

1. Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow! (2Q 2010—Health and Healing)

Biblical material: Matt. 22:37, 38; Rom. 12:1; Eph. 2:8, 9; 5:2; Col. 3:13; 2 Tim. 1:9; 1 John 4:10, Psalm 103:1.

Quotes

- In nothing do men approach so nearly to the gods, as in giving health to men. *Cicero*
- Life is not merely being alive, but being well. *Martial*
- Health and good estate of body are above all gold. *Apocrypha: Ecclesiasticus 30:15*
- There's lots of people in this world who spend so much time watching their health that they haven't the time to enjoy it. *Josh Billings*
- Health is a large word. It embraces not the body only, but the mind and spirit as well;... and not today's pain or pleasure alone, but the whole being and outlook of a man. *James H. West*
- It's no coincidence that four of the six letters in health are "heal." *Ed Northstrum*

Questions

Should we view suffering as a reason to praise? When ill-health strikes, how does this affect our relationship to God? What does God want for all of us? How do we see the great controversy playing out in the area of health and healing? How did Jesus reveal God's intent in his miracles of healing? How does healing show us God?

Bible discussion

Jesus, who reveals God to us, explains what he really wants: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to you! So often I wanted to gather your children like a mother hen gathers her chicks under her wings—but you wouldn't let me." (Matt. 22:37 FBV). God always desires our best, and our response should be one of dedication to such a loving Lord: "So I urge you, my brothers and sisters, because of God's compassion for you, to dedicate your bodies as a living, holy offering that will please God, which is the sensible way to worship him." (Romans 12:1 FBV). God has made us what we are, and our lives should be dedicated to goodness and right (Eph. 2:8, 9), tolerant and kind (Col. 3:13). We are his people by his grace (2 Tim. 1:9), by his love (1 John 4:10), so we should praise him (Ps. 103:1).

Comment

"An appreciation of the love, the power, and the majesty of our God should lead us to an attitude of praise, even in the worst of situations." (Sabbath afternoon's lesson). Perhaps the best response to this summary perspective would be, "Go back and read Job" and see what he said. It's certainly not the best advice to those who are suffering in pain... More significantly comes the question that if God is good, why does he allow such terrible suffering.

The truth is that as we begin this new quarter studying health and healing we see that God is both Creator and Sustainer, and wishes us to have happy, healthy lives. But we live in a world of sin and suffering, and God wants to change all that—but he too has

to wait for his children as we live through the great controversy. However we should never forget God's words to his people, "I am the Lord who heals you." Ex. 15:26.

This is more than just physical healing, but it does involve this too. Think of the life of Jesus. What did he spend most of his ministry doing? Not preaching. Not even teaching. Not even performing amazing signs like the feeding of the 5,000. But those truly meaningful miracles of healing. That's what Jesus in his active ministry spent his time doing. What does that say to us?

What did Jesus say he came for? To show us the Father. And by performing so many miracles of healing, what does that say about our loving heavenly Father? That he wants to heal. He wants to cure us. He wants to restore us to perfect health.

Look again at Luke 5:17-26. We normally interpret this as proving that Jesus was indeed God—that he could truly forgive sins. And that the Pharisees thought Jesus blasphemous for saying he could forgive sins. But there's more! What is Jesus really doing here? Is he healing the man from his physical disability? Yes, certainly. Is he healing the man from his spiritual? Yes, as well. And what is more important? Physical cure or spiritual healing?

So what does salvation mean? Oh, that's easy—it means we're saved from something. Like people from a sinking ship? Yes, Exactly. But there's more to God's salvation than that. We have an old English word that is rather similar to salvation: "salve." As Jesus tells us in Revelation we're meant to put on eye salve. That's an ointment to cure our spiritual blindness, so that we may see, so that our eyes may be healed. So what is salvation? It's healing. Not being counted legally right before God. Christ's salvation is the healing process, beginning with our conversion and lasting until we meet the Lord face to face. Luke 7:50: "Your faith has saved you." Luke 8:48: "Your faith has healed you." Interesting! It's even more interesting when you discover that the actual words in the original are exactly the same—what Jesus told Mary was the same as what he said to the Syrophenician woman! The word translated healed in one case and saved in the other is identical.

Salvation means healing. Not so much about wiping recorded sins off the slate so that you can start with a clean slate, but healing the disease—the disease of sin. This is so important to realize. God is not checking off sins, forgiven or not. He's a kind and loving doctor, trying to heal us from the deadly, fatal disease of sin.

Ellen White Comments

For every trial, God has provided help. When Israel in the desert came to the bitter waters of Marah, Moses cried unto the Lord. The Lord did not provide some new remedy; He called attention to that which was at hand. A shrub which He had created was to be cast into the fountain to make the water pure and sweet. When this was done, the people drank of the water and were refreshed. In every trial, if we seek Him, Christ will give us help. Our eyes will be opened to discern the healing promises recorded in His word. The Holy Spirit will teach us how to appropriate every blessing that will be an antidote to grief. For every bitter draft that is placed to our lips, we shall find a branch of healing. {MH 248}

We are to do all in our power for the healing of the body; but we are to make the healing of the soul of far greater importance. {CH 272}