

Sermon

"Your Faith Has Made You Well"

(Mark 5:21-43)

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Introduction: We all want healing, but what does God say?

A. As controversial as the president's health care initiative (Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, PPACA) has been, is, and will continue to be, that controversy is probably minor in comparison to the question within Christendom on the topic of healing.

B. In our text this morning in the Gospel of St. Mark, chapter 5, the Word of the Lord puts forth that faith in Christ is directly connected to healing.

1. Before Jesus raised Jairus' daughter from the dead, Jesus comforts the father who is begging Jesus for help. Jesus said to Jairus: *"Do not fear, only believe."* (v 36). In response to Jairus' call to Jesus driven by his faith in Jesus, Jesus answered that call of faith and raised Jairus' daughter from the dead.

2. This connection between faith and healing is only reinforced in the section right in the middle of the story of Jairus and his daughter; vss 24-34 that records the account of the woman who had been suffering from a condition of a severe flow of blood for 12 years. She touched Christ's garment. In response to realizing that power had gone out from Him on account of the woman touching Him, Jesus sees the woman and says to her:

***"Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."* (v 34)**

C. So is this the end of the story? Is God saying to us His children that when you are sick that with enough faith, God will and should be expected to grant you healing?

D. The answer to that question depends on your definition of healing.

E. What is most important to grasp from Mark 5 is when Jesus is revealed and believed on as Messiah, the Son of God, the Savior of the world...YOUR Savior from sin and from death, yes, dear Christian He always, always brings healing...but again, what do we mean by "healing" in application to our lives here on earth?

F. For example, we simply cannot limit physical healing here on earth as something that comes *only* to Christians with faith.

1. Jesus also physically healed and heals many (not all) those who do not believe...He's that generous and kind! Just ask a good doctor! Are all of her patients who experience healing only Christians? Of course not.
2. Just as the LORD sends the sun and the rain on the just and the unjust, He also sends healing to the just and unjust. It is a fact that in some instances Jesus healed without the prerequisite of having faith (this does not contradict Mark 5, but simply complements Mark 5 to give us a more complete theology about healing). In the same way that He preached the Gospel with liberality to those who would believe and even to those who would not; He healed with liberality. I like the way the sainted Dr. Ludwig [who taught here at CUI] put it:

"Jesus seems to have gone out of His way to heal the lame, the blind, and the dumb. What etches itself on the modern reader's mind is that Jesus demanded no spiritual pre-condition of those He healed. He accepted all who came to Him for healing and turned no one away for reason of station in life, moral failure, or spiritual immaturity." (Order Restored, 90)

- G. So, which is it? Is faith a required pre-requisite for healing or can one be healed even without faith? The answer is "yes" but only as we explain our definition of "healing" in each instance.

Part I: We start to gain clarity when we confront our sin.

- A. In our sin, we have the unfortunate habit of making an idol of physical health.
- B. That is, we limit the definition of healing to physical strength and vitality.
- C. And while we should indeed be good stewards of our bodies and strive to take care of them; and while your physical health is not only important to you, but also to the LORD...
- D. At the same time, all of our bodies have been impacted by sin. Our bodies die on account of our sin. That's a fact.
- E. But this reality is so often ignored and fails to humble people when we treat our bodies as an idol -- as if nothing else were more important -- but this is a shallow view of health and healing.
- F. When the Hebrews spoke of "peace," they understood a state of wholeness in which God touched the intellect, relationships in society, and yes, the body was also included, but the spirit and one's relationship to God was the most important component of peace in one's life; and consequently, of health in one's life.
- G. To limit health and healing to the physical body is short-sighted to say the least.
 1. There are people here on earth with astounding physical health and strength, but they are far, far from God, and therefore they are far, far from being healthy.

2. On the other hand, there are people here on earth who suffer a great deal physically, but are so close to God that they are enabled to live with their disease while exuding spiritual power.
 - a. I will never forget Shirley Edwards with severe ALS...every, single time I brought Holy Communion to her, she was overjoyed...in fact, I would say 9 times out of 10 she was in a better mood and state of mind than I was. I was the one walking around, but she was more vibrant than I...and in every instance, her witness to God's healing hand upon her (even while living with ALS) was absolutely astounding. She was immensely healthy; and she knew remarkable healing even though she could only move her neck and her head.
 - b. In another instance from St. John, Covina CA where Shirley was to Living Word, The Woodlands, TX, I served Mildred Oglesby. Mildred had suffered debilitating osteoarthritic conditions and as a result saw one complication through the years after another. And yet, it is no exaggeration to say that for years and years while in a wheelchair, she was faithfully in church every Sunday. Her joy and her outlook on life was contagious and everybody in the congregation loved her...everyone felt lifted up by her and without it ever having to be said, everyone knew that with Mildred around, we had all lost our excuses to miss church! She was radiantly healthy!
3. At the same time, this is not to say that the other side of the gamut does not occur. I have lost count of the instances over the years when absolutely medically dumb-founding healings and recoveries have taken place. These include the instances when the doctors themselves for all intents and purposes pronounce "miraculous" recoveries...and none of these are ever too hard for the LORD.
4. On the other hand, this does not always occur. When my relationship with Saint Paul's began, one of the first medical emergencies was for the president of the congregation at the time John Lottes...an amazing organizer and leader, a consummate professional and gentleman, a devout disciple of Christ...and while I was so excited to join forces with him when I accepted my call to Saint Paul's when we were still in Laguna Beach in 1996, I was shocked by the severity of his cancer and its rapid spread. I had indeed seen amazing interventions in seemingly impossible situations before and I prayed for God's miraculous hand upon John even while the medical resources were failing him, but God said, "No." Later, I witnessed the astounding spiritual growth of his Christian wife Nancy...she had already been strong in the faith before John was diagnosed, but afterwards, she testified to growing in her faith more than ever before in her life...and this is to say nothing of how John himself faced his death knowing Jesus was holding him! In these cases, no the miracles did not come – or did they? – and there is no question that the signs of spiritual vitality were abundant! And in this way, healing also came!

