

HEALING – and it's connection to Passover (Why less healing; Lessons from Hezekiah; footwashing's real meaning – and much more)

Light on the Rock
by Philip Shields

Abstract: How many times have you wondered why there seems to be less healing today? This sermon will give you one or two huge reasons why, and what we can do to receive God's healings more frequently. You'll never think of the footwashing the same way again after reading or hearing this sermon. If God's people apply this message, I'm confident we'll begin to see many more healings. (Given originally in 2004, its message is even more timely today.)

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Hello everybody, this is Philip Shields. Today we're going to talk about a topic that has really puzzled a lot of people, in conversations that have come up. ***Why isn't God healing today, as much as he did in times past, in the days of the apostles? What's going on here, what's the reason for it? I'm going to hope to bring an answer to that today.***

How would you like to see people being excitedly healed, supernaturally healed, dramatically healed? Wouldn't that be great? Today we'll talk about the correlation between lack of dramatic healing and Passover, because there is a lot of correlation, as you'll see as we go through this today.

You might be wondering, "Why is he talking about Passover? We're after Passover, we're past it now." The Passover attitudes and the lessons we learn from the Passover should be things that we hang on to all year long. It's not something just for Passover. And for that matter, this particular topic has a lot of bearing to Passover.

In the days of the early apostles, right after the resurrection of Jesus, and right after the Day of Pentecost, the apostles were given the gift of incredible signs and wonders. But they weren't just for their day, Jesus promises all His believers, till the end of the ages, will do even greater signs and wonders than He did, if they would just believe in Him. You can read that in John 14:12-14.

John 14:12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. (13) And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. (14) If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

Then we can read how, as an example of that, even Peter's shadow falling on people would result in their healing. But again, that wasn't just limited to their day, Jesus said in Matthew 28:18-20 that He would be with His disciples – and that includes us – as He puts it, until the end of the age.

Matthew 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. (19) Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: (20) Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.)

In Acts 5 we see an example of this. This is after Pentecost, it's after the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Acts 5:12 And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. (13) And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them. (14) And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.) (15) Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. (16) There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.)

They're all united. Please keep that in mind, in terms of this study, that **the healing was taking place as they were all of one accord. That's a big tie-in to today's sermon.**

And in Acts 8:5-8 we see how Philip in Samaria had great healings. And we know that Paul, certainly, had awesome gifts of healing, including resurrecting people from the dead and instant dramatic healings. So why isn't that happening today? There are some clear reasons why, I think you're going to see that today.

I want to focus *not* on the whole topic of healing per se, but to talk today on healing and its connection to Passover, to our attitude about Passover, and to what Paul calls “the Lord's body”, and that's what I want to limit our discussion to today, and leave the other keys of healing for another message. You'll be surprised at how much our unity, our treatment of the Body of Christ, and other issues related to Passover – have to do with our limited amount of healing today!

We get sick not just because of correlations to Passover, but for lots of reasons, including but not limited to: wrong diet, being overweight, being careless, having an accident, letting stress overcome us, exposure to wrong chemicals and additives, and many other things. But today I want to limit the discussion of healing to how it relates to Passover.

Before I get into the points I have here, let me hasten to add also that I realize that God doesn't heal everyone every time, no matter how perfect we all are. Paul said that he had his thorn in the flesh - whatever that was, he doesn't define it, although many people speculate on it. My point is that he wasn't healed of that thorn in the flesh, though he fervently beseeched God to heal him, at least three times. In 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 you can read about that.

2 Corinthians 12:7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. (8) For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. (9) And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. (10) Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

Now remember, Paul had the gift of healing, but God didn't heal Paul himself. So I'm not saying that we apply all the points in this message to say that everybody, every time, everywhere, will be healed. I'm not saying that nobody will ever get sick, and neither am I saying that those who are getting sick are sick because of their own sins. I'm not saying that at all, and I hope you listen and hear that. Now that I've done all the caveats and little statements about all the things I'm not saying, let's get on with the message.

Now we all know also that if we don't have faith, we won't be healed. Even Jesus did very few miracles in his own hometown of Nazareth, it says in Mark 6. If you've never noticed that you might want to read it. We think of Jesus having all power and all ability to heal whomever He wanted to, but it says in Mark 6:4-6 that He didn't heal very many people in Nazareth because of their unbelief.

Mark 6:4 *But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house. (5) And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. (6) And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages, teaching.*

Now, turn with me to 1 Corinthians 11 because I believe that we can get back to having more healings, more dramatic healings, less people sick – let's put it that way too – if we would learn the lesson of this message. In 1 Corinthians 11:23-32 we'll see how Paul states plainly that God is chastening the church, partly because of our attitudes about His body, and partly because of our attitudes about the Passover.

Again, I'm not saying that the ones who are sick are ones that God is necessarily chastening.

Sometimes it hurts us more when we have a loved one who's sick than if we ourselves were sick, as in the case of David's son after Nathan the prophet came to David, I think in 1 Samuel 12. Nathan the prophet said that the child would die because of David's sins, even though God forgave him, there was to be some consequences. Now, the child did nothing wrong. It was probably not a baby, by the way, it was probably a three or four year old child, according to the Hebrew. It wasn't the child who had done something wrong, it was David. **So, I'm not saying today, that if you're sick or someone else is sick, that they are the ones who necessarily have sinned.**

1Corinthians 11:23 *For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: (24) And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. (25) After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. (26) For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.*

So we're remembering, and honoring, and memorializing the death of our Lord every time we take those emblems of the cup and the broken bread at Passover time.

