

Holy Week Devotions - Maundy Thursday: Sickness to Healing



“When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to Him, and He drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. This was to fulfill what was spoken through

the prophet Isaiah: ‘He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases.’” Matthew 8:16-17 (Original verse in Isaiah 53:4.)

For our fourth devotion of **Holy Week**, we are studying the following stanza of the True Lenten Discipline Poem:

FAST from thoughts of illness; FEAST on the healing power of God.

(Here is the full poem of True Lenten Discipline. Here are the devotions for Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday.)

What strikes me about this verse in Matthew is that every kind of infirmity is addressed by Jesus: spiritual, emotional, and physical diseases. We see just as many **illnesses** and problems in our times as were present in the Bible times—maybe even more. Jesus also wants *us* to be whole in mind, body, and spirit. That should always be our goal and desire too.

Physical Healing

I think many of us don't have any doubts about our **minds** and **spirits** being whole, but when it comes to our bodies, we struggle with that because so many people are not healed of diseases. It's difficult for us to fully understand why. But, I do feel that God wants us to pray for physical health and to control what we can in our lives so that we are healthy. The

Bible tells us that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19-20), and as such we need to care for our temple. This means watching what we eat, making sure we get enough rest, maintaining proper hygiene, exercising so that we are fit, living moral lives, and caring for ourselves if we get sick. Many physical problems can be avoided if we do these things—but not all of them.

I do believe that **God** wants us to seek healing for diseases like cancer, heart disease, autoimmune diseases, and the like. We are to pray continually for healing, and to use the resources of doctors, a healthy lifestyle, food supplements, and other treatments as God leads; we then leave the results up to Him. Whether we are healed to earth or healed to heaven, God loves us and desires the best for us.

Spiritual and Emotional Healing

We may think that physical **healing** is the most important type of healing, when in reality our spiritual state trumps everything else. Salvation—confessing our sins, accepting Jesus' death on the cross in atonement for our sins, and giving Him control of our lives— is only the first step in our walk with God. If we just stop there, we will miss the richness of a life on earth lived in the power of the Holy Spirit to God's glory. God wants us to grow, to be healed of any spiritual or emotional weaknesses and illnesses. **Jesus** tells us in John 10:10 that He has come so that we can have an abundant, full life.

Much of our emotional and spiritual state hinges on the things that we allow ourselves to “take in.” Philippians 4:8 tells us that our focus needs to be on the true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy things. By doing this, we renew our minds (Romans 12:2). What we think and reflect on is what we become (Proverbs 23:7). Philippians 4:9 then goes on to tell us that whatever things we have learned or received or heard from Jesus, we are to “put into

practice. And the *God of peace will be with you,*" (emphasis mine).

It's also a good idea to be in the habit of protecting our spirits by praying through Ephesians 6:10-20. Jesus realized that His followers would have spiritual battles, and the Bible tells us how to protect ourselves by putting on the full armor of God. Several years ago, I read these verses aloud daily as I prayed for my family each morning. To my surprise, after a few months I found that I had memorized the entire section without even trying! So, if there's a long section of scripture you want to memorize, get in the habit of reading it aloud every day.

Today, on this **Maundy Thursday** when Jesus celebrated the Last Supper with His apostles, let's put our focus and our prayers on the Great Physician and his ability to heal the things in our lives and in the lives of our loved ones that need to be healed.

Application: What in your life needs to experience the healing power of God? Are there any changes that you can make that will speed up your healing? What resources has God given you that you can take advantage of?

Prayer: Dear Jesus, We thank You that ALL things are under your feet, are subject to you. We ask for Your healing power to be unleashed for these specific things: _____ (you fill in the blank). Lead us to the people, resources, and lifestyle changes that will help us. We thank you for your mighty power that is at work in each of us. Amen.

You may find these other resources helpful: Are Your Walls Up?; Praise the Lord!