

## ***The One You Love is Sick***

*September 13, 2012*

Why do we suffer sickness, injury and loss of life? Because of man's choice to sin—first in the Garden of Eden—God subjected His whole creation to hardship, suffering, guilt, loss, and pain. But His plan of redemption brings hope—the hope of healing from sin and disease. What will bring **health**? Verses right after Proverbs 3:5-6 in 7-8 tell us: *“Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil. This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones.”*

We find “...*the one you love is sick*” in John 11:3 when Mary and Martha sent word to Jesus that their brother Lazarus was sick beginning in verse 1: *“Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha...3So the sisters sent word to Jesus, ‘Lord, the one you love is sick’...5Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. 6Yet when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days.”*

“Nothing is more touching than to know that God hurries to help us,” said Francois Fenelon. But we know that Jesus tarried—stayed where He was two more days—He did not hurry to their aid as soon as He was summoned, or did He? *“When he heard this (that the one he loved was sick), Jesus said, ‘This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it.’”*

Lazarus would need a miracle. “We all love miracles,” said David Lyons, “but few of us want to live in the place where we need a miracle to succeed or survive.” Jesus already had a ‘grander’ plan: He would bring glory to God and raise Lazarus from the dead! Too little, too late can never be ascribed to God: His abundant compassion and care, mercy and miracle are always at hand—*His*.

Who is the ‘one’ that Jesus loves? When Lazarus’ sisters sent word to Jesus that *“the one you love is sick”* they would have been speaking of us today as well. Scripture is replete with God’s assurance that he loves us, and if we are sick...He is at work; He is on the case! Every miracle is preceded by a problem—usually a big one—too big for us. In seeking the miracle, whether healing—spiritual or physical—restoration, rescue or renewal, we must seek the Healer; the Miracle Worker first and foremost. Ken Gire in his book, *Fight to Heaven*, said, “I should have been seeking the Healer before the healing. I wanted a miracle more than I wanted the Miracle Worker.”

**James 5:14-15**—*“Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. 15And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven.”* Beth Moore, “Either Jesus no longer does what the Bible says He did, or we don’t give Him the chance.” God does 6 things for the needing-a-healing:

• **I. God has compassion on those who need a miracle!** •Matthew 9:35-36—*“Jesus went through all the towns and villages, **teaching** in their synagogues, **preaching** the good news of the kingdom and **healing every disease and sickness**. **When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.**”* When Jesus—the Great Shepherd—saw this disorganized, distressed and diseased mass of matted mutton, he had *compassion* on them! Webster defines compassion as sympathetic feeling : PITY, MERCY. When our Lord and Savior sees our sickness and suffering, He has sympathy.

• **II. Jesus often walked passed many sick and infirm to heal one person!** •John 5:2-6—*“Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. <sup>3</sup>Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. <sup>5</sup>**One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years.** <sup>6</sup>When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, **‘Do you want to get well?’**”* **Invalid**—chronic ill health—for thirty-eight years; lying at waters’ edge to be healed, the man is asked by Jesus if he wanted to get well. Again, Jesus never asks a question that He doesn’t already know the answer to, but He wants this man to articulate his need, and he does in verse 7:

1. *There is no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred.*
2. *While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me.*

And this day was the Sabbath, and the Jewish leaders had issues with that. There’s no dilemma for Jesus, though, as He tells the man to *“pick up your mat and walk.”* Verse 9 says, *“**At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked.**”* Jesus sought out someone to ‘heal’ who would take Him at His Word!