1Corinthians 11:27 *Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.*

That kind of sounds to me like maybe there won't even be the sacrifice applied to us. We're guilty of something here. Sounds serious anyway.

1 Corinthians 11:28 *But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.*

So after we examine ourselves, we're supposed to then take the bread and the cup --- not examine ourselves and then decide we can't. I'll say more about that later, and more about that is also in the other message I have about Passover, the one about a positive look at the Passover.

1 Corinthians 11:29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

Now notice what that says. “Not discerning the Lord’s body.”

1 Corinthians 11:30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

DID WE GET THAT? Now, he’s not talking about a spiritual weakness and sickness here, because tied right into this he talks about how many are dying, many sleep. The Bible calls dying “sleeping”, because it’s only temporary. The first time we die, we’re going to be awakened in the resurrection, so to speak. So God calls the first death a “sleep”.

1 Corinthians 11:31-32 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. (32) But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

So he’s saying here that God wants us to wake up, and to realize what we’re doing. So God in turn allows the sicknesses to come upon us, hoping that we’ll wake up to some errors and problems we have, and come around, so to speak, so that He doesn’t have to condemn us with the world. So He chastens us, He spans us, but He’s not necessarily going to keep us from eternal life because of these things. That’s what it’s saying here, if we listen to the warning that’s been given here.

This is not the only passage that ties sickness and lack of healing to our preparation for the Passover, or ties it in to the Passover itself directly. Did you realize that there are several other passages that clearly allude to a connection to healing or being sick with the Passover? We’ll look at a couple right now.

Isaiah 53:4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

Notice the phrase there by the way, “smitten by God”. So many times people want to accuse the Romans of killing Christ, or the Jews of killing Christ, the one who offered Christ and the one who really was ultimately responsible for His death was all of us. Peter said in Acts 2 that “you killed Christ”, talking to people who probably weren’t even there necessarily at the crucifixion scene. But beyond that, even bigger, ultimately the one who killed Christ is God Himself, who allowed His Son to be a sacrifice, it says here in Isaiah 53:4, “smitten” or “struck down” by God. Afflicted, because Jesus was offered before the world began. It was an agreement that they had made, God the Father and the One who became Jesus.

Isaiah 53:5 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.

By his stripes, the scourging He went through. Now some people, some ministers, want to make this only a spiritual healing, but we’ll see in other passages that it clearly ties physical healing also to the Passover. You can also read Matthew 8:1-17, where it also talks about Jesus bearing our sicknesses. And that’s all in context with Him healing several people in that particular passage.

So don’t buy into that notion that God has simply given up on healing. There’s a reason why He isn’t healing as often, brethren. And if any of you hearing this have bought into the nonsense that God isn’t ever going to physically heal anymore today, get out a concordance and study the words

“heal” and “healing” and “healed” in the New Testament. You’ll be just amazed at what the Bible does say about healing. That’s going to be more in my second message on healing.

The other passage that I want to talk about besides Isaiah 53 and 1 Corinthians 11 – another passage that involves healing – **talks about King Hezekiah of Judah**. The ten tribes of Israel, north of Judah, had split away, making the two nations – the Kingdom of Israel to the north, and the Kingdom of Judah to the south. Now brethren, the modern nation we know today as Israel, is actually composed of descendants primarily of the Kingdom of Judah – the Jews. There are other members of other tribes sprinkled in there, such as Paul, who was a Benjamite.

Under David, all twelve tribes were united in one kingdom. Then, after David there was King Solomon, and after Solomon, in the reign of King Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, the nation split into two – the Kingdom of Israel to the north and the Kingdom of Judah to the south. Then the Kingdom of Israel was taken into captivity by the ancient Assyrians. The Kingdom of Israel was composed of tribes like Ephraim and Manasseh and Asher. So the ancient Assyrians took them into captivity, then the ancient Israelites’ identity was lost to the world.

I think we can show you, if you aren’t already aware of it, that the United States, Britain, Australia, Canada, and some of the Western European nations are modern-day descendants of ancient Israel, the ones that disappeared from history.

It’s just unimaginable to me that God would talk about the modern nations in prophecy by name, like Libya, and not include prophecies that include the United States, or the big nations like Russia or China, and Japan, as well as the other powerful nations that weren’t from ancient Israel. So anyway, that’s another topic. Ask me if you want to get some information on that.

King Hezekiah was a young man, twenty five years old, when he took over the throne, and he became one of the top three righteous kings in Judah’s history. The other two most righteous kings in Judah were Josiah and David. Now, Hezekiah means “strength of Yahweh”, so Yahweh has strengthened him. He’s known, according to what it says in **2 Kings 18:5**, as a king who trusted in God, more than any other king of Judah, before him or after him.

Now, we think of David all the time as being the most righteous. It says here that Hezekiah was the one who trusted in God more than anyone ever. His reign was a troubled one, and maybe that’s why he trusted in God so much. Assyria, the nation that took Israel captive eventually, was definitely on the rise, and it was rattling swords over there, and it was kind of a scary time.

And so Hezekiah had to trust God. He had to pay tribute from time to time. There was a constant threat that Assyria would come and roll over his land, and no doubt he got a lot of support and encouragement, perhaps even instruction from the prophets Isaiah and Micah, who were prophesying during his reign.

