

THE OLD PATHS

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“Physical And Spiritual Illness”

Jarrod Jacobs

Many in this congregation, and in this area of Kentucky, have fallen victim to the “flu bug” in recent weeks. Many are fighting this illness right now and feel miserable. In addition to this, we have brethren in the congregation who are fighting cancer, and other severe physical problems. These folks are striving daily to overcome these diseases as best they can. We know there are times each year when illnesses flare up, but this time it has been especially bad, it seems. We need to keep these folks in our prayers, as well as show kindness and generosity to them in other ways (I Thess. 5:17; Matt. 7:12, 22:39, 25:36, 43; Jas. 2:15-18, 5:15-16).

I find it more than a coincidence that the Bible makes a comparison to physical and spiritual illness on several occasions. When speaking about the sins of the nation of Israel, God said, *“Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment”* (Isa. 1:5-6). In speaking about the sins of a nation, God compared their sins to someone stricken with a grave illness. Similar descriptions are given by David when he said his *“wounds stink and are corrupt,”* referring to his sins in his life (Ps. 38:3-5). Hosea (Hosea 5:12-13) and many others said similar things when comparing sin in the lives of people to illness or disease.

Jesus used this imagery when describing the sin of the people. On one occasion when Jesus was criticized for associating with the publicans and harlots, He responded, *“They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance”* (Mk. 2:17). Notice how the Lord equates physical illness with spiritual problems. Whether one is physically sick, or spiritually sick, Jesus said

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these folks needed a “physician”! In this case, the spiritually sick needed Jesus. He was exactly where He needed to be! Jesus also called some men “blind” due to their rebellion against the truth (Matt. 23:16-17; Jn. 9:40-41). In Matthew 9, when Jesus healed the paralyzed man who had been lowered into the room by his friends, Christ equated healing the physically ill with the spiritually ill so that folks understood He has the power to forgive man’s sin (Matt. 9:6).

Illness, disease, and finally death has not come from God, but is a consequence of sin (Gen. 3:16-19). Thus, we deal with these problems daily. Whether we are the ones suffering, or we are the care-givers to those who have the problem, we have to deal with illnesses almost daily.

While we cannot always control the physical illnesses, the bacteria, and viruses that enter our bodies, we can control the lusts, and sinful behavior that can enter our minds! We control this by being “sober” and “vigilant” (I Pet. 5:8). We control this by thinking on the right things (Phil. 4:8) and then acting on that truth (Phil. 4:9)! We can control our thoughts, and thus control our speech (Jas. 3)! We do this by resisting the devil and not yielding to temptation (Jas. 4:7)! This is a necessary thing, for sin has far worse consequences than any physical illness (Jn. 8:24; Rev. 21:8; Matt. 25:41)!

The next time we are caring for those who are ill, or when we are ill ourselves, let us remember the origins of illness. Also, let us take the time to examine our souls, and make sure they are not spiritually ill (II Cor. 13:5)! If we are spiritually sick, then go to the Great “physician” (Lk. 5:31) and get the healing that can only come from the blood of Christ, the grace of God, and the obedience He expects from each of us (Titus 2:11-12; Mk. 16:16; Matt. 26:28; Acts 2:38)!

Can We Receive The Gift Of The Holy Spirit?

Joel Raulerson

In Acts 2:38-39 Peter says, “*Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our*

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God calls to himself.” The study of the Holy Spirit is a confusing thing to a lot of people. Some claim Him to be just a feeling. Others will say that He gives miraculous powers to us today. While still others claim that the Holy Spirit will reveal knowledge and talks to them. How can we know what the Holy Spirit does today? Does He do anything today? How can we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit talked about in Acts 2?

First, we have to notice that there is a difference between the “gift” of the Holy Spirit and the “gifts” of the Holy Spirit. The “gifts” of the Holy Spirit refer to the miraculous abilities bestowed upon the first century Christians (1 Cor. 12:4, 8-10). These miraculous “gifts” of the Holy Spirit had a time and place in the first century. The whole truth had not yet been revealed. Those folks did not have access to printed Bibles like we do today. In the first century, while the Bible was still being written, these miracles were a way for God to show that He approved what was being taught (1 Cor. 12:1-2). Some had the miraculous ability of knowledge, some could prophesy, some could speak in tongues, perform miracles, etc. However, these miraculous “gifts” of the Holy Spirit were meant to be temporary things (1 Cor. 13:8-10). Now that we have access to the complete word of God, we have no need for the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit. Despite what some may claim, no one living today has access to miraculous powers. We cannot receive them because there is no need for them since we have God’s complete word.

If we understand that the “gifts” of the Holy Spirit were only supposed to be temporary, why does Acts 2:39 say that we can receive the “gift” of the Holy Spirit? It is because the “gift” of the Holy Spirit is different from “gifts.” The “gift” of the Holy Spirit encompasses all spiritual blessings that Christians can access. While the “gifts” of the Holy Spirit were temporary, the “gift” of the Holy Spirit is meant for all those throughout time that wish to follow God’s commands (Tit. 1:2-3). Those who belong to Christ have access to all the spiritual blessings He gives. Ephesians 1:3 says, *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,”*

The Holy Spirit is alive and well today. Each person has access to His “gift” if he will repent of his sins and be baptized (Acts 2:38). You will receive salvation from your sins, the spiritual blessings in Christ, the hope of Heaven, fellowship with God, etc. Once you have been baptized and followed God’s plan of salvation just as the first century Christians, in like

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manner you will gain access to the “gift” of the Holy Spirit. Doesn’t this sound wonderful? Who wouldn’t want to receive the “gift” of the Holy Spirit? Have you become a Christian and received the “gift” of the Holy Spirit?



Spotlight On A Bible Verse: I Peter 4:11

“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.” Peter’s words closely parallel the words of Colossians 3:17. They are a reminder that in whatever we say or do, it needs to be for the glory of God! When we speak, let us speak as the oracles (utterances) of God. What has God “uttered”? We will only know when we spend time in God’s book (Eph. 3:4)! Our actions need to be a reflection of what Christ did. Christ left *“us an example, that ye should follow his steps”* (I Pet. 2:21). When we speak and act according to the will of God, we also bring glory to God. Truly, this is our reason for being here! We ought to live so as to glorify God and bring others to Him (Matt. 5:14-16). Are we speaking and acting in a way that reflects the command of I Peter 4:11? If not, why not?
- Jarrod Jacobs



“I want the truth, give me book, chapter, and verse!”

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