjMCF1mOBsRAqw>

(Torben Sondergard Teaching about getting practical about healing)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BZtGvVc4Ik8>

(Torben Sondergard - Healing Videos)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3nR0tW6u48w>

(Torben Sondergard - Healing and Deliverance Video)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=39m0vFARku8>

(Torben Sondergard - Healing Videos - Kickstart England)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x5CVc6uO6N8>

(Todd White - Healing on the Street)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VDKLYFYc40Q>

(Todd White - Healing of a legally blind boy)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OHOIkdsES7Y>

Final words from the author:

The above references have been an encouragement in my process to move forward in faith. There is now a multitude of Christian teaching or videos to be found on the subject, however, one rule applies equally to all:

"Test what is said and keep what is good!" - cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:21

Your theology should never be completely dependent on others, but others should only lead you into self-study of the Scriptures so that you learn it on your own conviction from the Word of God. Your foundation should never be a person, but the Person – Jesus Christ - the Word of God made flesh. Therefore, I cannot guarantee any of these referred persons or ministries complete correctness or personal agreement even in other areas of their teaching. They are merely listed because I agree on very many points of their theology on healing and deliverance from a scriptural perspective and some have given me motivation or encouragement along the way.

If you really want to invest yourself in this subject and are willing to learn practically how to pray for healing or deliverance, you can also contact me at:

florian.boeffel@freenet.de

Perhaps I can network you and put you in touch with people in your area who are already praying regularly for the sick in evangelistic outreaches. I wish you readers that you would test what you have heard in the Word and that the Lord would give you a heart to proclaim His Word with power. I prayed that each reader would be challenged and put into action newfound convictions from God's Word, that we would become not only hearers but doers of the Word. My heart is to equip as many followers of Jesus to minister to the sick, the bound and the lost so that the harvest will be reaped and people will find Jesus. I have also written another script on the subject of equipping for biblical evangelism that I am happy to provide free of charge upon request. There, evangelism is screened with more than 350 biblical passages so that a biblical foundation is laid for the subject of evangelism. For me, healing is not the central theme of following Jesus or the gospel, however it is clearly part of it. At the same time, I am not a proponent of the prosperity gospel. The focus is on redemption, forgiveness and deliverance from sins through the work of Jesus on the cross, his resurrection and an upright, sincere following of Jesus Christ. There are Christian circles where some topics - such as physical healing - are given more emphasis than should be the case. However, a sanctified life pleasing to God (see Romans 12:1-2) is far more important than success in prayer for the sick or deliverance. Yet healing and deliverance is a very neglected subject these days. I was prompted to write this script on the one hand because I have been able to successfully equip others for this ministry in the past and brothers and sisters have therefore suggested this to me again and again, and on the other hand because God's instruction on this became clearly visible. Although I never really found motivation to do this for a long time, I received prophetic words again and

again from various brothers and sisters all over the world who either did not know anything about it or did not even know me and said that God instructed me to record in writing in books or scripts the things that He had taught me through His Word. On this occasion, I came to write the two manuscripts, "Equipping for Biblical Healing and Deliverance Prayer" and "Equipping for Biblical Evangelism."

I sincerely wish the reader God's blessing and strength in discipleship and hope that this elaboration will be a blessing in your life and likewise contribute to God's glory.