The time setting was their type of what we would call the end time for them. It was just a type of that, I’m saying, for Judah and Israel. It was just a few short years after what we’ll be reading when the tribes of the north did go into captivity in Assyria, but at this point not yet.

The main thing I want to focus on today about Hezekiah’s incredible Passover that he had is this: according to 2 Chronicles 30:26, it was the most awesome Passover that Judah ever had since King Solomon. **So let’s pick up the story in 2 Chronicles 29**, I’m going to summarize all of 29 for you for

time's sake. I want to go into it in far more detail in other sermons or messages, there's so much good stuff there. But as we'll have time we'll glean more from it.

Hezekiah comes to the throne at 25. He immediately reopens the temple, which had been abandoned. The doors had been shut. Remember when Christ says to the Laodiceans in Revelation 3, "I stand outside, I'm knocking at the door"? This is what Israel and Judah had done, they'd left God on the outside of His Father's house – the temple was a type of the Father's house, and Jesus was the door to the Father's house.

Anyway, he opens the door to the temple, and has the priests and the Levites consecrate themselves, just like we're supposed to do. They cleansed the temple, got out all the rubbish that was there, and they got ready for Passover, but they didn't get ready in time, so they had to do the Passover in the second month, which was allowed. Numbers 9 talks about having a Passover in the second month if you can't have it in the first month, for emergencies and for reasons of uncleanness. You could be unclean for touching a dead body, or for menstrual periods, maybe even being away on a trip, things like that.

Hezekiah finally gets the temple cleaned, the Levites and the priests are cleansed and consecrated, everything's ready to go, but it's past the time they're supposed to keep the Passover. So they decide to keep the Passover in the second month. Now remember, we're studying all this to learn a lesson about healing and its correlation to Passover, so be patient, because it's coming here. And don't forget all we've just said here – there're a lot of lessons, such as opening the door – we've got to open the door to God, and be abiding in Jesus Christ.

In 2 Chronicles 30:9-10, Hezekiah invites the people from the north to come down, and to enjoy a time of being together again. ***He says, "Okay, I know you're a part of your own flock, your own group up there, your own body, your own nation up there, but come on down. Let's be together, as children of God, and let's worship God at Passover together, in Jerusalem where it's supposed to be."***

DO YOU HEAR THE SIMILARITIES WITH TODAY'S BODY OF CHRIST?

Those ambassadors were largely mocked and ridiculed, so nothing really happened there. So picking up 2 Chronicles 30:11...

2 Chronicles 30:11 Nevertheless various ones of Asher and Manasseh and of Zebulun humbled themselves, and came to Jerusalem.

Isn't that interesting wording there? ***They humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem.***

2 Chronicles 30:12 Also in Judah the hand of God was to give them one heart to do the commandment of the king and of the princes, by the word of the LORD.

Now think about this before we go on. There are two houses, two kingdoms, two flocks, two groups -- the house of Israel to the north and the house of Judah to the south. Now they're coming together for the Passover. It took a humbling from the people up north to accept the invitation, to join up with a brother.

They could have just as easily said, as did most of the north, “Hey, we have our own holy cities, we have our own places, we have our own heirs we can worship, we don’t need to go to Jerusalem. You know, we don’t like you guys anyway, you’re kinda weird. You have an accent.” Whatever they wanted to say. “We don’t like your beliefs.” Most didn’t come down. But it says that some humbled themselves and did come to Jerusalem.

So what’s happened today in the church, and how does this tie in? We have various branches of God’s church scattered around the world. The vine is Jesus Christ. If we’re considering ourselves children of God, branches on that vine, are they not also children of God? Why don’t do the same thing, and sometimes visit our brethren in other flocks? Brethren who are with other church groups, other leaders, perhaps? Why don’t we? We all left the heresy that we all were in at one time, and then we flew apart after we did that. And we’ve stayed apart. What’s up with that?

2 Chronicles 30:13-14 *And there assembled at Jerusalem much people to keep the feast of unleavened bread in the second month, a very great congregation. (14) And they arose and took away the altars that were in Jerusalem, and all the altars for incense took they away, and cast them into the brook Kidron.*

The brook Kidron is that narrow gorge that passes on the east side of the temple mount, and marks the division between the Mount of Olives and the temple mount. In other words, if you were standing on the Mount of Olives, looking at the temple mount, that ravine in between is the brook Kidron.

2 Chronicles 30:15-17 *Then they killed the Passover on the fourteenth day of the second month: and the priests and the Levites were ashamed, and sanctified themselves, and brought in the burnt offerings into the house of the LORD. (16) And they stood in their place after their manner, according to the law of Moses the man of God: the priests sprinkled the blood, which they received of the hand of the Levites. (17) For there were many in the congregation that were not sanctified: therefore the Levites had the charge of the killing of the Passovers for every one that was not clean, to sanctify them unto the LORD.*

So that’s telling us something here. There were people, priests, and others, who had not been diligent enough to be ready for the Passover even in the second month. So these unordained Levites had to do their job. Sound familiar? The next verse says:

2 Chronicles 30:18-19 *For a multitude of the people, even many of Ephraim, and Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves, yet did they eat the Passover otherwise than it was written. But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, The good LORD pardon every one (19) That prepareth his heart to seek God, the LORD God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary.*

So Hezekiah prayed for the people who hadn’t done it right. Isn’t that a lesson for us today too? If we know brethren who aren’t quite doing something right as we know, but we know they’re trying to get back to God after so many years of heresy...isn’t there something we can do too? We can pray for them, that God would look upon their heart, and prepare their heart to seek Him, though he’s not thoroughly cleansed.

