

Draw us all to You, Lord Jesus, for as You went about doing good to all especially those who suffered in this life, so teach us Your disciples today to show mercy upon those who need help in their various afflictions. Accompany all such acts of compassion by Your Church with the words of life, the healing medicine which alone successfully will treat the disease of their souls, so that even if those who here must continue to suffer with physical ailments they may be called to serve You in the bodies of their humiliation, that thereafter they may wear the body of Your glory. Amen.

And [Jesus] went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people. So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, those oppressed by demons, epileptics, and paralytics, and he healed them. And great crowds followed him from Galilee and the Decapolis, and from Jerusalem and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan. Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.

In Christ Jesus, who heals all our diseases of body and soul, dear fellow redeemed:

Jesus did do everything well, but He did not heal all those who were sick in Galilee, Samaria and Judea of His day. The vast majority of those who were ill, Jesus never healed physically. Those who were brought to Him He healed for sure. But even those He did heal eventually got sick again and died. Physical healings were only a means to an end, not the ending purpose for His physical visible presence on earth. However His purpose for coming, living, dying and rising again was to give a blessed eternal end for the entire human race. So let us consider this truth found in our text: **Temporal Healing Pales Before Eternal Healing.**

I

You might remember how Jesus dealt with the paralyzed man who was lowered through the roof before Him. The temporal physical needs of this man were screaming out to everyone in that room with them, but the first words of Jesus were: “Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven.” Jesus took the opportunity not only to demonstrate that He had the power to bring eternal healing to a poor sinner, but that this power and authority is given to His Church here on earth - through you and me and all believers in Christ as Savior.

Jesus' fame spread on account of His miraculous powers over temporal physical maladies. He healed lepers, gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speaking ability to the mute, ability to walk to the lame, not to mention the greatest miracle of all - raising people from the dead. However, Jesus was not seeking fame in a celebrity or politician's fashion today, who seek familiar popularity for self-promotion and personal advancement. He was doing these things to verify His person as true God, the Christ sent by the heavenly Father. Our Lord wanted to verify in the people's hearts and minds that He was the One able and willing to save us poor sinners.

Consider how our Lord even at times told the witnesses to His miracles to keep it to themselves. The reason He did this was for their protection, lest His enemies be stirred up against them as His believers. Such a response happened to the man born blind whom Jesus gave sight. The religious leaders, the enemies of Jesus, badgered this man until finally they excommunicated him from the Jewish church.

Again, Jesus performed these miracles for His believers to confirm their faith in Him as the holy One sent by God to bring mankind salvation. It was finally the great miracle of raising Lazarus who had been dead for four days, which was the catalyst that put in motion his arrest, trial and crucifixion. All the great physical healings Jesus accomplished could never address the spiritual depravity with which everyone of us sinners is born.

You and I as believers today show forth that same sinful nature that still clings to us, whenever we turn against God in our thoughts or words in response to some physical problem in this life. We are often tempted to see such bad things in life to be a sign of God's anger and even hatred for us. We fall for it when our prayers seem to go unanswered and our physical problems become even more severe. Or when we do receive healing through medical science, we may remember to send a note of thanks to the Dr. and medical staff, but forget to thank our Lord and perhaps even assume we deserve to be healed.

Turning against God, doubting His love and care for us is exactly what Satan desires us to do. But having weak suffering bodies in this life pales compared to having bodies raised to eternal condemnation and torment. It was this consequence that caused our Lord to go "throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom." Yes He did heal "every disease and every affliction among the

people". But it was preaching the powerful word of life that was the most important, since it had everlasting healing power, so that we might be given bodies of glory.

II

When your pastor comes to your bedside in the hospital or at home under hospice care, he will join you in praying for temporal physical healing to be sure, but something far greater is given to you. He will speak the Word of life so that you might receive the blessings of Christ. He will give you the blessed food of Jesus' true body and blood, which was given and shed for the forgiveness of all your sins.

We are living in the day of which Isaiah spoke (in our OT lesson for today), when he said: "In that day the deaf shall hear the words of a book, and out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind shall see. The meek shall obtain fresh joy in the LORD, and the poor among mankind shall exult in the Holy One of Israel." The temporal physical healing of the deaf and blind pales compared to the eternal spiritual healing that takes place when God converts the sinner from being dead in sin to being alive in Christ.

My fellow redeemed, you have been given such healing. Your booster shots of hearing the Word and receiving of the Sacrament sustain you in this life, where your physical problems and ailments can overwhelm you. In being overwhelmed you at times have sinned, and yet your gracious Lord forgives you and revitalizes your faith in Him. You look upon the grizzly scene of His suffering and death as His greatest act of love for you, knowing He paid the price of those sins and all your sins by the shedding of His holy precious blood. You also confess with Isaiah that by His stripes you have been healed.

Consider how we usually begin and end our divine services. We begin by hearing the baptismal formula, which has washed us clean - "*in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*" Then you and I confess individually to being the chief of sinners, offering up no excuses but fall upon the mercy of our God. Immediately our gracious Lord declares us forgiven and righteous through His Son. Then we conclude that God smiles upon us for Jesus' sake. Our blessed healing is magnified by the divine service proceedings. But just as the healthy do not seek out a physician, so you and I do not seek out our greatest Physician of souls

because we are well. We come to this infirmary of sin-sick souls and receive the healing balm with its eternal healing properties.

Understand rightly the temporal physical healing, which Jesus accomplished in His day for those who came to Him and still does in ours for us. They truly are blessings from our Lord, but when compared to the eternal spiritual healings that have happened for us they pale in contrast. God hears all your prayers for Jesus' sake, so do not hesitate to pray for temporal physical healings for yourself and others, but realize such healings if granted are only a foretaste of the everlasting healing you have received in the blood of Christ.

As mentioned earlier, the healings that take place in this life are only temporary. Pain, suffering, anguish, tears and death will eventually come about in this life for even those who received such healing. It is from this broken place our Lord has saved us. We now await for Jesus' sake a place described for us like this: *Where God will wipe away every tear from our eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things will have passed away.* It is our possession right now, because as Jesus promised, all who believe in Him, even though they die, yet shall they live. You live for Jesus' sake, even though your body of humiliation will one day be placed in the ground. It will be awakened on that last day to live life to its fullest. You have truly been healed and your color is marvelous forevermore! Amen.