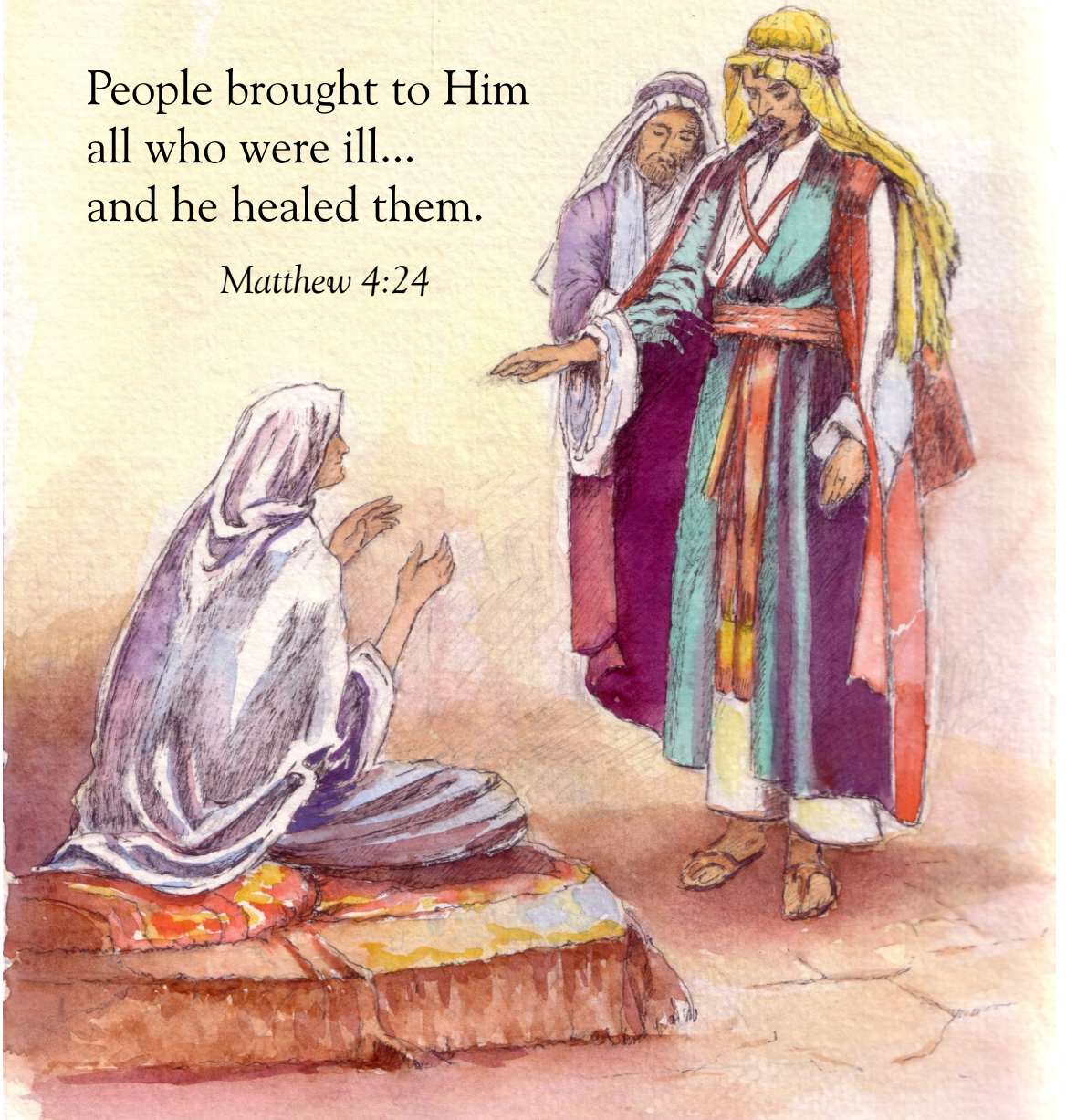


Inside Wyoming

The Newsletter of the Wyoming Ave. Baptist Church Vol. 19, No. 2, September 12, 2004

People brought to Him
all who were ill...
and he healed them.

Matthew 4:24

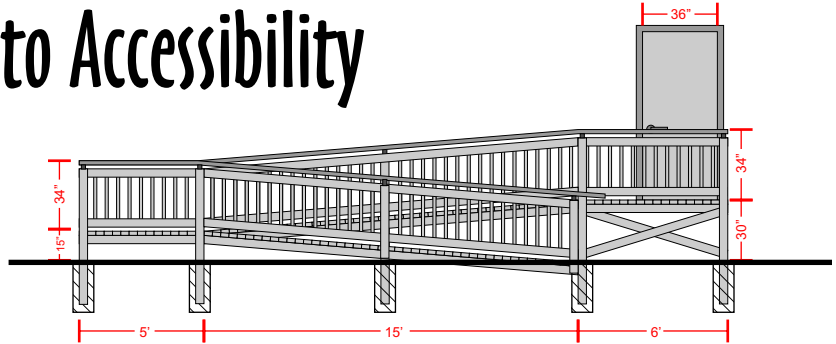


Ramping-Up to Accessibility

If there's anything particularly "bad" about Wyoming's building, it is the fact that there are steps everywhere – you can't get into the building without climbing at least 10 stairs. And for people in wheelchairs, this means that somebody has to carry them up the stairs, an often difficult (and dangerous!) proposition.