It’s also interesting to note here that in some cases God might appear to be flexible, contrary to what Pharisaical type people might believe. **But in 2 Chronicles 30:20 – a very interesting verse, and the point of going back to Hezekiah’s Passover.**

2Chronicles 30:20 And the LORD hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the people.

This is very interesting. God had either made those unclean people sick, or they'd arrived sick and hadn't healed them. But when Hezekiah prayed, God accepted them as having been cleansed and their heart was cleansed and prepared and God now healed them. Now compare that again to what we just read in 1 Corinthians 11. He said in 1 Corinthians 11:29-30, that some of you are not discerning the Lord's body, some of you are not taking the Passover in a worthy manner, or starting to eat it in an unworthy manner. Therefore you're bringing judgment to yourselves, and for this reason, 1 Corinthians 11:30, many are sick among you, and many sleep.

Now, this is obviously talking about a physical illness, because it was resulting in someone's physical death. Some believe the mention of Passover healing is only about spiritual healing. One minister even told me that God doesn't heal anymore. Well, that's nonsense. God still does heal. It's just that we don't see a lot of dramatic healings. My point here is that Paul said that many of you are sick and weak because you're not discerning the Lord's body.

Now, do we want to see more healings in God's church? Do we wish not to be condemned by God? Then we'd better get real good at examining ourselves, as 2 Chronicles says they did - some did, some didn't - and letting God cleanse us, and taking the Passover in a worthy manner, and keeping that right attitude all year long.

The other thing I want to point out about Hezekiah's Passover is that the people up north humbled themselves and willingly came down and met with their brethren to the south, with a different flock, if you will. That obviously pleased God, that they humbled themselves to do that.

We'll see that that has a lot to do now with the new meaning I hope to show you - maybe not new, but deeper and broader, with footwashing, as well as our attitude about the bread and cup of the Lord. Now, part of the reason we have so many prayer requests for healing, and the reason so few are being dramatically healed, is that we have not been worthy of God's healing. God is chastening us. And many times it's probably not the person who's sick that's being chastened at all, but the people around him or her. I already mentioned Nathan's saying to David that his son would die because of David's sin.

So Jesus said clearly that the bread we eat at Passover pictures His body broken for us. He said in 1 Corinthians 11:23...

1Corinthians 11:23-24 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: (24) And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body...

Then we're told that they were sick, because they weren't esteeming or judging the Lord's body correctly. Certainly that can mean, and must include, that as a primary meaning, that they weren't esteeming and appreciating the actual sacrifice, the actual body of our Lord. They were showing a carelessness and a lack of preparation for the Passover, taking it like a casual ritual. Not having prayed extensively about it ahead of time, not examining themselves extensively, not having thought about and thanking God for the sacrifice that God and Jesus gave for us, before arriving at the service. It surely, certainly has to include all of it. And that part of the message is covered, I hope, very well every year, around the world by most ministers. I will come back to it in my other message on the Passover.

But what else does that mean in context? He said “You’re not properly discerning the Lord’s body.” Now, the body has also to do with the spiritual body of Christ also.

***Ephesians 1:22-23** And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, (23) Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*

Other places clearly state that the church of God is the body of Christ. If you need to jot these down, Colossians 1:18, Colossians 1:24, where he’s called the head of the body, which is the church. Ephesians 5:30...

***Ephesians 5:30** For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.*

There’s also 1 Corinthians 12, where he talks about “we are members of His body” the hand, the foot, the eye, and all that. There are many places that talk about that.

So remember this in the context of the body, the church, getting sick. What do we do to keep a body healthy? A physical body, your body. **What do you do to keep your body healthy? You have to treat it right, don’t you? You have to be kind to your body, so to speak. You have to feed that body. You have to rest, and exercise, and esteem that body, and give it the breaks it needs to have. We have to nourish and love and protect the body from accidents, from cuts and all of that. We have to avoid certain things too.**

So what makes a body sick? Because there’s some correlation here to what I’m going to talk about. Abusing the body makes it weak, prone to sickness. Is the body of Christ being abused at all? Not treating the body right, not feeding it, making it sick, or feeding it junk, making it fat and flabby and sick, stressing the body – too much stress going on can make a body sick. It can have a devastating effect. Feeling ignored, feeling very unhappy – if we’re very upset about things, you can get literally physically sick. If we’re mentally and emotionally very upset about something, or feeling ignored, feeling rejected, feeling unforgiven. All of that can make a body very sick.

So what’s happening to the body of Christ – the church – today? The members are stressed – in many cases, by the way other members are treating them, or mistreating them, or ignoring them. All through the book of 1 Corinthians you can see this kind of bad behavior towards the body of Christ, the church. Paul has addressed it over and over, how the body of Christ, the church, abusing itself, abusing its members, its brothers, its sisters. There was division, “I’m of this man, I’m of this leader, that leader, I’m of Peter, I’m of Paul”. I don’t want to name names in this message because that’s partly my point, we’ve got to quit doing these things.

But there are people who want to brag about being part of Church A, or Church B, Leader A or Leader B. “Our preacher is more interesting, more dynamic than your preacher.” “Our church is more involved in activities than your church is.” The Passover had become festive, and many people were drunk and not loving and caring for one another. Brethren were suing one another. It was chaos in church services.

