

You Need a Doctor

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To you God says, "I have seen his ways and I will heal him" (Isaiah 57:18). How does he heal? By sending Jesus Christ into this world to die for the sins of sinners and rise again from the dead to give them everlasting life. "The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings" (Mal. 4:2). When a paralytic was brought to Jesus, he forgave his sins. The Pharisees, knowing that only God can forgive sins, "said within themselves, 'This Man blasphemes!' But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, 'Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, "Your sins are forgiven you," or to say, "Arise and walk"? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins'—then He said to the paralytic, 'Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house' " (Matt. 9:3-6).

Only God can cure the ultimate diseases of sin and death. Jesus, who is God incarnate, is the only one who can heal you. You need only sincerely pray from your heart, "Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed" (Jer. 17:14). "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23).

If this is your prayer, and you mean it, then you have been forgiven and become a follower of Jesus Christ. This means that you need to associate with his people in his church, where his infallible Word the Bible is faithfully preached and practiced. He says, "Take up the cross and follow me" (Mark 10:21).

Everyone, of course, needs a doctor at one time or another, even if only for a physical examination. If you have an ache or a pain that you cannot explain, you go to your family doctor and have him check it out. If something is wrong, he will prescribe a cure. But before any doctor can help you, you must admit that you have a problem, go for help, and accept the treatment. With the cost of health care today, the thought of needing a doctor can cause anxiety!

I would like to tell you about a doctor who has a cure for your greatest sickness, and he does not charge a cent. The problem is that you probably do not know that you have a terminal disease! In fact, you really do know. It's just that you will not admit it. You are in a state of what doctors call "denial." With all the talk about the health care "crisis" it is amazing that the one disease that every person on earth has is almost totally overlooked. That disease is what the Bible calls sin. It is an epidemic like nothing the Department of Health and the Surgeon General have imagined in their worst nightmares. It is infinitely more deadly than the Ebola virus.

God says: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9). While you try to deny it he goes on to say, "I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings" (Jer. 17:10). He knows what you are like on the inside. He knows that although you may never have stolen anything, you have envied those who have more than you. He knows that although you may never have murdered anyone, you have hated those who have wronged you. He knows that although you may never have committed adultery, you have secretly lusted after someone not

your spouse. And worst of all, he knows that whatever good you have done, you have done it not out of love for your neighbor or for God, but out of love for yourself.

There was a very fine young man in Jesus' day who was a rich young ruler (Mark 10:17-22). He inquired of Jesus how he might inherit eternal life. He felt that he had kept all of the Ten Commandments since he was a boy. He was the kind of person we would all admire. But Jesus, the Great Physician, told him something about himself that he really did not want to hear. Jesus said, "One thing you lack: go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross and follow me" (Mark 10:21). He loved money more than he loved God or his neighbor.

A good doctor will always tell you the truth about your condition. The Bible says that when Jesus told the young man of his true condition, "looking at him, [he] loved him" (Mark 10:21). Jesus wants you to know, even as you read this tract, that you are not spiritually well. You have a fatal disease. And if you do not accept his diagnosis and his cure, the consequence is eternal separation from God in hell. "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). On the day of judgment "The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 13:41-42).

Jesus said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance" (Matt. 9:12-13). Jesus was talking to the religious teachers of his day, who thought that because of their religious practices they deserved eternal life. They thought that they were healthy. Jesus told them that he would save only those who admit that they are diseased with sin. If you refuse to accept his diagnosis, sadly, you must face the consequences.

But if you repent and turn from your denial of God's diagnosis, he promises to heal you completely. Jesus healed all kinds of sick people during his earthly ministry. He even raised the dead. After Jesus told the disciples, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:25), they wondered how anyone could be saved. Jesus responded, "With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible" (Mark 10:27). This is the message of the Bible. We cannot cure ourselves. We cannot shape up. We cannot pull ourselves together. We cannot be good enough, or get the solution from a psychiatrist or a self-help book. We cannot pay enough money for a cure. Only God himself can save us from sin and death.