

**Subject: Christ the Great Physician**

**Scripture: Matthew 8:1-17**

We live in a sick and needy world. Sickness and disease have been a terrible problem ever since the fall of man in the Garden of Eden.

**Job 14:1** *Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.*

This verse describes life on earth. Our life is brief and our life has burdens. One of our main burdens is sickness, suffering, and death. Even in modern times and with all of our modern medicine we can't escape from it. As we go through this pandemic we appreciate our medical professionals and how God uses them to help us. None of us can do what they do, so we are thankful for their knowledge, skill, commitment, and kindness to care for us.

In Bible times disease was rampant and many people suffered greatly. Plagues occurred and they stopped only after they had run their course. Simple infections often were fatal. When Jesus healed the sick, the amazing news must have traveled fast.

## **1. CHRIST'S TENDER COMPASSION**

**Matthew 4:23-25** <sup>23</sup> *And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.* <sup>24</sup> *And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.* <sup>25</sup> *And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan.*

In verse 23, Jesus healed all kinds of sickness and disease. In verse 24, Jesus healed three specific kinds of people: demoniacs, people with illness caused by demons; epileptics, those who had seizures (thought to be caused by the light of the moon, hence the term "lunatic"); and paralytics, those who were crippled and paralyzed. Jesus cured them all, regardless of their problems.

What was it that caused Jesus to heal the sick and afflicted? He had compassion on them.

**Matthew 14:14** *And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick.*

**Matthew 20:34** *So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him.*

## **2. CHRIST'S HEALING POWER**

He healed people with all kinds of problems. We find six characteristics of Christ's healing power: 1) He healed with a word or a touch; 2) He healed instantly; 3) He healed completely (no therapy or rehab was needed); 4) He was able to heal anyone (no case was too hard); 5) He healed organic diseases (not invisible things like back pain or headaches, but crippled legs, withered hands, blind eyes, paralysis, even death). He healed in public and private. His physical presence was not always needed. His healing power was amazing. Never has there been anything like it. His healing power was proof of His deity.

A. Christ healed a leper (8:1-4)

Vs. 2 – The leper worshiped and believed Christ could heal him. He had no doubts about Christ’s ability to heal him, although at that time there was no cure for leprosy. His only question was if Christ was willing to heal him.

Vs. 3 – Christ touched him and healed him instantly – Jesus did not hesitate to touch him even though He would become ceremonially unclean (Lev. 13:45-46).

Vs. 4 – Christ commanded him to tell no one, but go to the priest as a testimony. This would be in obedience to OT scripture (Lev. 14:1-32) and would prove to the priests that the leper was supernaturally healed and Jesus was indeed the promised Messiah.

B. Christ healed a paralyzed servant (8:5-13)

Vs. 6 – The centurion’s servant was paralyzed and suffering greatly. A centurion was a Roman officer in charge of 100 men, but he was obviously a compassionate man.

Vs. 7-9 – Christ promised to come and heal the servant. The centurion responded in humility and faith. He had considerable authority and he understood Christ’s superior authority.

Vs. 10-12 – Christ was impressed by the centurion’s faith. This Gentile man demonstrated greater faith than any Jew. Christ predicted that many Gentiles will be in heaven, and He warned that many Jews (children of the kingdom) would miss out and be in hell. The purpose of this story is to show that a Gentile had real faith, while many Jews rejected Him.

Vs. 13 – Christ assured the centurion that his servant would be healed. Jesus honors faith because faith honors Him (Heb. 11:6).

C. Christ healed Peter’s mother-in-law (8:14-15)

Vs. 15 – Christ touched her and healed her instantly. She arose and served them. Whenever the Lord heals, we should use our strength to serve others and glorify Him. Christ healed in many ways: by a direct command (8:3); from a distance (8:13); and by touch (8:15).

D. Christ healed many who were demon-possessed and sick (8:16-17)

Vs. 16 – Christ healed many who were controlled by demons. Demons (evil spirits) actually controlled the bodies of their victims, sometimes speaking through them, causing mental derangement, violent behavior, or making them unable to speak. Christ healed many who had physical ailments.

In Matthew 8:1-16, Christ healed different people at different times and places and in different ways. It is worth noting that Christ healed the leper in response to his faith. He healed the paralyzed servant in response to the centurion’s faith. He healed Peter’s mother-in-law and many who were demon-possessed and sick without any mention of faith at all. We can conclude that Jesus often healed in response to faith, but His power was never controlled or limited by a person’s faith. So-called “faith-healers” often say that people are not healed because they don’t have enough faith to be healed. We may not have enough faith, but Jesus has enough power.

### **3. CHRIST'S DEEPER CONCERN**

Like a good doctor, Jesus was concerned about the source of man's trouble. Like a good doctor, He probed and brought the real problem to light. And like a good doctor, He provided the right cure.

Though Christ healed the sick, He was even more deeply concerned about their spiritual condition. He knew that every person He healed would eventually die. He knew that even those He raised from the dead would die again. He knew that every person had the deadly underlying problem of heart trouble. The heart of the man's problem is the problem of the human heart.

**Jeremiah 17:9-10**<sup>9</sup> *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*<sup>10</sup> *I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.*

As the Great Physician, Christ did two things to cure the problem:

#### A. He preached and taught the truth

In Matthew 4:23, we find three main aspects of Christ's ministry: teaching, preaching, and healing. He preached the truth about sin and repentance. He taught people about the need to be born again and to be forgiven. He warned people about judgment and eternal punishment. He knew that every person would eventually die, so He told them to repent of sins, put their trust in Him, and live in the light of eternity.

#### B. He died and rose again

In Matthew 8:17, we see a link to Isaiah 53, where Jesus is described as dying for sins and in the place of the sinner. That whole passage is a prophecy about Christ's death on the cross as the sinner's substitute. This is how Christ took care of our deepest problem, the root problem of sin. The question is often asked and debated: "Is healing provided in the atonement?" The answer is yes. But the healing Christ provided is ultimate healing beyond this life. When Christ ministered during His life on earth He provided temporary healing and demonstrated the power of His coming death and resurrection to reverse all the effects of the curse. It was through His death on the cross that He provided permanent healing of sin and its consequences.

Death is our real enemy and our constant problem. Christ is the only cure. We are right to be concerned about the corona virus and those who are affected by it. But there is a much greater issue and that is the problem of human sin and mortality that we all face. If we have learned anything from this crisis surely we have been reminded about the uncertainty and the brevity of life. We all need Christ the Great Physician. He is the only one who can reverse the effects of the curse on sin.