We can read the things that were going on in the Corinthian church. There was open sin going on. No wonder Paul said that the body of Christ, the church, was often sick. Sick spiritually to begin with, and so the physical was but a picture of what God wanted us to see spiritually. They weren’t appreciating what God and Jesus had done for them. **So God says, “Okay, if you’re not going to esteem what**

Jesus has done for all the body, then I'm going to make your literal body sick, and make you think about why". Because the spiritual body, the church, is sick.

So first of all, we're not supposed to feel superior or inferior to other parts of the body, other groups of God's people, or anyone. Paul teaches that clearly in 1 Corinthians 12. It says that the eye can't feel more superior than some other part, the hand can't feel superior to the feet, and so on. So we can esteem others better than ourselves, but not turn that into a sick feeling of inferiority. When a cell of the body begins to feel dominant, and insists on being #1, the most important, wants to take over, wants to rule the rest, and wishes there were more like himself...

I've heard even ministers get up in front of a group and say that "you're supposed to submit to them who have the rule over you and I rule you!" Right or wrong, I can't imagine a minister doing that, but they do it. One or two I know of have done it. When a cell of the body begins to feel that kind of dominance, and wants to take over the rest of the body, in a physical body we call that cancer. That kind of cell – that kind of attitude – makes the body sick.

So we must not put any man on a pedestal, though we are to respect and even honor those who are our leaders, we are to obey them. But we are for that matter to honor all, Peter says in 1 Peter 2:17. Honor everybody. It's a large part of what esteeming the body means. James says that if a rich person comes in and you treat them with all this kind of extra respect and someone comes in shabbily dressed and they've got to sit over here...he says that that's all wrong. I speak to myself here as well. I've been critical also.

We've got to quit being this way. We need to quit being down on people, down on other ministers. There are ministers who name other ministers by name and put them down. Let's pray for everybody. Even our enemies, God tells us. Certainly we can pray for those in other churches, even everyone in the other churches. Otherwise, how are we fulfilling Philippians 2:3?

Philippians 2:3 *Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.*

Do we see that happening in the splits of the Lord's body? That's tough, because we all have a lot of vanity, and we also at the same time have a lot of inferiority feelings within us. Paul is saying, "Yeah, you can esteem others better than yourself," but at the same time he says in 1 Corinthians 12 that we're all needed, we're all part of the body, we're all needed to be there, working together. Peter says in 1 Peter 5:5...

1Peter 5:5 *Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.*

So what was happening in the Corinthian church is that they were saying "We're more important than this other group" or "We're better than these, we have a better preacher", "I'm of Peter, I'm of Paul". Or, "our group is the spear point of the gospel...", or "our group adheres closer to the truth", or "our group has a bigger Work going on" – and on and on ad nauseum. There was division, there were lawsuits, all of these things were going on. There was not any humility being shown.

Now, remember in Hezekiah's day, when the northern tribes came down for Passover? They humbled themselves. And they joined up with their southern brothers and sisters.

Can we learn something from that? **God isn't pleased, in my opinion, with the way his children keep themselves separated from one another, in the various churches, groups, and denominations.**

I think the real reason that the leaders of these various groups encourage that, and discourage you attending another Feast site, or something like that, is to secure the tithing base for themselves and "their" work, which each consider's "God's work".. What's up with that?

Do you consider the members of other church groups your brothers and sisters? If you don't, why not? And if you do, then why do we feel we can't have them over to our home for dinner? Why can't we attend services with them once in a while, and invite them to our services once in a while? Why can't we attend Passover with them once in a while? Why can't we attend their Feast sites with them from time to time?

I want you to think about that. Imagine how you'd feel about that if you were God the Father, or just a father of many children, and every single week these kids all come to honor you, like we do God the Father on the Sabbath. They come to honor you, but they won't talk to each other, and they won't fellowship with each other, they won't mix with each other...how would you feel about your children? Oh, they come to honor you, but would you be pleased that this group's staying with themselves over here, and this group's staying with themselves over here, and this group's staying with themselves over here? And they're supposed to all be showing the world how to love one another, because by this shall all people know that you're my disciples if you have love for one another, but they can't come together?

And the games of upmanship we play? Am I of Paul? Am I of Peter? Am I of Apollos? Are we not all of Christ? Remember again in Hezekiah's day how the northern Israelites humbled themselves and joined with their southern brothers in Judah. The lesson is clear. God heard the prayers to cleanse them and heal them.

So I'm asking those of you listening to this, if you want to start seeing more healings, we can be doing certain things. Let's start praying for the other flocks much more than we probably are. If you are doing it already, God bless you. May God bless you. Let's pray that we become one flock soon, as Jesus speaks of in John 10, I'll read that in a second. John 10:11, and also verses 14-16.

Let's be a messenger of that hope, that reconciliation and that peace. Let's pray for the ministers of other groups. Let's pray for the brethren of other groups. Let's pray for those we know are hurt. Let's pray for those who have quit attending any group because they're so hurt, rejected, and discouraged. Not just for people in our own group. I think some of you are doing that, I think that's awesome. I know some of you get prayer requests from various groups. That's awesome. Keep it up.

John 10:11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

We know who the sheep are, hopefully that's me and you, God's people.

