

Sermon from Gospel of John

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WHEN GOD DOESN'T HEAL THE SICKNESS OF THE SAINTS (WHY DOESN'T GOD HEAL ALL SICK SAINTS?)

TEXT: Jno 11:1-15

INTRODUCTION

In these days of waning faith in the God of miracles and waxing confidence in the Pseudo-Curative Powers of so-called Medical Marvels, our faith is sometimes challenged when God fails to heal those we think he should.

We understand the world of the unsaved does not believe in the Power nor the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore, does not believe in the Only True God, so they seek help from some other source, some other "god". For them, scientific research is the 'god' that shall find cures for AIDS, cancer, heart disease, diabetes and leukemia. They are depending on so-called 'miracle drugs', exploratory or experimental surgery, or thru the new-found promise of 'human cloning' and stem-cell research for their healing.

But we, who are saved, have been delivered from the Kingdom of Darkness; delivered from the Bondage of the Systems of this world's order; have discovered the Cure for our Sin-Problem is also the Healer and Maintainer of our physical bodies. He is our Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption, but He is also our healer and our help. We hold on to the fact

that he said in Exodus 15:28 that He is Jehovah-Rophe – the Lord who heals you?

Looking back over his resume we have come to know that He Can Cure Cancer, AIDS and Lupus. We know He can regulate our blood pressure. He can heal the sick and even the raise the dead by the Word of His Power! So we are often confused and somewhat troubled when He chooses not to.

The text before us is tailored to teach us that being friends with Jesus is no guarantee against sickness and death. Sometimes we or our loved ones get sick, we call for Jesus. There are times when we pray for healing and healing comes, while at other times we pray for healing and we nor our loved ones are not healed. Why is this? Why does God not heal all sick saints? Is it because God no longer heals miraculously today? Is it because of sin in their life? Is it because of lack of faith on our part? This lesson is designed to help answer those critical questions.

THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING THROUGH SICKNESS

A. SICKNESS IS A RESULT OF THE ORIGINAL SIN

Had there been no sin there would be no sickness

PEOPLE SUFFER BECAUSE OF A FALLEN WORLD - Genesis 3:17-19. The world in which we live is not the world as God made it. When man chose to sin against God not only did man fall from his estate with God but the creation fell over which man had dominion. Since that time God has said "cursed is the ground for thy sake".

Paul would also remind us of that fact when he wrote in Romans 8:22 *“For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now”*. One day God will create a new heaven and a new earth without suffering – (Rev. 21 & 22)

PEOPLE SUFFER BECAUSE OF THE OPERATION OF GOD'S MORAL LAW. God has placed natural laws within the universe and if these laws are broken they will bring suffering. Forgiveness is available and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin - even the spiritual consequences of sin. However, forgiveness does not alter the human and physical consequences of sin - Gal. 6: 7, 8

Sickness is not always a result of personal sin - John 9:2. Sickness can be attributed to a variety of causes, Sin (personal sin) - I John 5:16, I Cor. 11:30. Sickness can be attributed to Self (unhealthy habits which break God's laws) ie. drinking, smoking overeating, worry, anxiety, etc.

Remember that sickness is sometimes attributed Satan, God's permissive will allows Satanic attacks on your body - Job 2:7, Acts 10:38, Luke 11:13.

However, when sickness occurs God does not always heal even when the sick is a faithful believer. An illustration from the Old Testament comes to mind first. In Second Kings chapter thirteen and verse thirteen we observed what happened to one of the greatest prophets of the Old Testament. Elisha fell sick with a sickness of which he died.

Now, why did Elisha get sick and die? Was he a sinner? Of course all men have sinned, but he was not a sinner in the sense in which he was not in fellowship with God as a result of some sin in his life. As you read this scripture you find out that Elisha was in perfect communion with God and even on his death bed made one of the most remarkable prophecies in all of the Bible. Yet, as a man of God, an imminent prophet, he got so sick that he died.

