

"JESUS - THE GREAT PHYSICIAN"

TEXT: "And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching.....
and preaching.....and healing every sickness and every disease
among the people....."
(Matthew 9:35)

I read recently where the drug pencillin has been used so often to fight so many different kinds of bacteria, that the bacteria are becoming immune to it. A Boston physician reports that only one fourth of five hundred cases treated at the Boston City Hospital in a given period of time responded to pencillin. Even the patients who never before had been treated with the drug pencillin, proved to be pencillin resistant when affected with diseases caught from those who had been treated with it. And this doctor goes on to warn us that unless pencillin is used cautiously and intelligently, we will be left with diseases resistant, and not sensitive to this wonder drug!

Something like this has taken place over a much longer period of time in the field of divine healing. The convenient use of heavenly magic as a wonder drug has long been a familiar cure all for disease. The use of supernatural powers in healing the sick goes back before the time of Jesus. In Greece, the God ASKLEPIOS was credited with endless feats of healing. In Palestine, before the time of Jesus, the Talmud speaks of a rabbi performing healing miracles. That Jesus should heal the sick, therefore, was not a new idea in religious history!

Like so many other ancient beliefs, Jesus took this one and gave it new meaning. He performed healing miracles, but he was more than just a typical miracle worker. He demonstrated beyond a question a great truth just now being confirmed by modern science, namely - the amazing power of the human mind over the physical body. After two thousand years, it is being recognized as a therapy of great value. The difficulty is that the power of divine healing has been so misused that it has lost some of its potency, and we have become afraid of it. At the hands of cranks and charlatans many sins have been committed in the name of divine healing. In some hands it has become a racket. It has been used too often - too carelessly for too many ills. We have become resistant to it. Therefore, as in the case of pencillin, in spite of its proven wonder power, we must use spiritual healing intelligently and cautiously. Otherwise we will become insensitive and immune to it.

In all of this we would do well to sit reverently at the feet of Jesus - the Great Physician and learn from him.....

PHYSICAL ILLNESS IS CAUSED BY
TROUBLED MINDS AND SPIRITS...

One idea that is evident from reflecting upon the healing wonders performed by Jesus is that JESUS KNEW THAT

MUCH PHYSICAL ILLNESS IS CAUSED BY TROUBLED MINDS AND SPIRITS.

Joseph Klausner in his book, Jesus of Nazareth, says:

"Owing to wars, and tumults, and the terrible oppression of Herod and the Romans, Palestine and especially Galilee, was filled with the sick and suffering, and with those pathological types which we now call neurasthenics and psychasthenics. The disturbances had multiplied the poor, the impoverished, and the unemployed with the result that in Palestine such

neurasthenics and especially all manner of "nerve" cases - dumb, epileptics, and the semi insane - were very numerous....."

These conditions existed among the poor with whom Jesus lived and worked. Most of the specific cases of healing by Jesus were of this type. Those we read about in the Gospel records among others were....the blind...the dumb, possessed by a devil....the epileptic....the man with the useless hand.....the man with palsy....the woman with a hemorrhage....the paralytic....and Peter's mother-in-law possessed with a high fever...

The modern development of psychosomatic medicine is an outgrowth of the realization by physicians that sicknesses of this type and others like them come from troubled minds and upset personalities. Modern science will underscore the words of Harry Emerson Fosdick that:

"A sick mind can cause a sick body. That moral disgust readily expresses itself in physical nausea. That a fatigued spirit makes an exhausted physique. That a hated task, for which one has 'No Stomach' causes loss of appetite. That paralysis may be due to a bodily injury but it may also be a psychological alibi....."

At a clinic in New Orleans, a report was made of 500 consecutive admissions. Of these, 386, or 77 percent, were sick from illnesses induced by mental and emotional disturbances.

Two outstanding doctors in our country report that deep seated anxiety is the cause of 84% of all peptic ulcers. Peptic ulcers often turn into cancer.

Dr. John A. Schlinder, the chief physician of the Monroe, Wisconsin Clinic reports that 30% of rheumatism is caused by muscle groups hurting under nervous tension. He declares that 33% of skin diseases and 50% of gall bladder troubles are brought on by upset personalities.

In fact this outstanding doctor estimates that at least half of all modern sickness is due to care, troubles, and difficulties in living and not due to organic disturbances as such. That worry....fear....anxiety.. hate.....selfishness....suspicion.....jealousy.....and lust...just to name a few - bring about the gradual destruction of the body.

It would seem to us then, that Jesus was centuries ahead of his time. It doesn't do us any good to explain away his healing wonders. They are records of fact, and cannot be ignored. They reveal to us a deep concern on the part of Jesus for physical welfare of people. They reveal to us his great compassion for those who are sick. They show a divine insight into the nature of human illness.

✓ He KNEW that OUTWARD AFFLICTIONS ARE OFTEN CAUSED BY INWARD SPIRITUAL DISTURBANCES.....

He KNEW that the ATTITUDE OF MIND that a person possesses often affects their bodily health.

This then, is the first insight we receive from a close study of the healing wonders of the Great Physician: THAT MUCH PHYSICAL ILLNESS IS CAUSED BY TROUBLED MINDS AND SPIRITS.....

THE WORK OF HEALING WAS
A NORMAL PART OF THE
MINISTRY OF JESUS.

Another idea we need to recognize is that the work of healing was a normal part of the ministry of Jesus. For as our text declares:

"Jesus went about all the cities and the towns, teaching, and preaching, and healing."

This emphasizes the fact that Jesus was no "faith healer" in the usual sense of the term. His work of healing the sick was only part of his total ministry. It naturally made him the center of attention. And many people were drawn to him as a result of these works. But Jesus didn't want to capitalize on these powers. He often withdrew when the crowds gathered, and many times he cautioned those whom he healed to tell no one about it. Jesus didn't want the more sensational part of his ministry of healing to cover up the more important ministry of teaching and preaching. etc....