John 10:14-16 I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. (15) As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. (16) And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

So let's be praying that this happens. Let's also be forgiving anyone we have a grudge against. Now that we have many different flocks to attend. A bad thing I see happening in the church of God, in my opinion, is we feel we can just hop from group to group permanently and leave the other group. I'm saying fine, attend the group you want to attend. You like the people there, and it's convenient, the services and the times and all that are great, do so. But don't exclude yourself from the others.

Forgive those you have a grudge against. People have left a particular body because they can't stand meeting with a particular person who goes to that group. I know that for a fact. We need to forgive

them from the heart, or else we might not get forgiven. You need to forgive the ministers who disfellowshipped you, and you feel very strongly – wrongly so. Forgive the boss who fired you. Forgive the neighbor who upset you.

And don't just forgive them, but pray for them. Esteem them. Highly regard them. Honor them. This has a big part to play in the Passover. Be a tool of reconciliation, is what I'm saying. Visit the other groups.

1 Corinthians 10:16-17 *The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? (17) For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.*

Who's the one bread? Are we one body? Are we one bread? Or is Christ divided? 1 Corinthians 10:17 in the updated New American Standard Version says "Since there's one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread". The word "communion" can also be translated as sharing. We all share, we come together, we partake.

What does it picture? We picture that God is not a denomination. God's church is not a denomination. It's not any denomination. The true church is that group of believers that have accepted Jesus as their king, Lord, master, and Savior, and who are led by the Holy Spirit, no matter which group God has put them in to attend. As long as they don't exclude anyone else in their conduct and behavior. If they've been given God's spirit and are led by it they're God's people. We should reach out to them. We should consider them our brothers.

Any incorporated group that insists that they are the one true body of Christ alone, drop them like a hot potato but do pray for them. Do be kind to them. That is simply a lie, that you must be part of a particular group, incorporatedly, or else you're not part of the body of Christ. Simply a lie.

There're some that put stipulations out there, as far as what you've got to believe, that aren't even doctrinal beliefs in the Bible. You have to believe a certain person's an Elijah, you have to believe certain foundational things or else you're not welcome to come to our services. Well...I don't see how God's going to be happy with that.

The bread we eat is supposed to picture our unity. Now obviously, if you don't believe in the doctrines of a particular church, then there won't be unity if you go there, because you're going to be talking about your reasons for disbelieving. But I'm saying still pray for these people, still invite them over for dinner. Still reach out, still mingle with them.

Now, here's where footwashing comes in. I've been waiting a long time to get to this. Reach out, brethren. Let's reach out. Let's remember a lesson here about footwashing. *The footwashing, and*

healing, and Passover, I think has a lot in common here. My heart's heavy as I talk about this, because I feel that God really, truly would give us more healing, if we would learn the lesson that I'm talking about here today.

We know that the footwashing certainly pictures humility, we've learned that many times. The lowest ranking member in the household, or sometimes a slave or servant, would be the one doing the footwashing. Footwashing pictures being a servant. Footwashing also pictures God cleansing us as we stumble and sin, but these are not the things I'm going to emphasize right now. I'm going to emphasize something else here.

Let's talk about this for a second, because this leads up to it. We have heard this too over the years. If you haven't, then look at this. Footwashing isn't just showing that we're serving and humble, but it also shows an obedience to God that we walk God's way now and as we walk that way we sometimes, and oftentimes stumble. As we stumble we pick up some dirt. That dirt has to be washed off. Now, we've been baptized and cleansed already, but along the way every year we have to wash off the dirt, if you will, the stumblings if you will, that we picked up along our walk with the way of Jesus Christ and God our Father.

1 John 1:5-9 *This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. (6) If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: (7) But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. (8) If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. (9) If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

At the footwashing we come in there to remember that we need to be washed from the dirt we've picked up in our walk with the Christian way. Let's continue reading:

1 John 1:10 *If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*

So yes, we have to walk the walk. And yes, we've picked up some dirt, and yes, we have it washed off at the footwashing. Now, most years when I hear sermons and sermonettes about the footwashing, it's always about humility, about being a servant, about washing the dirt that we pick up as we walk this way of life, the way of life that God gives us, all of which is very true.

But now there's another great big deal about this footwashing that takes off what I just said, about washing the dirt. Why do we wash one another's feet? Is it just to show humility? Is it just to show an attitude of service? Those are wonderful points, and very valid points, but there's so much more, brethren. Is it just to remind ourselves that we can be cleansed by God once a year? This point's getting much closer to a broader view of this cleansing.

Notice that God, in the person of Jesus Christ, is the one who actually washed their feet. No one washed His feet, because He had no dirt, no spiritual dirt.

And so God is still the one who washes us of our faults and our sins. God is the only one who can really do it. Your feet were symbolically washed by God, by Jesus, in what He did in John 13. Only God can truly wash us of our sins.

But then Jesus does something very interesting. He sits down, and then he says something that has very much to do I think with healing. Now John 13:1-15, let's read it.

John 13:1 *Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.*

So the context of the footwashing is the love of Jesus Christ. Not even in the context of the service of Jesus Christ, though He brings that up later on in about a dozen verses. So the context of the footwashing was His love for His bride, and He was to present her to Himself without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. So He gets up and washes His bride's feet. The disciples picture the bride. What an awesome picture this is, when you think about it.

John 13:2-8 *And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him; (3) Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; (4) He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. (5) After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. (6) Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? (7) Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. (8) Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.*

Notice that it's Jesus doing the washing.