Well, we're working hard to change all that. We've come up with a plan for a handicapped access ramp that will bring people in on the main level of building. The ramp will run up the alley to the back yard of the annex, and then from there up and around and into the building at a new door.

The amazing part is that the ramp will be built at a cost that is affordable to the church



(about \$3,000), and most of this money has been given by families in memory of their loved ones. Lumber was donated, as was a steel door.

The one problem is that construction has been delayed – in fact, summer is pretty much over and we haven't even started the ramp. The plans are ready and the contractor is ready, but we haven't been able to get approval from the city's Zoning and Building departments. Pray that God would make a way for us to get approval to build the ramp, so that we can readily welcome all God's people, even those in wheelchairs.

Inside Wyoming

*The Newsletter of the
Wyoming Ave. Baptist Church
123 E. Wyoming Ave.,
Philadelphia, Pa. 19120
(215) 329-8295*

*Vol. 19, No. 2, September 12, 2004
Edited by Walt Rice, Jr.*

Questions?

Do you have questions about Jesus or about anything you've read here? Feel free to come to one of our services or to call the church, (215) 329-8295.

Our Sunday Services
*9:30 am ~ Sunday School
10:45am ~ Worship*

The Healing Power of Jesus

Divine or miraculous healing is a topic that has caused more confusion and argument in churches over the past 100 years than almost any other. We all agree that Jesus performed wonderful miracles of healing when he was here on earth 2000 years ago, but does he perform such miracles now? Why do some devout Christians suffer for many years with a disease or disability, while others seem to be unexplainably healed? As we ponder these questions, let's turn to the Bible to shed some light on the subject.

Miracles of Healing in the Bible

The Bible is full of examples of God's miraculous healing. From the opening of the barren womb of an Israelite woman (Hannah) to the amazing cure for a foreigner's leprosy (Naaman), God was active throughout the Old Testament, working miracles through prayer and his prophets and priests.

But the power of God was most evident in the person of Jesus Christ, whose ministry on this earth was marked by widespread miraculous healing. Jesus went from village to village preaching the word of God (his primary purpose), and at the same time working many miracles of healing. People

everywhere would bring the sick, the lame, the paralyzed, and the demon-possessed to Jesus, and he would heal them. Jesus' healing was immediate and complete.

Jesus entrusted this miraculous ministry of healing to chosen disciples (one scholar has counted a total of 86 men in the Bible given this power by Jesus), but this type of healing ministry seems to have mostly disappeared from the church, and is only mentioned in passing in Paul's letters to the early believers. What changed? Does Jesus still heal today?

To answer these questions, we have to consider some of the reasons for the healing ministry of Jesus.

Why Did Jesus Heal?

The simple answer is that Jesus healed the sick to bring glory to God, specifically by revealing to those around him that he was the Messiah, the Son of God. Jesus' miracles were not just miracles – they were *signs* pointing to the unique person and mission of Christ. In describing Jesus' first miracle – turning water into wine – the apostle John explained, “this beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested his glory; and his disciples believed in him” (John 2:11).

continued on page 6

Wyoming's Summer of Kids

You may have missed some of the action around the church, but let me tell you, Wyoming was a busy place this summer! Here's a quick run-down on what was going on...

Visiting Youth Groups – We were blessed to have a bunch of different churches send teams of youth and their leaders to help out around the church. The group you see to the right is one of the two groups that Central Wesleyan Church in Holland, Michigan, sent to Philly for a summer missions trip. Other groups were sent by the Chinese Church of



Maryland, First Baptist of Newtown, and the Grantham Brethren in Christ Church. The youth did physical work around the church – like painting the outside doors a bright red, helping to build two new offices on the second floor, and starting to refurbish the nursery. They also ran programs for neighborhood children in the afternoons.

Vacation Bible School – This year, in anticipation of the Olympics, we held a special “SonGames 2004,” where kids learned about the gospel of Jesus through the life of Paul, and about the spiritual race that we must run. To the left is a picture of some of the VBS kids having fun coloring





Kids played games, made crafts, and heard a Bible lesson. The picture above was taken during the camp run by teenagers from the Chinese Church of Maryland. The second group from Michigan also led a basketball camp at the rec.

Street Meetings – Pastor Lou, Pastor Daniel, the visiting groups, and some members of Wyoming were out on the streets of Feltonville proclaiming the good news of Jesus. Pastor Lou has all kinds of prizes for the kids, and uses his creativity to keep the attention of both kids and adults with his butcher-paper drawings.



A Final Note – Our neighbors have appreciated our efforts and have received us well so far – let's pray that the seeds planted as we reach out will fall on good soil, and will bear fruit for the kingdom of God.

athlete figures. We were glad to have a good number of volunteers from our church, as well as some helpers from First Baptist of Newtown. They helped make VBS week fun, safe, and spiritually edifying for the more than 60 kids that attended.

