

## **Crosswalk Communities Discussion Guides**

### **October 30th**

#### **Icebreaker Questions (Pick at the least one question, but use as many as your group feels comfortable)**

1. Halloween is this week. What is the best costume that you have worn for Halloween or some other dress up event?

#### **Bible Study Questions**

1. How would you respond to someone who says that God no longer heals? For example, atheist Richard Dawkins says that there are no examples of someone losing a limb and then it miraculously being replaced.
2. Read Luke 4:18-21. What all do you notice about the way that Jesus describes his ministry? How is this different then how you usually think of the gospel message? How is healing involved?
3. Read James 5:13-16: What instructions do you see here? What questions for you have? When do you believe that it is appropriate to ask the elders to pray over you?
4. Read Matthew 8:14-17: How does Matthew link Jesus' ministry with Isaiah's prophecy? Why is this important?
5. In the book of Acts, we see signs and wonders as a regular part of the life of the early church. Why does healing seem to be so rare today?
6. When we pray and find healing, our proper response should be to give God glory. What should our response be when we don't find healing?
7. Why do you believe that we often receive a "no" to our prayers? How have you seen God work through a "no" answer?

8. Pastor Michael talked about a "no" answer always being temporary because we will experience a resurrection into a world in which sickness is no more. How does this increase your anticipation for heaven? What will it be like to live in a sick free world?
9. How can we glorify God when the answer is "no?"
10. Spend some time as a group praying over group members who are dealing with sickness or other people that you know who are in need of healing.

## October 30th Christ as Healer

Many of us have been exposed to various faith healers who claim to heal people of physical disease as long as they generously contribute to their ministries. For many, it makes them very skeptical about miracles. Christians believe that Jesus healed, but debate as to whether God still works in that way today. Even those who do believe in healing, deal with the disappointment of praying for healing only for God to reject their request. How should we approach the issue of healing?

### A. Biblical Teaching on Healing

- **The source of sickness: Man's sin:** God's intention was for Adam and Eve to live forever, free of sickness. The Tree of life was positioned in the Garden of Eden to ensure that. When they sinned, they were exiled from the garden and therefore experienced sickness and death.
- **The ending: the Kingdom of God banishing sickness:** We are told that when God's kingdom is fully present, pain and death will be no more (Rev 21:4). Access will be restored to the tree of life (Rev 22:2).
- **The present: Kingdom of God experienced through Jesus:** The prophets declared that a messiah was coming who would undo the curse. Isaiah that "by his wounds we would be healed (Isaiah 53:5). When Jesus came, his ministry was accompanied by physical healings. He declared that the kingdom of God was accessible through him (Mark 1:15). Jesus was able to bring that future reality into the present.
- **Physical healing is a privilege of God's people:** The resurrection of Jesus signified that a new day had dawned. There was a paradox in which Jesus now reigned over his kingdom, but the kingdom of the world, with all of its brokenness, was still present. This will be the reality until Jesus returns to fully establish his kingdom. The early church believed that they had access to God's power and healing would regularly take place in their midst. Christians were told to pray for healing for the sick (James 5:14-15) and God would answer.

Scripture does not put a time constraint on this, but assumes that it would be the ongoing rule.

### B. Why does God often say "no"

- **Lack of faith:** Often when people asked for healing, Jesus would respond because of their faith. Today, we often pray with little expectation and don't receive healing as a result.
- **Sin issues:** Sin issues can prevent us from being healed. James 4:1 talks about Christians not receiving because they had the wrong motives. In 1 Corinthians 8, Paul says that Christians are dealing with sickness because of their abuse of the Lord's Supper.
- **God intends to use sickness for his purposes:** In John 9:3, Jesus says that a man blind since birth was that way so that God's might may be displayed in him. God often says "no" because he has a better purpose in mind. Sometimes we can see that as a building of character or in the restoration of family relationships. Other times we don't see the reason and won't know it in this life.
- **Note:** The early church did not always experience healing. Paul identifies two cases in which a co-workers experienced prolonged periods of sickness (Ephesians 2:25, 2 Timothy 4:20)
- **Note:** A "no" answer from God is always temporary. We are promised a future resurrection where we will experience the full reality of healing.

### C. Our response

- **Ask persistently:** As long as God leaves the door open, we should continually ask him for healing. Sometimes God waits to see how much we really want it (Luke 18:1-8).
- **Trust and praise God:** If God grants the request, then we praise him for it. If God says "no", then we trust that he knows the big picture and has something better in store. We can praise him because we can be confident that God will bring about that good.