

DOES GOD HEAL TODAY?

Mk. 1:29 And forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.³⁰ But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever, and anon they tell him of her.³¹ And he came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up; and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them.

This was a Sabbath, and earlier in the morning, the Lord Jesus and His disciples had attended the synagogue in Capernaum (v.21ff.). The service had ended about noon, and along with James and John, He entered the home of Simon and Andrew to find Simon's mother-in-law seriously ill. Simon and Andrew, and James and John worked together in the fishing business. Simon (Peter) was married (³⁰ *Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever*) ... and Paul referred to his marriage in I Cor. 9:5, *Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?* He sometimes brought his wife with him on missionary trips. But, at this early stage in his service for the Lord, he was living in Capernaum ... originally having come from Bethsaida, a short distance inland from the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee.

So, Jesus enters Simon and Andrew's home, - along with James and John, - for to have a meal. Yes, Peter's mother-in-law wasn't well ... but that did not hinder the age-old custom to turn your home into a welcoming place for guests. ... And Jesus was the very special Guest in Simon's home that Sabbath.

But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever (v.30). ... This was much more than an ordinary 'fever'. In his professional capacity, Dr. Luke described her as being taken with a *great [μέγας] fever [πυρετός]* (Lk. 4:38). She was 'burning up'! ... πῦρ is the Greek word for *fire*! The family were concerned about her! This was a crisis, and anon [*straightaway*] they tell Him [*Jesus*] about her. ... There wasn't a moment to waste. They brought Jesus *immediately* to where Simon's mother-in-law was lying, 'burning up' with a serious fever, and Luke says, 4:38 *they besought him for her*, - they 'begged'/pleaded with Him that He would heal her.

And Jesus responded, ³¹ *he came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up.* ... He wasn't afraid to catch her fever ... and when she could not take His hand, He took hers *and lifted her up.* ... She had been lifeless and helpless on her sickbed. ... There wasn't a thing she could do for herself, and there wasn't a thing anyone in the family or in the town was able to do. It was only when Jesus came into her home, went to where she was, He held her hand, and then He lifted her up ... He healed her, *and immediately the fever left her.*

Does God heal today? Yes, He does and indeed, many of us can testify to His healing power ... *God still heals today!*

He does not *always* heal though. A person may sincerely pray and truly believe God can heal, but if it is not God's will to provide the healing at that time, then no healing will come, - healing only comes when it is His will, **I Jn. 5:14** *And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us ...* If it was always God's will for us to be healed, then Christians would never die. ... But Christians *do* take ill and Christians *do* die, - that is the will of God ... that is how His purpose in our lives works ... and illness and death are two natural occurrences in *everyone's* life.

As you know, some Christians would be of the opinion that when they are sick, all they have to do is ask God to heal them and, because God loves them, He will make them better. If you believe strongly enough, God will heal you, and healing is the proof of your faith and of the love of God. But that is a false premise because it is not what the Bible teaches. For example, Job suffered because it was the will of God for him, at that time, and throughout his suffering he understood God ultimately had a purpose in why he was suffering.

Joni Eareckson Tada had a diving accident in 1967 (at the age of 17), and she has been a quadriplegic ever since. She prayed and fully believed God would heal her completely, - in the early days, she told her friends she would be walking again. It never happened though, and fifty years later, she is still in a wheelchair, paralysed from the neck down, and yet her faith is stronger than ever, she said, "God may remove your suffering, and that will be great cause for praise. But if not, He will use it, He will use anything and everything that stands in the way of His fellowship with you. So, let God mould you and make you, transform you from glory to glory. That's the deeper healing".

Even in the Bible, - for the first 2,500 years, - there is no mention of any healings. In fact, the first healing was when Moses' sister Miriam was cleansed from leprosy (Num. 12:13-15). It is not until the New Testament, healings increased through the power of the Lord Jesus, but even at that, He did not always heal everyone. The apostles, - during the 'apostolic age', - were also given the power to heal, as a sign to the Jews to confirm the truth of the Gospel. However, they did not heal everyone either ... for example, the apostle Paul had his 'thorn in the flesh' ... he also shared with the Galatians, **4:13** *Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first. ...* and he referred to Timothy's condition, **I Tim. 5:23** *Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities. ...* Why didn't Paul go to Timothy, lay his hands on him, invoke the power of the Holy Spirit, and heal him? It wasn't because Timothy lacked faith, but it was because it was not God's will to heal him that way. ... The healing ministry was not a convenience

for Christians, but a sign from God, - particularly to the Jews of the old covenant, - of the validity of the apostolic message concerning the Messiah.

We are no longer living in the apostolic age, - the apostles ended with John. Of course, God can and does heal when it is His purpose so to do. When we sit at the bedside of someone who is ill, the question is, what does God want? What is His purpose in their illness? God can heal that person, but will He? ... *Will* He heal the person in that bed, or has He another plan to demonstrate His glory through that person's weakness? Sometimes He brings healing to that person, and sometimes He doesn't, but through the faithfulness of the one who is suffering, He is displaying His purposes, **I Cor. 10:13** *There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it ...* **II Cor. 12:9** *And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

Someday all sickness and death will be eradicated, - **Rev. 21:4** *God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away, - ...* There will be no Zimmer frames or walking sticks, no tubes or dialysis, no slurring of the speech, there will be nothing reminding us of the restraints of this life for the power of Christ to save the sinner is the same power of Christ which will heal from all infirmities and conditions. ... No more strokes, no more heart attacks, no more cancers, no more of anything to threaten God's new creation. He will overrule!

Look at our story again, *Jesus came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up; and immediately the fever left her. ... the Great Physician met her need completely ...* At the very moment Jesus drew alongside and took her hand, *the fever left her. ...* And then, this woman got up off her bed, *and she ministered [διακονέω] unto them.* ... That's another 'immediately'!

She got up, she went into the kitchen, and she prepared a full meal for Jesus, Simon, Andrew, James, John ... and anyone else who was in the household! She had a new life in Christ, - her transformation was because of Him. ... In a greater way, in Christ, each of us has been given a new life, and there is nothing can take that new life from us because Jesus has guaranteed, **Jn. 10:28** *I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. ...* And that eternal life is forever, **Jn. 14:1** *Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. ² In my Father's house are many mansions: if it*

were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also ... **II Cor. 5:8** absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

That's the victory-plan of God for every believer, and those are the promises upon which we are depending, **I Jn. 3:2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. ³ And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. ... **I Cor. 15:57** thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.