John 13:9-10 *Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. (10) Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.*

Now we were bathed, brethren, at baptism. It says in **Acts 22:16** "Wash away your sins in baptism." So we were washed. But he who is bathed needs to wash only his feet, it says here.

John 13:11-15 *For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean. (12) So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? (13) Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. (14) If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. (15) For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.*

Now that's the part there that talks about being "I'm the Lord and Teacher, yet I've done something a servant does", but there's something else here too. **Read verse 14 again. "You need to wash one another's feet. Was Jesus really so concerned about dust on feet? Or was He concerned about something much bigger here?** Was that ever supposed to become just another ritual in the church? No, brethren! A thousand times no, brethren!

What did the dust on the feet picture? It pictures the dirt we pick up when we sin, like I said earlier, when we stumble, and all sin is against God ultimately. That's why Jesus had to be the one to actually do the washing. But then Jesus says that God is using us, mere humans who fail, to physically remove the dirt on our brother or sister's foot, and then present them clean. To God, to ourselves, and back to themselves, present them clean in our eyes, and in God's eyes.

God wants us to remember, He wants His body, the church members, the elect, to see one another without judgment, without condemnation, without separation, without superiority, without gossip, without putdowns, without finger pointing. He wants us forgiving one another, and accepting one another. Seeing one another as cleansed, for indeed we are.

Have I done all those horrible things of condemnation, lacking forgiveness? You bet I have. Have you? I'll bet you have. Do I need to quit doing all that? Do you? Yes, we do! We must, or we're going to bring more judgment on ourselves. Less healing. More illnesses. We must present to ourselves and

back to Himself our weak, human, sometimes offending brother as one whom God has now cleansed. Therefore, who am I to judge and reject you, I'm saying to this person as I wash his feet.

Now, the church gives lip service to this, but then they forbid certain people from attending with them, when God has forgiven, accepted, and washed that person. Remember what it says in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, that it says there that in the Kingdom of God there's not going to be adulterers and fornicators and idolaters and homosexuals. No, they're not going to be in the Kingdom. But then in verse 11 of 1 Corinthians 6 it says "Such were some of you". But you were washed, you were sanctified, and are now justified.

Then that same Paul says in the next book, 2 Corinthians 5:16...

2 Corinthians 5:16 Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.

He says don't look at someone's physical weaknesses and problems and judge them that way. Verse 17...

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

If we're in Christ, we're a new creation. He goes on talking about a spirit and a ministry of reconciliation that we have to have with each other, and for that matter, even with people in the world. 2 Corinthians 5, read all of 14-19. This is pictured by the footwashing. So in many other passages we're commanded to accept one another, to quit condemning one another, to quit the gossiping, backbiting, and rejecting.

At the Passover we're reminded that each of us, and that God in the person of His Son Jesus took each of us, and our sins, upon His body, and that substitution there, His sacrifice, atones for, pays for, my sins and yours. And God sees us now as cleansed, forgiven, and no bad record left on our account.

And then we're able to observe the Days of Unleavened Bread, for at that time Christ has delevained us. **We can't delevain ourselves. We can't have the Feast of Unleavened Bread without the Passover first. You can't take leaven out of leavened bread.** The bread has to be discarded, and we have to accept a new bread: Jesus, the living bread, the bread from heaven, which never has had any leaven in it. That can only be Christ, in me and in you, if we're going to remain unleavened.

I can't put the leaven out. Christ does it. We symbolically do that, physically, but that's done after the Passover because it's the Passover that does it. And when I get on the floor and kneel down in front of my brother or you kneel down in front of your sister and wash his or her feet, you are seeing the body of Christ in front of you.

Since that brother or sister is not Christ literally, that brother or sister has fallen on the way in the past year, and picked up some dirt. He or she has repented and Christ has washed their feet. And then he asks you and me to do it, to remember that we are to see one another, cleansed before God, and be willing to accept and love and wash one another.

And then guess what? Then I have to get in a chair myself and acknowledge that I, too, must have you wash my feet, because I too have fallen and failed and sinned. Maybe even against you. Though all sin is ultimately against God. I've fallen short of the glory of God, and I too need to see you, my brother, and you, my sister, forgiving me, washing me in your mind, presenting me to yourself and back to myself cleansed, forgiven, and renewed. And clean, squeaky clean.

By washing one another's feet we're remembering how each of us has been forgiven, and that we need to forgive, we need to wash one another in Christ. Brethren, how beautiful this is, if we have eyes to see. The footwashing is about forgiving one another, it's about washing one another. It's also about humility and service, yes. The footwashing's about accepting one another. Coming together, like the northern tribes of Israel did in Hezekiah's day. Humbling ourselves, coming together. Not staying separate. God was the one who separated the tribes in the first place, but God was pleased when those from up north came south. God healed them.

I have a message on forgiving the way God forgives, by the way, if you want to be forgiven. Make sure you hear that one. Because I think that's part of the message of footwashing, that we're forgiving, washing one another.

We're not seeing dramatic healings much today in the church because we're not discerning the Lord's body enough. Now we must also examine ourselves and take the Passover in a worthy manner, yes, you bet. That's preached a lot and that's going to be in another message I have. So we do have to do that.

I hope you learn the lesson of footwashing, that it's about washing each other's dirt, and forgiving each other and seeing each other as cleansed, and new, and holy before God.

The Passover also pictures our coming to the Lord's table, to eat and drink of Him and with him. We're supposed to be picturing doing that together, abandoning our involvement of the table of Satan's way. When we come together at the table of God, it's a picture of us coming together to now finally be one.

