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Trinity Lutheran Church
Decatur, Illinois
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The Kingdom Of God Is Breaking In – One Miracle At A Time!

God's PEACE is ALWAYS YOURS in Jesus.

Hear the Word of God from Mark 1,

“As soon as they left the synagogue, they went.....to the home of Simon and Andrew. Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told Jesus about her. So He went to her, took her hand, and helped her up. At once the fever left her, and she began to wait on them.

That evening, after sunset, the people brought to Jesus all of the sick and demon-possessed....and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons.

The next day, Jesus said, ‘Let us go somewhere else.....so I can preach to others. That is why I came!’”

DEAR FRIENDS IN CHRIST,

Jesus had just finished preaching, and casting out a demon, in Capernaum, so He, and His disciples decide to spend the night at Simon's house. And we're told that Simon's mother-in-law was in bed. Luke says she was, “*controlled by a great fever*”. So Jesus goes and looks in on her. Next, Luke reports, “*Jesus rebuked her fever*”, which is the same greek word for “rebuking” demons and storms on the sea. And we're told, “*The fever left her.*” In fact, after Jesus heals her, she's feeling so good that she gets out of bed, and starts making some “eats” for everyone – this is the fervent love for neighbor that flows from faith in Jesus.

Pretty soon the word gets out, and a huge crowd of diseased and demonized people show up on Peter's front lawn. And we're told that Jesus worked all night healing the sick and casting out demons, so by sunrise He's exhausted. But when the people urge Him to stay – because this kind of healing sure beats doctors and HMO's – Jesus says, ***“I MUST go and preach the Good News of the Kingdom of God in other towns, for this is why I came!”*** And He leaves a bunch of diseased and demonized people behind on Peter's front lawn, who weren't healed. Now why would Jesus do this? Doesn't Jesus care? I suspect we've all asked the question a few times in our lives.

But Jesus' goal is to give us MAXIMUM healing, not MINIMAL healing! Jesus came to let the whole world in on the Good News that ***“God made peace with the whole world through Jesus' blood, shed on the cross.”*** That's God's MAXIMUM healing, that will get you out of your grave alive, and into God's heaven for all eternity! And that's the REAL HEALING that everyone needs. Jesus came and did much more than heal peoples' diseases. Jesus came to forgive every sin that made God mad at us, to set captives free, raise the dead, deliver everyone from satan's tyranny, and to declare the guilty, not guilty, even though He knows we're guilty. News this good should tickle your toes, and give you an ocean of emotion, and a quiver in your liver. Why? Here's why. You and I, guilty sinners, are set free from the sins the condemn us, the death that dogs us, the devil who demonizes us, and the diseases that threaten us, and we are risen, in Christ, to die no more. That's why!

But, if it is the Good News of God's Word that Jesus' blood forgives every sin we ever did wrong, that actually saves us, then why the miracles? The miracles, first of all, are the evidence that our Savior has arrived. Isaiah 35 promised, ***“Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the weak knees; and say to those with fearful hearts, “Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, . . . , he will come to save you.”⁵ Then will the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped.⁶ Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Then water will gush forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert.”***

Secondly, Jesus' miracles, validate Jesus' claim that He was God, and that He had all of the authority of God to do what He did. In Mark 2, people brought a paralyzed man to Jesus to heal. As soon as Jesus saw the paralyzed man, the first thing Jesus said was ***"Be of Good Cheer, your sins are forgiven!"*** And that ticked off the Jewish leaders, who said, ***"Who does this Jesus think He is? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"*** And Jesus forcefully responded, ***"Which is easier for me to do? To say to the paralytic: 'Your sins are forgiven', or to say 'Get up, take up your mat and go home.'? But so that you may know that I, the Son of Man, have the authority to forgive sins, I say to you, 'Get up. Take up your mat. And go home!' And the paralyzed man, got up, in full view of them all, and returned home."***

However, the miracles are NOT Jesus' normal mode of operation, because what you and I need the most is not a miracle, but a Savior. What we need more than being saved from CoVid and Cancer is to be saved from sin and eternal death. When Jesus does use miracles it's to reveal our Savior, and to validate that you can take Jesus at His word when He says, ***"Be of Good Cheer, your sins are forgiven!"*** and ***"Whoever lives and believes in Me, will never die eternally."*** In other words, your greatest need in life is NOT renovation, but salvation! What you and I need more than an Extreme Makeover, is a way out of our graves alive! No matter how many people Jesus healed of their diseases, eventually they got sick again and died. And even if Jesus were to miraculously heal you and me of a disease, we will eventually die too, because we still have sin in the members of our body. In other words, even when Jesus healed Simon's mother-in-law, He didn't make her bullet-proof. Simon's mother-in-law still wasn't able to run faster than a speeding bullet, stop a speeding locomotive, or leap tall buildings in a single bound. But what the miracle did was to reveal to us the One Who does have all power over our diseases, death, and demons. The miracles validate Jesus' promises of an even greater healing in John 11, ***"I Am The Resurrection and The Life, whoever believes in Me, will live, even if he dies."*** Now that's "News You Can Use" in the emergency room, the ICU, the funeral home, and in the cemetery. While miracles are spectacular gifts of God, they can't save you from God's wrath. Only Jesus' forgiving blood saves you from God's wrath! A miracle may be an unbelievable, life-changing event; but, because of sin, you and I will still die. And while postponing death may be good for a while, to let us share the love of Jesus with more people, a miracle can also postpone our going home to heaven. Are you sure you want that?

