

Women & More

Just Like Our God

Lesson 15: **February 19, 2015**—*healing*

When we or our family members are faced with pain and suffering; sickness and sorrow, we have entered *crisis*:

a threatening surprise attack of trouble;

a turning point demanding decisions, and

a catastrophe requiring critical care! And the believer can go immediately to the Divine Office of Crisis Management for refuge, strength and help. Psalm 46:1 “*God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.*”

More often than not, God’s word will reveal the cause of our *crisis*. Are we surprised? It is *just like our God* to shed light, to reveal, to guide, and help us understand what is going on. Will He say “this is why you have cancer or diabetes or this happened or not”? No. But staying-in-the-Word-daily will bring understanding beyond what we could ever realize on our own. Because we do not want to waste the sickness, sorrow or suffering, we must stay in constant contact with the mind of God revealed in His Word.

God often uses the crisis of disease or disaster to deliver His people to glory—not everyone goes up in a chariot of fire! In 2 Kings 13:14 Scripture says, “*Now Elisha was suffering from the illness from which he died.*” Was Elisha God’s man doing God’s will? Yes. He had miraculously received his calling when he saw his predecessor Elijah being taken up to heaven whose ‘mantle’ fell on him. And this is noteworthy: God is not done using us even when we are suffering an illness from which we will die. Now, of course, we won’t know that we’re dying from it and we don’t know if Elisha knew he was dying. But what we do know is that Elisha was still acting as the prophet God had called him to be.

The rest of verse 14 says “*Jehoash king of Israel went down to see him and wept over him. ‘My father! My father!’ he cried. ‘The chariots and horsemen of Israel.’*” Interestingly, the king said the same words that Elisha had uttered when Elijah was taken up (2 Kings 2:12). Jehoash was not a god-fearing or ‘faithing’ king, but because he had come to commiserate with and pay his respects to the ailing prophet, God was going to attempt to increase his slim faith and give him victory over Aram through Elisha. In the middle of dying, Elisha instructed Jehoash to shoot an arrow—even placing his own hands on the king’s hands—calling it the ‘LORD’s arrow of victory’.

And after Elisha’s death, God was still using his influence—first in a most miraculous way: 2 Kings 13:20-21 says, “*Elisha died and was buried.*”

“Now Moabite raiders used to enter the country every spring. ²¹Once while some Israelites were burying a man, suddenly they saw a band of raiders; so **they threw the man’s body into Elisha’s tomb. When the body touched Elisha’s bones, the man came to life and stood up on his feet.**” God was still using His man; and He continues to use His witness today through Scripture. The influences we are building up by remaining steadfast and faithful during illness and injury and injustice will be used by our God for His glory long after we’re gone—just look at the influence of Pastor Adrian Rogers who is with the Lord in glory due to illness but his sermons are still being broadcast here on earth!

King Hezekiah reigned in Jerusalem (Judah) for 29 years beginning at age 25. 2 Kings 18:3-6 says “He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father David had done.

- **4He removed the high places,**
- **smashed the sacred stones and**
- **cut down the Asherah poles.**

—**He broke into pieces the bronze snake Moses had made, for up to that time the Israelites had been burning incense to it. (It was called Nehushtan.)**

⁵“Hezekiah trusted in the LORD, the God of Israel. There was no one like him among all the kings of Judah, either before him or after him. ⁶He held fast to the LORD and did not cease to follow him; he kept the commands the LORD had given Moses.” Several of Judah’s kings were said to have done what was right in the eyes of the LORD, but none had cleaned house like Hezekiah. God was well-pleased with him!

•Notice verse 4b says Hezekiah broke into pieces the bronze snake Moses had made because the Israelites had been worshipping it. Our medic symbol today is that image of the snake on a pole—right out of Scripture. And unfortunately we have come to hold ‘medicine’ and the practice of it, whether physical or emotional or mental, in seeming higher esteem than our great God. It is time we put God in charge of our health and welfare: He may choose to use a ‘practitioner’ and a ‘medicine’ or not.

