



Isaiah 53:5

“But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.”

CHRIST, MY HEALER!

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CHAPTER 1

The Blessing of Healing

“Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.”

3 JOHN 1:2

I giggled when my friend, John, recently said, “I have a razor-sharp memory. It’s just short!” This was his poor excuse for forgetting his wedding anniversary.

Memory is a frightening tattletale. It reveals our true and immediate priorities, identifying what’s most important to us right now. In John’s situation, his forgetfulness didn’t mean his marriage and his wife weren’t important to him. His forgetfulness simply showed that something else in the *now* had pushed them into the recesses of his mind.

The psalmist reminds himself and us in Psalm 103:2 to bless the Lord “and forget not all His benefits.” In our walks with God, we would do well to always keep our memories razor-sharp when it comes to the things that God has done and is doing for us. We need to make sure we don’t allow other things or even wrong priorities to crowd Him out. We especially don’t want to forget the benefits that He has provided for us.

One of the many benefits that God has provided for us is healing. Healing belongs to us. Healing is ours by the stripes that Jesus received (Isaiah 53:5), and it’s given to us freely. As James 1:17 declares, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.” Healing is one of the “perfect” gifts given to us by our Father. It’s a blessing from Him!

Sickness—Our Enemy

I believe all Christians may recognize the blessing of healing and the anguish of sickness and disease. Their theology on healing and sickness, on the other hand, can differ greatly. For example, I’ve heard some Christians assert that *sickness is God’s will*. I’ve heard others teach that *sickness is a*

gift from God, humbling us and drawing us closer to Him. I've even heard some testify that *God's purpose in their sickness is to teach* them.

I don't mean to be offensive, but such reasoning seems absurd to me! If a man really believed sickness is God's will, then I would expect him to do *nothing* for himself to receive comfort, relief, or healing. I would expect him *not* to go to the doctor or *not* to take medicine. And we've all heard stories of a few who have taken such stances. But more often than not, most of us run to various remedies for relief when we're sick, even many of those who claim sickness is God's will.

And as far as those who view sickness as a gift from God, I have one question for them: Why is it we never hear people crying out for a sickness or a disease? Think about it. When have you ever heard someone at the altar pray, "Lord, please give me a tumor"? How crazy would that be?!

Furthermore, if a father had the ability to cause his child to become sick and actually did so, we would lock him up for child abuse. God isn't a perpetrator of child abuse. He's a life-giving Father who "daily loads us with benefits" (Psalm 68:19) and whose gifts to us are good and perfect (James 1:17).

And yes, God *may* teach us something while we're sick; after all, He's able to redeem every situation and circumstance, creatively using them to draw us closer to Him and to instruct us about Him and His ways. But making a doctrine out of His making me sick so that He can teach me something is going too far. Remember, *God also teaches us when we're healthy*. Just because a woman, for example, may be learning spiritual lessons while she's ill doesn't explain her sickness, nor does it mean that it's God's best for her. We must realize *sickness is our enemy*.

In 1 Corinthians 15:26, Paul writes, "The last enemy *that* will be destroyed *is* death." If Paul calls death the enemy, I would think those sicknesses and diseases that work death in our physical bodies should be seen as death's friends. And any friend of death—any friend of my enemy—*is* my enemy!

Even those who aren't Christians and don't believe in Jesus perceive sickness isn't for them; it's against them. They understand that sickness is bad and not good. How do we know this? Just look at secular advertising slogans that say things like, "Fight AIDS," "Fight Cancer," or "Fight Diabetes."

Looking back at our opening verse in 3 John 1:2, we see the beloved apostle John as he expresses the very heart of God for us to be in health. He writes, “Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.” This is the Father’s desire for us. After all, our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19). How could anyone believe that the One who wants us to prosper and be in health is the same One who puts sickness on what He calls His own temple? There are those who don’t have this understanding, so they teach that God puts sickness on people. Such people read Scriptures that say God sent sickness, or God afflicted so-and-so with severe disease, and they make a doctrine out of these—that all sickness is sent by Him.

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In Deuteronomy 28:58-59, Moses instructs the Israelites saying, “If you do not carefully observe all the words of this law that are written in this book . . . the LORD will bring upon you and your descendants extraordinary plagues . . . and serious and prolonged sicknesses.” When we read this Scripture that says God will put plagues and sickness upon them, it simply means that His law of sowing and reaping will be executed and enforced by the proper agencies.

God has established His laws, and we face the consequences for breaking them. So many times when Scripture says God afflicted people or sent sickness upon them, if we read the context of what’s happening, we’ll discover that the people broke certain laws of God and called the sickness, the disease, or those forms of evil upon themselves. Sins of all kinds—rebellion, hardness of heart, fleshly lusts, pride, unbelief, and many other personal acts on the part of people—have caused them to break the laws of God and given the agents of sin, sickness, and death the opportunity to wreak havoc in their lives.