The Great Physician knew that God's laws were written into our very muscles and nervous systems.....

He knew that the healthy life is the whole life and that we are not whole until our spirits are at peace with God.....

He therefore sought to bring the resources of religious faith to bear on the healing of the minds, souls, and bodies of men.....

He dealt with disease by bringing a living, healthy faith into the focus of personality.....

The twisted minds and bodies of men responded to the cleansing power of forgiveness and the recreating power of a vibrant faith.

This emphasis on faith cannot be escaped in any reading of the healing works of the Master..... On one occasion, some blind men were brought to him, and he said: "BELIEVE YE THAT I AM ABLE TO DO THIS?" They all answered in the affirmative. And then Jesus opened their eyes with the words: "ACCORDING TO YOUR FAITH BE IT DONE UNTO YOU" And then there was the time near Jericho when another blind man was brought to him. The man persistently tried to get near Jesus. But you know how people in a large crowd can be. They pushed the blind man away. And Jesus saw this, and went to the man and said: "GO THY WAY.....FOR THY FAITH HAS MADE THEE WHOLE!"

In these and other cases, Jesus seems to be trying to tell us that the power of faith is something more than just mere mechanical assent to a creed....that it is more than just a perfunctory performance of religious duties. It is the law of God for life....and health...and strength. Complete surrender to God, and complete trust in him brings health to our bodies and minds. "Thy faith has made Thee whole" - this is the keynote of Jesus at this point.

Many physicians today will bear witness to the therapeutic effect of a strong faith. The words of Dr. Robert Peale of this city emphasize this truth:

"Religion has a powerful effect on the poisons that infest the conscious and the unconscious mind. Its penetrating potency drives deep into those areas of the subconscious where lurk the sources of infection. It finds these mental disease germs and destroys them with the powerful heat of its clean life....."

Jesus would have us see that FAITH HEALING CANNOT BE SEPARATED FROM THE TOTAL RELIGIOUS LIFE. In other words, we can't neglect God when we are well, and then expect him to come to our rescue with a miraculous cure when we are sick. It just doesn't work this way. A strong and living faith is necessary if we would share in the rich blessings of the Great Physician.

THE GREAT PHYSICIAN PRESCRIBES FOR ALL MEN A HEALTH GIVING FAITH AS A POWERFUL AID TO HEALING AND PHYSICAL WELL BEING.

And this introduces us to the final idea that I would like share with you, and that is that the Great Physician prescribes for

all men a health giving faith as a powerful aid to healing and physical well being.

UNFORTUNATELY, the universal interest in both religion and health usually comes to a focus these days in the more odd and bizarre forms of divine healing that would almost reduce religion to magic. But for every spectacular healing miracle today, there are countless everyday miracles performed when we use both the resources of religion and science in the interest of health.

The refusal to use medical aid in healing as advocated by some groups is no sign of faith and has no basis in the Scriptures. Jesus lived long before the days of medical science as we know it. But knowing his concern for human physical well-being, we can be sure he would have welcomed its help.

On the other hand, doctors and psychiatrists need to recognize more and more the healing therapy of a religious faith. Medical men cannot afford to ignore the healing powers of a sane religion just because of the crimes that have been committed in the name of divine healing.

The healing powers of God in the body are set free as we use the prescription of Jesus to

Forgive our enemies.....
Love our neighbors.....
Live by the moral laws of God.....
Trust God for the future.....
Have faith in God, in ourselves, and in life.....
And believe with all our hearts in the
presence of God in human life.
power of God...
purposes of God....

Only as we do, can we get rid of the harmful poisons of worry, fear, anger, and negative living that often block our way to health and happiness.

Catherine Marshall, in the story of her husband, A Man Called Peter, tells of her fight with tuberculosis. She was reduced to the life of an invalid. She wanted to regain her health more than anything in life. And as she experimented with the healing power of prayer, she came to a great insight. SHE MUST WANT GOD MORE THAN HEALTH. Tired, worn out, and quite discouraged, she shifted the burdens of her faith and the center of gravity of her faith. She would be resigned to the disease if this were the will of God. But above and beyond her own desire for regaining health, she must be willing to accept the will of God. Soon after the realization of this truth, her health began to show real signs of improvement. Here we seem to find a modern echo of the words of Jesus, "O woman great is Thy faith....Thy faith has made Thee whole!"

And so I would leave these thoughts with you this morning. Regardless of the source of our ailments, and their outcome, a strong faith helps us to fight their effects much more effectively. I think that the trouble with so many of us is that we often live animal lives of exhaustion, and overeating, and neglect of the moral and the physical laws of life. We push ourselves rather than learning how to pace ourselves. And then if we get sick, we blame God, and we want him to pass a miracle in order to make us well. Drugs, vitamins, and medical skill are of God - BUT THEY MUST BE SUPPORTED BY A MIND FOR HEALTH WHICH COMES THROUGH GOD DIRECTED PRAYER.

A clean, loving, and positive attitude of faith can go a long way toward conditioning the glands, the nerves, the muscles, and the heart in their resistance to and recovery from illness.

We would see Jesus in his work of healing.

At even tide before the sun was set

Divine and human in his deep revealing

Of God and man in loving service met.

LET US PRAY:

Our Heavenly Father, open our eyes as the Great Physician opened the eyes of the blind who came to him, that we may see the need for a strong and living faith. We know that our troubled spirits often bring us more trouble in the form of sickness and ill health. Give to each one of us
The faith to accept those things that cannot be changed.
The courage to change those things that can be changed.
And the wisdom to know the difference...
So may we hear the words of the Great Physician: According to your faith be it done to you.