Summer Day-Camps – The visiting youth spent their afternoons running (with the able leadership of Joyce Crosscombe and their youth sponsors) day-camps for neighborhood kids at the Feltonville Recreation Center.

Healing, *cont'd from page 3*

Jesus also healed because he had compassion on the people. Matthew tells us that when Jesus “saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd” (Matthew 9:36).

But Jesus did not heal everyone. There were villages and whole continents that he did not visit. Can we say he did not have compassion on those peoples? Certainly not, but rather, in working out his sovereign plan of salvation, he chose to declare his glory among the people of Palestine.

Does Jesus Heal Today?

Most certainly he does! We have all heard testimonies from those who have been delivered from physical problems – from cancer to chronic headaches to addictions. God continues to heal in ways that baffle doctors and bring glory to himself. Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and his compassion and power are the same now as during his life on earth.

We must first recognize that God provides healing not only through miracles, but primarily through doctors and medicine and other means he has appointed for our good. All good wisdom is from God, and the wisdom that doctors use to heal the sick comes from God, the Great Physician and the creator of all of us. So we must not neglect the advice of medical professionals, particularly from those who are Christians

and are seeking to honor God in their practice of medicine. And we pray that God would bless their hands and their minds and give them insight to provide healing.

So what should we do when there is nothing the doctors can do? What if they have done everything they can and things now rest only in the hands of Jesus? We continue to pray for God’s healing in whatever way he chooses to provide it. He may chose to heal now, he may chose to heal later. But those who rely on him will find him true and faithful to provide grace to weather any difficulty. God may permit us to be ill for the purpose of building our character. He may teach us to rely on him far more than we might have done otherwise. This is the case with the apostle Paul, who asked God three times to be healed of a “thorn in his flesh.” God chose not to heal Paul’s affliction and told Paul, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness” (1 Corinthians 12:9).

What Should We Do?

Pray! God delights to give good gifts to his children, and many times that includes physical healing. But also know that if God does not heal now, he will in the end give us new bodies that will not experience sickness or pain. Until then he gives to us something more precious than physical health: the presence and comfort of his Holy Spirit, who gives us strength to endure all things.



On the Cover

The image on the cover is a pencil and watercolor drawing by George Parcell. George has been at Wyoming since he was 17, when his best friend told him about Shirley, a pretty girl at the church (and who is now his wife). A plumber by trade, now retired, one of George's favorite hobbies is painting. The picture on the cover reminds us of the many people that Jesus healed during his ministry here on earth.



Above are some of the people who meet at the church on Wednesdays to discuss and pray about the ministry here. If you interested and able to join us, please talk to Pastor Lou to see if this group would be right for you.

PRAYER CORNER

*“Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.
Your kingdom come.
Your will be done
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors.
And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.
For Yours is the kingdom and the power
and the glory forever. Amen.”*
(Matthew 6:9-13)

Two of Pastor Luis' recent sermons considered this "Lord's Prayer," and what it means to us today. Pastor Luis explained that it is not meant to be said as a ritual prayer, but rather serves as a model for all our praying. In teaching us this prayer, Jesus tells us the

things that we should be concerned about and should bring before the Father.

Here's a suggestion for you as you pray. Take each piece of the Lord's Prayer, such as "your kingdom come," and meditate on what that means. Pray through the things God brings to your heart. For "your kingdom come," we might pray that God's reign would be evident in our city, that his power would be revealed in the hearts of many unbelievers, that his kingdom would grow! Pray specifically for those whom you desire to come to Christ. Pray that in our own lives he would truly be Lord.

Do likewise for "give us our daily bread," "deliver us from evil," and the rest. In this way, we pray not in repetitive words, but in genuine supplication before the Father. Jesus' example for us wasn't about particular words – it was about the heart.

Youth Rally!

article by
Ariel Ianovale

Members of Faith in Action leading in some worship

At the Youth Rally this past Friday night (September 10th), I didn't know what to expect. I had so much fun! It was the first time I had ever seen Wyoming filled with such energy and youth, and all of it was to worship the Lord. There were about 200 teenagers at the rally! The church groups who presented all did a great job and sent out great messages. At the rally, there were people ready and excited to be there, singing, rapping, dancing, and performing their talents for God. It kind of reminded me of Word of Life Island, The Rock (the overnight week camp the youth group went to). There were a couple of speakers who had great messages. Ray Sydnor told his story, it was powerful. Ray is a former member of the Philadelphia Eagles but got

kicked off the team when he started doing crack cocaine. After 19 years of addiction and jail, God turned his life around. Ray's talk made



Ray Sydnor, the speaker for the youth rally



Wyoming's Youth Group performing a skit.

some people think about how they leave their faith and religion at church and don't take it with them outside of the church's walls. About 20+ teens went up front and accepted Jesus as their savior that night. I wish we could do these kind of rallies and things more often, and next time I'm making sure a friend comes with me!