This godly king became sick unto death. Here’s how Scripture tells it in 2 Kings 20:1 “In those days Hezekiah became ill and was at the point of death. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz went to him and said, ‘This is what the LORD says: **Put your house in order, because you are going to die; you will not recover.**’” This was God’s number-of-days for this king. And we know that Hezekiah prayed pleadingly to the LORD God that he might live, and notice what he, weeping bitterly, claimed in his prayer in verse 3: “Remember, O LORD, how **I have walked before you faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in your eyes.**” Fifteen years was added to his life by the Almighty Hearer, but the very things he’d claimed in his plead—faithfulness, wholehearted devotion and doing good in God’s eyes—were lost in those years! That’s why we are to pray for His will and not ours.

It is interesting to note that **God used His prophet** Isaiah's instruction to Hezekiah's aids **and medicine**—2 Kings 20:7—to 'prepare a poultice of figs' and when they applied it to the boil, Scripture says he recovered. We spend a lot of time desperately praying for the sick to be healed, but we absolutely must focus on the person's spiritual healing first and foremost, and **pray for God's perfect will** over His permissive will. God allows and sometimes even afflicts individuals with sickness and suffering to produce spiritual health! King Hezekiah lost his spiritual health during those added years: Wouldn't he have been better off spiritually to die at the appointed time? Proverbs 20:9 *"Who can say, 'I have kept my heart pure; I am clean and without sin'?"*

God has **a ministry** in our crisis; He has **a message** to convey through it, and **a mission** to advance—and He will do all this in us, through us and to us! In 2 Corinthians 12 we learn about a crisis that the Apostle Paul had—and he had many. ♦God's **ministry** was to keep Paul from becoming conceited (v 7) Right after receiving great revelations, he was given his thorn in the flesh which he kept to himself for 14 years (v 2), and then pleaded with God 3 times to take away (v 8). God ministered this truth: *"This came to keep me from being conceited."*

♦God's **message** to Paul and to us is *"My grace is sufficient for you"* (v 9). And ♦God's **mission** was that all of us learn that *"His power is made perfect in weakness"* (v 10). Paul came to understand why he was given this crisis and then he learned how to live above it so much so that in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 he could 1) boast of his weaknesses, 2) be content, and then make the great claim: 3) when I'm weak then I am strong. His weakness had become a platform for God's glory!

Weakness has become my 'middle name', and many others would testify the same. If we believe God's word on it—2 Corinthians 12:10—then we know that 'God's power is made perfect in weakness'! So God has a plan to afflict us with weakness and then use that very weakness to show His perfect power to a lost and dying world. Job 5:18 *"For he wounds, but he also binds up; he injures, but his hands also heal."* We must fully cooperate with our God.

Does God's word speak about doctors and physicians? Doctor is not in Scripture, but physician or physicians are mentioned some half-a-dozen times and none of the references are particularly good: Used twice in **Genesis** 50:2 Joseph was embalmed by physicians in Egypt (morticians)—Jacob had been also—in **Jeremiah** 8:22 God questions; **2 Chronicles** 16:12-13 Asa afflicted with gout; **Job** 13:2-4 Job called his friends worthless physicians; **Luke** 4:23 Jesus quoted Old Testament, and **Luke** 8 when the woman with the issue of blood spent all she had on physicians with no results. (Leviticus 15:25 describes what that issue of blood was like and what it would have meant for her.)

Charles Spurgeon said, "...she was a stranger to the generosity of Jesus' character, or she would not have gone behind to steal the cure which He was so ready to bestow. ...But here is the marvel of it: little as was her knowledge, her faith, because it was real faith, saved her, and saved her at once."