This man was singled out for healing when there were, according to Scripture, *“a great number of disabled people”* lying there, because the *Author* of life walks amid the sick! The *Savior* of souls slips among sinners! And He will do the right thing, at the right time, in the right way, because He is *Righteous*—His rulings are always right! Later Jesus found the man at the temple and said to him, *“See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you.”*

Jesus incorporated an interesting evangelism technique. We should always check our sin at the door of sickness—into His forgiving hands! We must allow the situation to bring us to repentance if we’re a believer, salvation if we’re lost, and give God credit and glory for healing. Verse 15 concludes: *“The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.”*

• **III. God will use our illnesses and infirmities as a witness so the lost will come to saving faith!** •Luke 6:6-8 *“On another Sabbath he (Jesus) went into the synagogue and was teaching, and a man was there whose right hand was shriveled. <sup>7</sup>The Pharisees and the teachers of the law were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they*

watched him closely to see if he would heal on the Sabbath. <sup>8</sup>But Jesus knew what they were thinking and said to the man with the shriveled hand, **‘Get up and stand in front of everyone.’** So he got up and stood there.” God has known the owner of the shriveled hand from birth and before. The hand is not even recognizable because it’s all bent and deformed and stunted—it may have been hidden—but it is there on this man for this hour as Exhibit A as “he got up and stood there” before the class.

And there were the legalists, the accusers—ones who would keep even God in line. Those who would tell the Almighty what He can and cannot do; when, how and why. This Lord’s Day they conspired to see if He would violate the Sabbath. Knowing their disapproval, Jesus asked them which was lawful to do on that sacred day: “to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it?” They didn’t have an answer, but they were furious as they discussed further damage to Him. Though eyeing Jesus closely, they clearly missed the teaching moment!

And the man—with the shriveled hand—what happened to him? Jesus... “looked around at them all, and then said to the man, ‘Stretch out your hand!’ He did so, and his hand was completely restored.” The man can’t stretch it out because it’s shriveled, but as he **started to do it**, God took over and stretched it out—restoring it. God always does the lion-share of any healing! Are we willing to let God use our shriveled cells as *Exhibits* of His gracious goodness and His glorious greatness?

• **IV. When God’s word is preached, and people are saved, healings take place!** • Acts 5:12-16—“The apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers used to meet together in Solomon’s Colonnade. <sup>13</sup>No one else dared join them, even though they were highly regarded by the people. <sup>14</sup>Nevertheless, **more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number.** <sup>15</sup>**As a result,** people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter’s shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by. <sup>16</sup>Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those tormented by evil spirits, and **all of them were healed.**”

As a result of people being saved, healings took place! The healings were the overflow of the generous goodness of God. Scripture says that “all the believers” were meeting together—doing ‘church’—in Solomon’s Colonnade, and people were reluctant to join them, “no one else dared join them”, even though the believers were highly regarded. Here comes the best part: “Nevertheless, **more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number.**” When we keep on meeting, and preaching, and sharing the gospel, people will respond and repent and be reconciled to God! And “as a result” of people being saved, people brought their sick and laid them out in Peter’s way, so that as he passed by, at least his shadow might fall on some of them. Do we see the overflow, as they placed the sick in the shadow of *Jehovah Rophi*’s sent one?

Verse 16 ends with this simple sum of words: *“all of them were healed.”* Let’s keep ourselves in **God’s will**—meeting, hearing God’s word, loving the brethren—and let’s get our lost friends and family in **His Word**, so they can be saved. And then let’s place the sick and injured and broken in **His way**. Let’s **get people as close to God, today, as we want them to be for eternity, so that they will receive ‘everything’ He has to freely give!**

• **V. God responds to our ‘ask’ and our ‘faith’ in a big way!** • Luke 17:12-16, 19 *“As he (Jesus) was going into a village, **ten men who had leprosy met him.** They stood at a distance and called out in a loud voice, ‘**Jesus, Master, have pity on us!**’”* 14 *“When he saw them, he said, ‘Go, show yourselves to the priests.’ **And as they went, they were cleansed.**”* Ten now happy men were healed of their dread disease. They had had what they thought was their greatest need met. Yet they had a greater-by-far need, because the greatest need that anyone has at anytime—anywhere—is to know the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord!

