

PHYSICAL HEALING

“...and Jesus healed many who had various diseases.” —MARK 1:34

In the ministry of Jesus and His disciples, physical healing played a significant role. There are nine occasions in the Gospels where it says Jesus healed all the sick who were around Him. The blind saw, the deaf heard, the lame walked, the lepers were cleansed, demons cast out, and people raised from the dead.

The evidence in Scripture of healing is both comprehensive and impressive, but there are also people who were not healed. In 1 Timothy 5:23, Paul refers to Timothy's frequent illnesses. Paul, himself, suffered from an illness he considered a trial to his colleagues. From this, we can conclude there are two mistakes we can make; one is to tell someone they will be healed, and the other is to tell someone they won't. The truth is we may be healed if God, in His sovereignty, wills it, or, which is often the case, He may use our illness as a means through which He works out His purpose.

On the cross, we know that Christ conquered sin, death and sickness, which leads us to wonder why we still sin, still get sick and eventually die. Matthew 8:16 says that Jesus healed all the sick, and verse 17, “This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: ‘He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases...’” This introduces a very important aspect that in the work of Jesus Christ there are things which are ‘now’ and things which are ‘not yet’. We live in the tension of the now – a life that Christ has procured for us in all its fullness, and there is also the ‘not yet’ - that which Christ has already procured for us, but has yet to come into being.

In relation to this, there are probably three kinds of Christians; the optimist who wants everything now - no sin, no disease, no suffering; the pessimist who grins and bears it, but eagerly waits for the 'not yet'; and the realist who lives between the tension of the 'now' and the 'not yet'. The realist is willing to bring every part of his life in submission to Christ, allowing Him to bring about His purpose.

There are times God does intervene, and until Christ returns, we have confidence in the words of Paul. "We ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies" (Romans 8:23). Though we continue to age, there will come a day when our bodies will be redeemed in a new world where... "There will be no more death, or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away" (Revelation 21:4).

PRAYER: Dear Lord, in good health or ill health, I trust You for whatever happens to me and am grateful my life is in your hands.

TO REFLECT UPON: Do I rest in the strength and comfort of Jesus when either my loved ones are ill or I am?