Paul, the man who wrote the books of First and Second Corinthians was a great spiritual giant and yet he was a man by his own admission sick and weakly 1 Cor. 12:9-12.

From those examples cited we can safely conclude that God miraculously heals the sick. Secondly, I believe there are many times it is God's will or plan

to use doctors and medicines to heal the sick. However, thirdly it not always God's will to heal. Sometimes he decides he can get more glory from allowing a believer to be sick.

Paul is such an example. He asked God three times to take away this stake, the Bible calls it in the King James Translation a thorn in the flesh. Actually, the Greek indicates it (stake), as a figure of speech to suggest it tormented him for a long time, fourteen years to be exact. It was just not something that had come up over night. If you read the context, he says fourteen years ago this thing came upon him. Three times he had asked God to take it away and thrice the answer had come no, I will not do it.

Why was Paul not healed? Was it because he was weak in the faith? No, he was strong in the faith. Was it because there was sin in his life? No, his heart was pure. Was it because he was out of the will of God? No, he was walking hand and hand with the Lord.

EXAMPLES OF OTHERS WHO WERE SICK

For example, there was Trophimus. In Second Timothy chapter four, verse twenty, Paul said concerning this dear brother Trophimus have I left at Miletes sick. Paul had power to heal, yet he didn't heal everybody. Trophimus was certainly one he didn't heal.

And then you remember what Paul told young Timothy in First Timothy chapter five, and verse twenty three. Paul told this splendid young preacher, drink no longer water alone, but mix your water with a little wine, for thy stomachs sake and thine often infirmity. What Paul was saying here was take fruit juice, put it in your water to cut down the alkaline content that is so prevalent in the water where you live because by doing so you can help your constant stomach sickness. Timothy was a man of God who loved the Lord with all of his heart and yet often Timothy was known as a sickly person.

THE PURPOSES OF SUFFERING THROUGH SICKNESS

A. POWER MAY COME THROUGH SUFFERING AND SICKNESS.

We go back to Second Corinthians chapter twelve for a moment to notice the wisdom and rationale God gave Paul concerning his sickness. *“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.”*

Based on Verse nine, Paul made an amazing discovery. Paul discovered that the weaker he became physically, the stronger he waxed spiritually.

“...that the power of Christ may rest upon me,” is an unusual phrase. The phrase may literally be translated, spread a tabernacle over me. He is saying that the power of God was spread over that weak, sickly body just like a tent. Paul shook the world for Jesus Christ in a little old sick, weak emaciated, hunched back, shriveled up body. He stood up and preached the gospel in a body that was contemptible to look at, but he says the presence and power of God was spread over him like a tent. The conclusion is, we may be sick so that God's power can be released through us.

Edenborough Castle in Scotland is a great fortress like building built high on a rocky hill. It has only been captured one time in history, how it was captured is intriguing. They put sentry all around the important places of the castle except one place. On one particular side there was a huge rock cliff, it was thought impossible that the fortress could ever be attacked from that side and so no sentry was placed on that side. It was from there that the enemy came and the castle was overtaken. It was at the strongest point that the castle fell because their the guard was let down. You see, the place of strength became the place of weakness.

God is pointing out to us in the experience of Paul that sometimes our place of strength is our place of weakness. Conversely our place of weakness may

be our greatest place of strength, when in weakness we are able to say “ When I can't, then He can: and I'm going to let him”.

God will use sickness to bring us to a place where we are so weak that we can't do anything, but trust and depend on him, so he can give you strength and you will give him the praise.

We say what can't be cured must be endured, Paul says what can't be cured can be enjoyed if you are seeking to glorify God.

B. PRODUCTIVITY OFTEN COMES THROUGH SUFFERING AND SICKNESS.

Vs 6

Paul is saying is that I have learned to trust the Lord and- , and when I trust the Lord great things happen, that makes me productive.

Sometimes sickness and sorrow causes us to be productive. Jesus said in John chapter fifteen and verse two that when he wants a branch to bear forth fruit he has to purge it.

Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it that it may bring forth fruit”. Purging and pruning is done to make vines more productive. A husbandman or gardener, takes his pruning knife to cut away deadness in order to bring forth new life. If the vine could talk it would say, “Ouch, that hurts, don't do that. Why, why, why are you making me suffer like this? The gardener if he could talk to the branch would say “It's not my purpose to make you hurt, I'm trying to make you productive”.

A man was walking through an apple orchard in the Shenandoah Valley when he saw a tree that was laden down with apples, so heavily fruited was it that the the caretaker had to prop up the limbs with a sticks lest they break. The man who was visiting the orchard asked the caretaker, why is this tree so productive? He said sir, you wouldn't believe it, but this tree at one time was

one of our least productive trees until we deliberately split it wide open. The caretaker took an axe and split that apple tree wide open. The man asked why? The caretaker said we have learned that when a tree has nothing but branches and leaves, nothing but beautiful foliage and lumber and no fruit that if it is hurt and wounded only purging can make it productive and bear fruit.

Every branch in me that bringeth forth fruit, he purges it, he prunes it that it may bring forth fruit. Purging and pruning is done to make us more productive. Sickness is sometimes the pruning process used to make us productive.

SOMETIMES WE MUST BE....

Broken in order to be blessed

Bruised in order to be used

Burned into order to be turned

Disappointed in order to be delivered to higher possibilities

Sometimes only pain can perfect us

Sometimes only struggles can strengthen us

Sometimes only burdens can better us

Sometimes only problems can prepare us

IF THERE IS NO....

No Cross, there will be no crown

No bleeding, there will be no blessing

No suffering, there will be no salvation

No Contest, there will be no conquest

No trouble, there will be no triumph

No death, there will be no deliverance

LET ME REASSURE YOU...He can take the viciousness that is unleashed

against you and make it a victory for you.

He can take your....

Sorrow and make you joy

hell and make you hope

trouble and make you triumph over it

enemies and make them your blessing

sickness and turn them into spiritual insight

PRODUCTIVITY OFTEN COMES THROUGH SUFFERING AND SICKNESS.

C. PURITY ALSO COMES THROUGH SUFFERING AND THROUGH SICKNESS.

First Corinthians chapter eleven and verse thirty is usually only discussed in connection to the Lord's supper, however Paul speaks of a sickness as a judgment from God. He says there is a way that we can escape that judgment and that is to judge ourselves before God has to judge us.

He is suggesting that there are times when we are made sick as a form of chastisement. We are chastised that we might be purified.

First Peter chapter five verse ten supports that insight.

Job wrote from the same perspective. Job 23:10

I think I hear the Psalmist say Psa. 119:67

The struggles in life is what makes you strong, reliable, dependable and trust worthy. Those who have never had struggles, never faced difficulties, have no strength and probably don't know how to pray, because they haven't had anything to pray for, wait for or trust God for.

There are certain problems God will not solve, so you will trust Him.

Certain mountains he will not move, so you will trust Him.

Certain barriers he will not break, so you will trust Him.
Certain sicknesses he will not heal, so you will trust Him.
Certain doors he will not open, so you will trust Him.
Certain enemies he will not remove, so you will trust Him.
Certain deaths he will not prevent, so you will trust Him.
Certain questions he will not answer, so you will trust Him.
It is in the midst of adversity that...

Your pride is broken
Your faith is renewed
Your hope is established
Your mind is enriched
Your love is deepened

Purpose may come through sickness. We are here by God's appointment. We are here in His keeping. We are here under His training. We are here for His time.

THE PRESCRIPTION FOR SUFFERING THROUGH SICKNESS

A. LISTEN FOR THE TRUTH OF GOD

When we are facing suffering through sickness there are certain lies we tell ourselves or perhaps we are told by others that simply are not true. Notice a couple of ways this deception express itself.

• “THIS COULD NEVER HAPPEN TO ME.”