One of the ten returned to give thanks: 15 *“One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. **16He threw himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan.**”* Jesus questioned him briefly and then said to him in verse 19: *“Rise and go; **your faith has made you well.**”* The NIV Study Bible Commentary says the statement *“your faith has made you well”* may be rendered ‘your faith has saved you’ (ref: Matthew 9:22). The fact that the Samaritan returned to thank Jesus very likely indicates that he received salvation in addition to the physical healing all ten had received. He recognized the gift he’d been given, but, more importantly, he recognized the *Giver* of that gift?

• The faith touch in Mark 5:24b-29—*“A large crowd followed and pressed around him. **25And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. 26She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse.** 27When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, 28because she thought, ‘**If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.**’ 29Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.”*

**We have a ‘touching’ scene**—a woman touches the *Healer*—**she has issues:** she has been bleeding for twelve years, she has seen and *“suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors,”* and *“she’d spent all she had...yet she grew worse”* She was just as diseased and helpless as the men with leprosy—dying by inches. Jesus knew all about her issues, her dozen-year suffering and her bag-lady life. As Jesus walked that crowd—full of compassion: pity, mercy and sympathy—He anticipated her faith-touch. It would make His moment—not to mention hers! And one touch would do it as her bleeding stopped immediately, *“and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.”*

We know that Jesus felt power go out from Him; that He turned and asked, “*Who touched me?*”, and that the disciples chided Him for it. Did Jesus know who had touched Him? Absolutely! So why did He ask? Because He wanted her to confess, so that He could meet her spiritual need, too! And when she confessed herself the touching-one, Jesus said to her in verse 34 “*Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.*” Sick or well: be ‘ye’ saved!

It was as Jesus was on his way to heal Jairus’ 12-year-old daughter, that He was touched by the woman with the 12-year issue of blood (Mark 5:24b-29). She’d suffered for as long as Jairus’ daughter had lived. There are no boundaries to Jesus healing ministry: **He was on the way to heal one, and another was healed on His way!** Luke 8:41-42—“*Then a man named Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, came and fell at Jesus’ feet, pleading with him to come to his house <sup>42</sup>because his only daughter, a girl of about **twelve**, was dying. As Jesus was on his way, the crowds almost crushed him.*” In verse 48 Jesus was speaking parting words to the woman who’d had the issue of blood stopped, when <sup>49</sup> picked up: “While Jesus was still speaking, someone came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue ruler. ‘Your daughter is dead,’ he said. ‘Don’t bother the teacher any more.’

<sup>50</sup>“Hearing this, Jesus said to Jairus, ‘Don’t be afraid; **just believe, and she will be healed.**’” Jesus went to Jairus’ home and He healed the little girl! Let these two phrases punctuate this whole lesson: •*As Jesus was on his way* (v 42)

•*While Jesus was still speaking* (v 49)

We want to be in the path of Jesus as He’s *on His way*. **We want to be in His way**—where He is already ministering—to receive the spiritual and physical healing He knows we need. And we want to be where He is *still speaking*—**in His word**—careful to trust Christ Jesus, and not to doubt His way or His word!

• **VI. God is willing to heal, and God can heal in a split second, but be sure there are good reasons why God would tarry, or not heal this side of glory!**

•Mark 1:40-42—“*A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, ‘If you are willing, you can make me clean.’ <sup>41</sup>Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. ‘I am willing,’ he said ‘Be clean!’ <sup>42</sup>Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured.*” Jesus reached out His pure hand, and touched this leprous man, yes, and touched the disease, and commanded: “*Be clean!*” The disease obeyed Jesus’ command!

If we still have our ‘leprosy’, we can be absolutely sure that God is full of compassion for us. And he knows our disease personally, and it knows His voice! And if He is willing, He can touch us and command our disease to “be clean”! Know that if He does not heal us on this earth, that there is purpose because He can make **His grace sufficient** for us: for **His glory**, for **empathy with others**, for **our spiritual growth**, and for **His impeccable timing!**