We know that the Lord is recognized by His followers as the Great Physician. While that phrase is not in Scripture His healing power is all over it! Salem Kirban said, "A physician who knows not The Great Physician...is missing 95% of his medicine." Jeremiah 46:11 *"Go up to Gilead and get balm. O Virgin Daughter of Egypt. But you multiply remedies in vain; there is no healing for you."* So often we have replaced the 'healing' work of God's Word and His Holy Spirit with human practitioners and practices. And that practice is idolatry!

In *Jesus Calling*, Sarah Young said, "I am a God who heals. I heal broken bodies, broken minds, broken hearts, broken lives, and broken relationships. My very Presence has immense healing powers. You cannot live close to Me without experiencing some degree of healing. However, it is also true that you have not because you ask not. You receive the healing that flows naturally from My Presence, whether you seek it or not. But there is more—much more—available to those who ask."

In Scripture there is a clear connection between sin and sickness! All human afflictions are a product of universal sin and Satan. God is a healer by name and a healer by nature—Jehovah Rophi! There are constant reminders of our sin; of going our own way; of failing to heed God's way; of being unloving to God and others; of placing other people and things before God, and of **carrying out God's will in the wrong way**. And 1 Corinthians 11:30 warns: ***"That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep."***

This passage gives an example of why many among us may be **weak, sick** or even **dying** when we've taken the Lord's Supper unworthily! 1 Corinthians 11:26 explains the frequency of the **ordinance** as "whenever" and its purpose to "proclaim the Lord's death until he comes": "For ***whenever*** you eat this bread and drink this cup, you ***proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.***" Then comes the warning to examine ourselves that we not prove unworthy in verses 27-29—***"Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. 28A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. 29For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself"***—needing no further explanation!

In Exodus 15:26 God makes a promise to His people, with a caveat: “***If*** you listen carefully to the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in his eyes, ***if*** you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, [then] I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for ***I am the LORD, who heals you.***” Healing is part of the atonement—Psalm 103:1-5—David says He “forgives all” and “heals all” in the same breath—talking about the benefits believers should not forget. When Christ went to the cross He took all of our sin and all of the results of our sin upon Himself, and He made we who believe to be at-one-ment with Him!

Isaiah 53:4-5 “Surely ***he took up our infirmities*** and ***carried our sorrows,*** yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him and afflicted. ⁵But he was ***pierced for our transgressions,*** he was ***crushed for our iniquities;*** the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.” And in Matthew 8:16-17—just after Jesus healed Peter’s mother in law—is reference back to this passage in Isaiah: “When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. ¹⁷This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: ***‘He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases.’***”

God will allow injury, illness and injustice to change the direction of our lives! We all know the life story of Joni Eareckson Tada, her swimming accident; physical and spiritual recovery, and then her life lived for God as probably the best-known Christian quadriplegic in the world. Her ministry, Joni and Friends, promotes ‘faith’ in the disabled community. But several years ago a man closer to home named Yo Yo Collins came and shared his story in our church. Twenty years earlier, while in college at Northeastern Oklahoma State University, he was a physical education major with great plans for his future.

Collins was in the best physical shape of his life, but church was not a part of it. On a camping trip with friends, he made the decision to do something that put him in a wheelchair for the rest of his life. In his book *Good as Grape Juice* he shares, “I knew the water was shallow, so I planned to barely skim the top.” Today, he is married to Sandi, and they travel to churches and he sings and shares his experience. Collins testifies, “God gave my life ‘a better direction’!” God used his accident to turn his life toward God and to minister for His glory in churches all over the country.

2 Corinthians 5:7 “We live by faith, not by sight.” **Belief** is the consent of the mind; **faith** is the choice of the will, and the result is **trust**—the commitment of the heart! Anne Graham Lotz says that God has a greater purpose than our immediate comfort and that the goal of our faith is to glorify God. She further concluded: “For the truly faithful no miracle is necessary; for those who must doubt; no miracle is sufficient.” Proverbs 14:32 “When calamity comes, the wicked are brought down, but ***even in death the righteous have a refuge.***”