How many times have you heard someone who had just experienced a tragedy say, “How could this happen? This kind of thing doesn’t happen to people like me.” The sad truth is tragedy, suffering and prolonged sickness

happens to everyone. We try to fool ourselves into thinking we are immune, but no one has the right to make that claim. The more privileged we think we are, the more difficult it is to deal with the hurts we experience in life. False security is a tricky thing, David was tripped up by it. Listen to his comments in Psalm 30:6. *“When I felt secure, I said, I will never be shaken.”* He had wealth and power, and they had gone to his head. But he was soon to discover that his own self-reliance wasn’t enough to face tragedy in his life. Hear his cry again in Psalm 30:7 *“O Lord, when you favored me, you made my mountain stand firm; but when you hid your face, I was dismayed.”*

No matter how secure you may feel, don’t believe the lie that says “Suffering, sorrow and sickness can never overtake me and even if I must face grief, I will be fine because I am a Christian!” Don’t deceive yourself. No one is exempt from the pain that suffering brings to your heart•

"THIS WILL NEVER PASS, IT WILL HAUNT ME FOREVER." Whether the grief, sorrow, sickness or sadness in your life is caused by circumstances you can’t control, or by our own sin or by the actions of others, we often tend to see ourselves as “marked.”

If you’re grieving or suffering through sickness right now I want you to know that you will suffer forever. That is God’s promise. Psalm 30:5 *“For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.”*

Weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning. The hurt you are feeling will not last forever. It may hurt now, but God promises that you will experience again a time of rejoicing.

B. LEARN HOW TO TRANSFER TO GOD

What is the transfer? It is what can be called the turning point. It is turning away from self-reliance and turning to God as your source of strength. The turning point is transferring your faith and trust from yourself in dealing with your suffering and sickness to the Lord

God does not want you to try to handle your pain on your own; He wants you to turn to Him. God is offering His hand of mercy. He is offering relief from the pain and grief in your life. He is offering to help you with the pain and fill your life joy. But before He can do anything, you must reach a turning point in your life, a point where you turn away from self-reliance and learn to transfer your trust to Him. It's as simple as saying, "Lord, I can't handle this on my own. I need your help."

David did it in Psalm 30:10 "Hear, O Lord, and be merciful to me; O Lord, be my help." Mary and Martha did it when they sent for Jesus.'

C. LOOK FOR THE TOUCH OF GOD

If in the pain of your suffering you feel you have reached rock bottom in your life, The Lord can turn your life around with His touch. He will hear your prayer and His gentle touch will begin the process of healing in your life and for your body. When you take your pain to God and transfer your trust to Him, He begins to turn your mourning into joy by the loving leadership of His gentle touch. Right now you may still be in the "wailing" stage of your grief, but once you turn your situation over to God, you may as well put on your dancing shoes, because he has promised to give you something to dance about. God will take the pain and anger and frustration you're going through now, and replace it with his joy. He will give you something to dance about.

D. LEAN ON HIM IN PRAYER.

Your first responsibility in order to get healing in sickness is to pray. James says that when we experience affliction, we are supposed to pray James 5:13.. He tells us this in the form of a couple of commands. He says, "*If any one of you is experiencing affliction—you must pray.*" And then he adds to it. He says, "*If any one of you is cheerful—you must praise God.*" The word that's translated merry in this text is the exact same word that's used in Acts 27:22, 25. There, the King James translates it, "be of good cheer." Do you remember what was happening in Acts 27? Paul was a prisoner on board ship on his way to Rome. But it wasn't just a typical boat

ride. They were in the midst of a terrible storm. Probably very close to a hurricane-type storm. Everyone on board thought they were going to die, except Paul. And Paul the prisoner told the crew to “be of good cheer” because they weren’t going to die. They were going to have to endure a shipwreck, everything they owned would be lost. But while they were trying to figure it out, God had already worked it out. So, Praise God for it.