5. But in our sin, we don't want any of the latter type of testimonies...these don't really count...real healing is about our blind ambition to live forever in these bodies (and no we don't actually say that, but it's implied by the way we carry on sometimes)...and when this happens our view of life becomes confused. We forget about communion with God; we forget our most important need to be close to the Living God in spirit; and we treat our bodies as the barometers for whether or not God is really who He says He is.

Part II: But True Healing -- Dear Christians -- Is To Receive the Grace of God in Christ Jesus!

- A. In Mark 5, Jairus' daughter received the grace of Christ; in Mark 5 the woman who had been hemorrhaging received the grace of Christ, but there are other instances in Scripture to take note of:
 1. St. Paul had great faith, but we see that in 2nd Timothy 4:20 Paul had to leave Trophimus at Miletus because of his illness. And yet he had also received the grace of Christ!
 2. Paul himself suffered a debilitating handicap, a thorn in the flesh, that was not taken from him despite his many prayers (2 Corinthians 4:20). But again, he had also received the grace of Christ!
 3. St. Paul encouraged Timothy to drink a little wine for his stomach malady (1 Timothy 5:23). In other words, his stomach problems were not eliminated in this case by faith and prayer. And yet, St. Timothy had received the grace of Christ!
- B. Again, this does not mean that God does not physically heal...He does all of the time, but it also means that we may not sinfully manipulate God or assume to hold magic formulas over the LORD.
- C. Most importantly, we need to understand what true healing is and sometimes in God's perfect will for us...it may or may not include life without physical disease.

Part III: Christ on the Cross, however, and Christ over Death has brought Healing!

- A. Isaiah 53 helps us to understand the impetus behind Mark 5: "By [Christ's] stripes you are healed."
- B. Your sins are forgiven by the blood of the Lamb who proved that He was the very Son of God and master over life and death when He raised Jairus' daughter from the dead.
- C. This Savior and Lord over life and death has already healed you dear Christian in the most important way:

- 1. Your sins are washed away.**
- 2. Sin is no longer your master.**
- 3. Death no longer has dominion over you.**
- 4. And yes, you have the peace of God today through the body and blood of Jesus Christ.**
- 5. And this healing which recall really is a wholistic/holistic healing includes the fact that after death, yes, even your body will know perfect vitality and healing. Remember for the Hebrews peace was about our total being, bodies included...God won't forget!**
- 6. But in the meantime, we do not commit idolatry when it comes to our physical health; nor do we limit the Lord's definition of the most important health: on this side of heaven, it is when faith pervades our soul; it is when we are filled with the Holy Spirit and have hope even when confronted with physical limitation and pain.**
- 7. So with all of this, how do we pray and what do we seek when we are sick?**
 - a. Pray the desires of your heart since you are invited to do so. In fact, see the moment in illness as an invitation – regardless of what happens – to grow more in your faith than ever before in your life!**
 - b. Always pray for His will to be done.**
 - c. Then trust in Him, and trust that He will do what is best for you!**
 - 1. Trust Him and praise Him if He grants you remarkable physical healing! And we ought never be surprised when it occurs since the Lord raises the dead!**
 - 2. But continue to trust in Him and praise Him if He grants you endurance to face an ongoing ailment!**
 - 3. Trust Him and praise Him that He is still working everything out for your good!**
 - 4. There was a time when it seemed all was lost...our Savior prayed that the cup of the excruciating cross for your sin would be taken so that He would be spared...and then He prayed, "And yet not my will, but YOURS be done!" Jesus prayed. His prayer was answered! And the best thing happened: you were saved from the condemnation of sin and through His blood you were healed because now not even death can rob you of health in EVERY respect...which is guaranteed when you meet the LORD face-to-face!**
- 8. Your faith in Christ is a gift from God and having received this gift dear Christian, listen to what Jesus says to you: "your faith has made you well...go in peace!"**