

Title: Help Me Feel Better

Theme: The Church of God

Focal Scripture: Mark 16:18

Resource: "The Church of God as Revealed in Scripture"

Date: November 18, 2012

Place: DCOG

Big Idea: God wants us to know that his healing presence is real and can be a part of our spiritual journey.

Today we begin a week that leads to Thanksgiving. As a nation, a community, and a congregation we have much to be thankful for but it is not always easy.

At the end of October a terrible storm hit our east coast and proceeded to deliver horrific destruction throughout the northeast quadrant of the United States. There was a loss of life, personal possessions, and livelihood. – God, help us feel better!

Several members of our congregation have had serious surgeries and the awful hand of Cancer has touched some others. Sickness, disease, and accidents have brought pain to our families. – God, help us feel better!

Our job market is limited. The huge companies of our past are closing or moving away from our area. For the businesses left behind the wages being offered are less than they were a generation ago. People are being paid less or not at all. -- God, help us feel better!

I wonder sometimes if God isn't singing that song of years ago, "I never promised you a rose garden." Many Christians and potential Christians are under the false assumption that a decision for Christ is a guarantee of prosperity, good health, and heaven on earth.

* Remember that Forrest Gump went through tragedy after tragedy on his way to moments of success. He said, "Life is like a box of chocolates." You never know what you are going to get.

Well, I think there are some things we can know.

Through Christ, we can know the hand of God and discover, in the midst of difficulties, that we can experience the "healing" hand of God.

God has made some specific and general promises that offer something on certain conditions.

1. Examples of general promises:

Matthew 21:22

If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."

Mark 11:24

Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

John 15:7

If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.

John 16:23

In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.

If these were the only verses, they alone would furnish sufficient ground for belief in God's divine help. But, let's look further...

2. Specific promises:

(In the great commission, Mark records)

Mark 16:18

They will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well."

* Arlo Newell says, "the healing promised here was not to be done through the apostles, but through those to whom the apostles were commanded to preach and who chose to believe."

Does God want his people to experience healing and help?

- I see Rick Strickler here, a few years ago a doctor gave Kathy no hope for him.
- Jim Poindexter sits back there. It wasn't that long ago when he was very sick in the hospital.

James 5:14-15

Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven.

In other words, Jesus taught the apostles to pray for healing and commissioned them to teach other to do so, which implies his intention to answer such prayers.

* Do you ever have any projects around the house that you intend to fix? A delay may have nothing to do with the fact that you don't want to get out of your lazyboy. Do you have the tools to accomplish the project?

3. Gifts of healing are talked about in the scriptures:

1 Cor. 12:9-11

To another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, ¹⁰to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.

1 Cor. 12:28

²⁸And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others...

These are gifts not only belonging to the Apostles but to whosoever God might be pleased to give them.

4. So the Bible tells us that there is a divine healing that is physical and granted by divine power. – God, help us to feel better!

I'm sure that you noticed, as Dr. Newell writes, that God's "divine healing is not natural, but supernatural. It is a miraculous manifestation that transcends nature."

- A. God's will is generally to heal the sick
- B. However, He is more concerned about spiritual and moral excellence.
- C. Thus, God may allow us to go through periods of suffering.
- D. Healing is not parallel with salvation. God's will is to always to save the soul, though not always to heal the body.

5. So, what are the conditions for healing?

A. The primary and all-important condition is faith.

- ✠ Unbelief in Nazareth hindered the miraculous work of Christ.
- ✠ The disciples could not heal the demoniac son.

Mark 9:23

"'If you can'?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for him who believes."

B. The belief that we are talking about here is a trustful and confident stepping out on the divine promise as it applies to the present need.

- ✠ A bold reliance upon God to bring his help to a particular need at a particular time.
- ✠ It is a faith that connects God's help with the consciousness of the one who prays.

* Yes, there are moments in time when God, supernaturally, reaches down from heaven with help and healing. But not everyone is healed. Not everyone gets a super job. Not everyone has a huge, beautiful home, or a snazzy car.

6. We ask God to help make it better but sometimes it only seems to get worse.

2 Cor. 12:7-10

To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.

⁸Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. ⁹But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. ¹⁰That is why, for Christ's

sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

- A. Did Paul believe in God's divine help? Of course he did.
- B. Is God still king over the entire universe? Of course he is.
- C. Are you wise enough to fully understand the mind of God? Of course we are not.

Conclusion: So what is it that God wants us to learn today?

- ✠ God can help make it better.
- ✠ God cares about our situation.
- ✠ God wants us to demonstrate faith.
- ✠ God wants us to trust even if it doesn't turn out like we want.
- ✠ God will help. He has an eternity in heaven reserved for his faithful.

2 Cor. 12:10

¹⁰That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

God, thank you for helping us feel better!