We should pray, but the question is how should you pray when you are experiencing affliction? Pray like Jesus did. We are all very familiar with Jesus’ prayer in the Garden before He was betrayed and led off to be crucified. We’re all familiar with the fact that Jesus prayed for the cup of suffering to pass from Him. We know that He prayed that, in spite of His desire for that, He prayed that the Father’s will be done. But do you know what else Jesus prayed? Before He entered the garden where Judas betrayed Him, Jesus prayed. It’s recorded in John 17. In that prayer, Jesus gives us an example of how to pray when we are afflicted.

Notice something about that prayer of Jesus. Yes, it was a prayer that He prayed in a time of terrible affliction. He understood what was in store for Him. The worst affliction that you or I will ever have to endure is just a small part of what our Savior had to endure on the cross of Calvary. But as He looked to that, He had one primary thing on His mind was the glory of God. Other than one line of “take this cup of suffering from me—but not my will, but thine be done.” -His focus was never on His affliction. It was always on bringing honor and glory to the Father THROUGH His affliction. If we could learn to pray like that when we experience affliction our prayer would sound something like this: “God, I am in pain. I ask that you take that pain from me. But if not, I ask that your name be glorified in this pain that I’m going through. May your name be glorified in the lives of those closest to me. May your name be glorified in the life of this church. Even if you won’t take the pain away, may your name be glorified in the world because of my affliction.”

That is how Jesus prayed and when we learn to pray that way we will see affliction differently and consequently react to it differently. The first individual responsibility is to pray.

If your first responsibility is to pray, then your second responsibility is to call. Look at James 5:14

I must admit, this is a difficult passage. But it's not difficult because of what it says or what it means. It's difficult because of the way it's been mishandled and taken out of context so much. The way this verse has been abused is all the more reason we need to be diligent in our study of the Bible.

Verse 14 starts the same way as verse 13 did. Verse 13 If any one of you is experiencing affliction—you must pray.” Now verse 14 says “If any one of you is sick—you must call.”

The word that is translated sick here is used 32 times in the New Testament. Eighteen (18) times it is used to describe physical sickness. Fourteen (14) times it is used to describe emotional or spiritual weakness. At its core, it means deep, intense, personal affliction—whether physical or spiritual or emotional. When you experience that kind of affliction in your life, first pray. Then call out to others to pray over you. But not just any others. While everyone in the church is to pray for those who are experiencing affliction, we are told specifically call on the elders- the mature Christian Leaders of the congregation.

When you experience deep, intense, personal affliction, where are you supposed to go? To a counselor? To a psychologist? To a telephone hotline? No, James says you are to call on the elders of the church. In the event your congregation does not have men holding the spiritual office of elder, find a good, godly, spiritually mature man in the church. They are to come, *"to pray over the person and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord."*

The specific Greek term used in James 5:14 for "anointing" does not convey the thought that we usually ascribe to it—namely a religious ceremony in

which oil is applied to the head. Here it literally means "to apply or to rub something into the skin."

This Greek term was used in those days to describe plastering walls-smearing something onto something else-and here it refers to smearing-rubbing-oil on a wound.

In Biblical times, oil was used on the sick-for its medicinal affects. We find an example in Luke 10:34 when the Samaritan poured oil and wine onto the wounds of the man victimized by robbers and left for dead. So James is not talking about ceremonial anointing here. Instead he is calling for the use of the best medical procedure of the day, simply rubbing or massaging oil into the body-along with prayer.

James says when we are sick we should use all known medical means to heal the individual and at the same time pray. In other words, medicine and prayer are not enemies, they work together.

The prayer and the medicine must be carried out " in the name of the Lord". This Greek phrase is synonymous with the WILL of the Lord. In other words, our prayers for the sick are to be taken while saying, "Lord, I invoke Your will-Your name-in this situation."

The person sick unto death needs the hope that he can get well. He needs a miracle in his life and he calls for the mature in faith to help him pray for a miracle. We pray asking for a miracle, believing God for a miracle until God reveals he won't give one.

THE PRAYER OF FAITH SHALL RAISE HIM UP!

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