

April 3, 2011 – Lent 4 – Receiving Healing (John 9)

Comments about the reading:

- It was common belief that afflictions were a direct result of sin – either on the parent’s part or the one sick.
- Notice again how some of the Pharisees criticized Jesus’ healing on a Sabbath, others said a sinner couldn’t do these works. They didn’t want to accept he was the Christ (on penalty of being thrown out of the church) and some didn’t even like calling him a prophet.
- The Pharisees sent him away because he “believed wrong”.
- Even diseases we are born with can be healed, much less those we get later in life.
- As with the woman at the well, Jesus revealed that He was the Christ.

God is not the source of sickness

In the Old Testament, short of the judgments in Numbers (which were actually very few and generally focused on those that lead others into sin/rebellion), sickness was not from God:

- There was no sickness in the garden before the Fall
- Job 1-2: It was Satan that struck Job, not God
- Keeping the covenant led to protection from sickness: Exodus 15:26
- Forgiveness and healing were seen together – Psalm 103:2-3, Isaiah 53:4-5

In the ministry of Jesus:

- Acts 10:38, 1 John 3:8
- Jesus PERFECTLY demonstrated the Father’s nature – John 14:9-11, John 10:30
- Jesus always did the Father’s will – John 5:19,30. Kingdom divided – Matt 12:25+
- Jesus taught that affliction was intended to take God’s word from us – Mark 4:14-20
- Jesus healed all that came to Him.
 - If it wasn’t God’s will to heal, then why isn’t there SOME example of Jesus sending someone away without their healing?
 - I am hard-pressed to find an example where Jesus healed someone that didn’t come to Him.
- Jesus’ ministry was defined by “preaching, teaching and healing” – Matt 4:23, 9:35
- Jesus sent his disciples, and later the 70, out to preach, teach, heal, raise the dead, etc. - Matt 10, Luke 10. Were these people always operating in God’s will? How did they know it?

Now:

- Jesus sent the disciples to heal the sick – Mark 16. Also, “all authority/go therefore” – Matt 28:18-20
- There is no sickness in heaven, and we are told to pray “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven”
- By his stripes we WERE healed 1 Peter 2:24, redeemed from the curse Gal 3:13
- Since we’re risen with Christ, we set our mind on things above – health, not sickness, for example – Col 3:1
- We are dead to sin, so we should be dead to its effects – Rom 6:13. The problem is the habits we developed still hang around us
- The same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead dwells inside us, giving life to our mortal bodies – Rom 8:11
- James 1 – God is not the source of temptation, and God would no more put sickness on someone (one aspect of the Fall) than that He would push someone into sin.

Why do we blame God – for either being the cause, or for choosing to leave it on us – healing in His good time if at all? Because we have a passive attitude about healing.

- Misunderstanding God’s sovereignty. Even the most devout Calvinist minister is not free from the call to do evangelism and to have a passion for the lost to hear the gospel. WE cannot

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assume that anyone is the exception. God's sovereignty does not allow for passivity in evangelism, so why should it in healing?

- We give lip service to the idea that "God is good". Bill Johnson: "It is a normal part of the belief system of churches today that God creates disease, tragedy, and crisis to bring about a righteous end." Two thousand years ago, all disease was from the devil and healing came from God. Today, many Christians believe that God sends disease to make us better people, and that those with aggressive views of healing are suspect at best. **YES**, God will use sickness – God can win with a pair of 2's, but He can teach us without sickness. The Holy Spirit and fivefold ministers are in the church to bring growth, training and maturity (John 14:26, Eph 4:11-15). You can get close to God without a disease pushing you into it, as well. **Learn fast**
- We view God as an angry Father, quick to pour out judgment on all that we do wrong. Again, judgment was infrequent in the OT. All of our judgment was poured out on Christ – was it sufficient?. IF by chance we are convinced we've gotten under a judgment from God, don't stay there – repent! Don't just "take it because we deserve it" – if we got what we deserve we'd already be burning in hell!
- We do reap what we sow – sin and bad habits both. But that's where forgiveness and grace come in and can reverse or cancel out our "bad harvest".
- If this was true, why do we go to doctors? Maybe we'd be thwarting God's will? God DOES use medication, surgery, therapy, etc.
- We think our problem is too big for God. You don't think so? Look at the percentage of time you spend thinking about God's healing you, vs the percentage of time you focus on your body being sick? Look at how many explicit scriptures about healing and examples of healing you can find, vs how you can recite in detail what all is wrong with you?
- We let our questions derail our faith in what IS clear to us.

War on passive acceptance of sickness!

- Pastoral ministry often focuses on comfort rather than calling to action. This is your call!
- We need to start from the place that as a believer in Jesus, His death, resurrection has given us redemption from the curse. We are the redeemed, not the exception.
- We can also start from the place that God's mercy is forever. But don't stay there!
- We need to raise our expectations and make room for God to heal.
- God uses medical treatment, but we can't assume that this is "all there is". These things will keep you going while you build and apply your faith.
- I cannot afford to be impressed by the works of the devil – in my life or in yours. If I am, then I am reduced to a powerless sympathizer.
- If we had a medical regimen to follow, we would follow it to the letter. What about if God gave us a regimen? Proverbs 4:20-23. Here is your healing regimen:
- First step is to learn these verses:
 - Exodus 15:26 – commandments = love God, love neighbor
 - Psalm 103:1-5
 - Isaiah 53:4-5, Matthew 8:16-17, I Peter 2:24
 - Romans 8:11
 - Galatians 3:13
- Second step - when we are attacked with sickness, spend a lot of time in the book of Mark 1-10. Read something from Mark EVERY DAY. Rom 10:17, Heb 11:6
- Third step – listen to this message again. Get it in your heart and head that it that God wants you well, not sick. He did not put it on you, it's not bigger than God, it's not to teach you a lesson, and by itself, it's not going to bring you closer.
- Fourth step - Fill your praise and thanksgiving basket – Lilian Yeomans
- Fifth step -Pray and/or get prayer as often as you need to – octopus story

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Closing prayer:

- Have all that are sick for any reason stand up.
- DO NOT SAY WHAT IT IS YOU HAVE – we don't want people to be more impressed with what you've got than who God is.
- Get congregation to stand around them and lay hands
- Lead in prayer for healing
- Remind them that as always, individual prayer is available after the service.

Remind of our Lenten prayer: Passion, Wonder, and who God is for us right now