So we see in Scripture and in life that some sickness is the *direct result* of sin in an individual’s life. Sickness, however, may also be an *indirect result* of sin. We do know that since the fall of man—since Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden—humanity experiences sickness, disease, pain, and suffering. This means that sickness and disease happen to both the

righteous and the unrighteous, to those who are in Christ and those who aren't. Humanity experiences the wages of sin—death working in the human body (Romans 6:23). But Jesus came to give us the gift of God—eternal life. In fact, He proclaimed, “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly” (John 10:10).

If you're in Christ, He's already defeated sin and death for you. He's personally come to you to give you the abundant life. And the abundant life means that all He purchased for you on the cross—redemption, restoration, salvation, wholeness, and healing—is yours.

Healing—God's Provision

Recently, a lady approached me asking if I could go and pray for her sister who was suffering with a prolonged sickness. Her situation was very severe. When I went to see the sister, I asked her permission to pray for her. She responded by saying, “This is the cross I have to carry. I've been prayed over many times, but nothing has happened, and I don't think this is meant to be healed.” So much for her confession of faith!

You see, delay and hope deferred, maybe even wrong teaching and influence, had built a stronghold in her life. She had started twisting Scriptures to justify why she wasn't receiving her healing. I explained to her that the cross she was referring to from Luke 9:23 was a cross of self-denial. Jesus said in that verse, “If *anyone* desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me” (emphasis added). The words here are addressed to “anyone” who would be a follower of Jesus. Every believer is called to self-denial, but not to sickness. I encouraged the sister about God's willingness and ability to heal. And then I prayed for her with her faith freshly fanned by the truth of God's Word.

Every believer is called to selfdenial, but not to sickness.

God wants you and me to live lives that bring glory to Him, and sickness doesn't bring glory to Him. Can He receive glory for healing us from sickness and disease? Yes! Can we give Him glory in the midst of our sickness and pain? Yes! But our being sick, in and of itself, doesn't glorify Him.

I want you, dear reader, to realize how much God desires to see you well and whole. I've seen God perform wonderful healings, even what I call *miracle healings*. I remember one such healing when my father was ministering. A man was listening in the audience and was very skeptical of the power of God. Yet God wanted to demonstrate His love for him. This man had no right thumb, as it had been cut off in an accident. Suddenly, the Holy Spirit created a thumb. It literally grew in front of the man's eyes! Wow!

The Gospels are replete with similar stories of miraculous healings where Jesus even created missing body parts. Matthew records an event where Jesus healed people who were maimed. The text reads, "Then great multitudes came to Him, having with them the lame, blind, mute, maimed, and many others; and they laid them down at Jesus' feet, and He healed them" (Matthew 15:30). According to *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, the Greek word for *maimed* in this verse is the word *kullōs* ("Greek Dictionary of the New Testament," 44). It refers to a person who is missing body parts. I know other versions translate this word as cripple, but a cripple is someone who has a part that can't function. It's evident from Scripture and from my own experience that God can heal cripples, and such a healing is indeed incredible and miraculous. Creative miracles like Jesus did in Matthew 15 and like the one my father witnessed, though, are other worldly. They display a greater dimension of the awesomeness of our God!

Another passage in Matthew says, "The multitude marveled [were amazed], when they saw *the* mute speaking, *the* maimed made whole, *the* lame walking, and *the* blind seeing" (18:8). You see the Bible is very clear that Christ is able to bring healing to the worst cases of sickness and disease—to those who are lame, maimed, blind, and mute.

As you read this book, I really want you to realize that no matter how bad your condition is, nor how long you have had this condition, Jesus is still in the business of bringing healing to His people. There are stories in the Scriptures of people who had sickness for twelve, eighteen, thirty-seven, or more years. These should encourage you and offer you hope that God's able and willing to heal you. His heart toward you hasn't changed. He wants you to prosper and be in health.

Jesus is still in the business of bringing healing to His people.

In the pages that follow, may you be encouraged and strengthened in your faith to believe God for healing. My hope is for your spirit to fully grasp all that Christ has purchased for you and offers you today. I trust that you'll allow the Holy Spirit, who is our Teacher, to bring truth and revelation to you in a personal way. As you move from section to section of this book, I believe that you'll come to know Christ as not just a healer. It's my sincerest desire that you'll be able to profess, "Christ is *my* Healer!" In the end, may that confession and testimony propel you to minister the blessing of healing to others.

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