1 Corinthians 10:16-22. I read the first part about the cup of blessings and the communion with the blood, and the bread we break and the communion with the bread, we're all one bread, partaking of that one bread. That's what it says. And then in verse 21...

1 Corinthians 10:21 *Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.*

I think of the Passover table as the Lord's table. Now, we're partaking of the Lord's table.

Remember in Psalm 23:5-6, right after Psalm 22, which is a prophecy about the cross, and the death and sacrifice of Jesus Christ. In Psalm 23:5-6, which also speaks of us sitting at his table, it says, "You prepare before me a table, in the presence of my enemies", and it speaks of his cup, overflowing with goodness and mercy as we dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

God's house is his church. It's picturing us coming together at God's table and eating together and drinking together, and Jesus is looking forward to use doing that in the Kingdom of God. And as we take the Passover we need to look forward to being together.

I've said to people who won't accept one another from other flocks and other churches, "Do you think they can be in God's Kingdom?" and they had a reluctant "Well, yeah, I guess". So you're going to be in God's Kingdom together but you can't be together now? Shame on us, brethren!

Let's do come together, in our minds at least, and physically if we can, and more literally, accept, pray for, forgive, and love one another. Yes, there are some minor differences between us, minor belief differences. That doesn't have to keep us apart. That's always been there before. And as we hear the message I'm trying to say here today, we will have more healings.

Sure, there are some healings. But where someone can be raised from the dead, as Peter did with Dorcas, as Paul resurrected the young man who'd fallen from the loft? I mean, the kind where one can say to someone, "Silver and gold have I none, but what I have I giveth thee. In the name of Jesus Christ, rise up and walk!" Where a lame man would jump to his feet and walk? That kind of healing, that's what I'm talking about. Where the shadow of one of the ministers would heal someone?

Well, brethren, there's so much more here. Remember too, there's the other part of this, and part of the reason why there's illness is not esteeming the body enough. The body of Christ enough, literally. Not just now the church, but also what He Himself also has done. And it does say that when you examine yourselves, take the Passover. It doesn't say don't take it, it says take it. Because none of us will be able to take the Passover truly worthily, and that's why Christ's action for us is called "grace". Unmerited pardon.

Now, examining ourselves. What are you looking for? A clean slate? On your own merits? You'll never find it, on your own merits. Jesus is the one with the spot remover, He's the one who will present us faultless. Not because we made ourselves faultless, but because He cleansed us with His blood to wash away our sins. It's at the resurrection that our corruptible puts on incorruptible. At the resurrection we'll be able to never sin again, once we're fully born of God.

So in examining myself, I'm looking for a deep appreciation for the body and the blood of my King. I'm letting Him change me, letting Him come into my life, to abide in me as I in Him. We come to examine ourselves, and when we do it properly, I realize, "Boy, do I need this Passover. Boy, do I ever need it." And praise be to God for it and all of its meaning.

If we come to really see ourselves first, by the way, that we need the Passover, that we have been forgiven, we will have tremendous love for God, for Jesus Christ. He says, "Who do you think will love God more? The one forgiven a lot or the one forgiven a little?" **So if we realize how much we've been forgiven, we'll have a tremendous love for Jesus Christ. Jesus' body is each other, brethren!**

If we see ourselves as having been forgiven a lot, I sure know I've been forgiven a lot, a ton, and I see a lot of people unwilling to forgive. I'm sure glad God's willing to forgive me. The things that I have done in my past, I'm overcoming, have overcome many of them. I'm sure you have too. There's still some things to overcome, I'm sure you have some things too. But as we see how much God's forgiven each of us, we will then have this tremendous love for one another.

If we come to really see ourselves first, as verse 28 says, examining ourselves, we'll be far more gentle on the rest of the body around us. Which in turn softens God's heart even more towards us, just as the northern Israelite tribes did when they came down, when they humbled themselves and joined in with their neighbors to the south.

When we see how badly we need the Passover, we won't be so condemning, backbiting, and superior. We must become more gentle with each other and start to mingle more with each other, like those tribes did. Now, also remember that Jesus said to discern that it was His body, you proclaim the Lord's death.

I think, brethren, with all my being, that God in heaven, watching His Son be treated the way He was, then having to turn His back on Him as They'd planned millennia ago, I think God suffered immensely in all the sacrifice Jesus went through. Not just Jesus - yes, Jesus went through a horrible thing for all of us, and willingly so - but God the Father also. I'm sure during those hours of darkness in the land, I'm talking about this because we have to also appreciate what God and Jesus also went through for us. That's also esteeming the body.

I don't think it was business as usual up in heaven, when Jesus was on the stake. I personally see God watching every single painful moment, until He had to turn His back on His beloved, perfect Son. How painful that must have been. I personally picture that God may have emptied the palace, emptied the temple in heaven, told the four living creatures and the twenty four elders, "All of you get out of here."

GOD went through all that because of His LOVE for all the children of God.

This Passover, let's forgive. Let's accept. Let's come together. Let's walk like real children of God. And have a meaningful Passover, brethren. God be with you all.

Until next time, this is Philip Shields. If this website and message has blessed you, or made you think – then tell others about it. And may God's people come together. May the parts of the Body of Christ start to finally work together, forgiving one another, accepting one another, working together for the common goal. It's NOT happening yet, but if we learn the meaning of Passover – we will have to. God bless you – and spread the word.