What finally saves us is not a miraculous healing of our body but the spiritual healing, of our soul and body, through Jesus' forgiving blood. Jesus' blood is what will finally get us out of our graves alive, to live with God, forever, in the paradise of heaven.

As a result, every cold, every sniffle, every virus, every cancer cell and clogged artery - whatever the disease may be - are signs of the death that sin brought into our lives. But Jesus has stepped onto the scene rebuking diseases, storms, demons, and death in order to set us free, not only from sin, but from all of the consequences of our sin!

Now let's be clear. It isn't God's Ultimate will that you and I are dogged by diseases, demons, and death. It isn't God's Ultimate will that cells turn cancerous, arteries get clogged, blood vessels burst, and bullets hit their mark; nor is God judging you when they do, if you are His child. How do we know? The Lord Himself tells us so in Romans 8:1, "***There is now NO condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus!***" However, for an unbeliever diseases, demons, and death are God's punishment. But even then, they are still not the full-blown punishment of hell. In fact, the Lord allows the unbeliever to taste just a bit of the sufferings their sins deserve, in the hopes that they'll turn from their sins, and turn to the grace of God that is already theirs' in Jesus, before the day comes when they'll experience the full blown wrath their sins deserve.

However, as a child of God, your suffering may be the exact same suffering that your heathen neighbor is facing, but in your case God is not judging you. In your case, the Lord is using your suffering to build you up in your most holy faith, and to prepare you to bear witness to your heathen neighbor who is suffering exactly as you are; so that you can let them know they're included in the death and resurrection of Jesus too. You and I have the privilege of letting our unbelieving neighbor know that God created everything perfect at the beginning, and He's going to make everything perfect again on the last day, and all of the suffering and death we experience in life, are an INTRUSION into God's perfect plan not caused by God, but caused by our sin.

In a sin-cursed world, a deadly virus may still infect you, a car accident touch you, or a stray bullet hit you, instead of its' intended target; but rather than making you and me bullet proof, shock proof, or disease proof, God has made us grave proof and hell proof. In fact, God often uses viruses, cancer cells, bullets, car wrecks, and whatever else kills us, as His servants, to take us from this life, and bring us to Himself in heaven. But the Good News that Jesus preached is no matter how diseased or dying we may be, we are fully forgiven, completely reconciled to God, and headed home to heaven, in the death of Jesus. That's how powerful and healing the blood of Jesus is!

So might still wonder, why doesn't Jesus bring all sufferings and diseases to an end right now? He could! And why did Jesus leave the rest of the diseased and demon-possessed in Capernaum, when He left to preach the Good News to the other cities? And why doesn't He just wipe out CoVid and Cancer today? He could do it! So why doesn't He? The short answer is: Healings and Miracles don't save you. Jesus' blood saves you! You can be disease-free and pain free your entire life, but you'll still go to hell without Jesus. On the other hand, your body may be racked with cancer and CoVid, and near death; and yet, in Jesus you're already risen from the dead to die no more, so that, at the very moment you die physically, you are already so completely saved in Jesus, that the Bible speaks of the believer's body as "sleeping" when it dies, and how many of us are afraid of sleeping. And when a believer dies, the Lord instantly takes their soul heaven, only to have their bodies rise again on the last day perfect and bullet proof. Jesus says in John 5, "***Whoever believes in Me already has eternal life, and will not be condemned! He has already cross over from death, unto life!***"

Miraculous healings are not God's main goal. He'll give us brand new bodies on the day of the Great Resurrection. For now, God's main goal is spiritual healing – "***Be of Good Cheer, your sins are forgiven!***" – so that we will indeed arrive safely in heaven.

In closing, if the truth be told, Jesus did heal everyone's diseases and death on the cross. Isaiah 53 promises us, "***The Lord laid on Him (Jesus) the iniquities of us all, and by His stripes we are healed.***" And Psalm 103 declares, "***He heals all of your diseases.***" Whether Jesus does so on this side of heaven, or when He takes us home to heaven, either way, He will heal all of our diseases. If not sooner, than on the day Jesus takes us home to heaven, our fever will break, the demons will let go, the cancer will disappear, our hearts will be healed, and death will be forever defeated! **Page 5**

If Jesus chooses to use a little duct tape of a miracle to hold your body together for a little while longer, that's His business; and it is okay to pray for a miracle, as long as you pray that His will be done. But don't blame God for being unjust, or unloving, if He doesn't heal your disease now, or give you a miracle. And don't listen to the devil's lie that your sickness is a sign of God's wrath. Jesus' death and resurrection are the end of God's wrath. Jesus's forgiveness is the Anti-dote for the cancer of sin. Jesus' blood is the anti-venom against the devil's attacks and lies; and those life-giving cures, are dispensed to us in the Lord's water, Word, and Supper. In Jesus' forgiving death and victorious resurrection, God already sees you perfectly sinless, totally restored, completely healthy, and risen to die no more, even in our dying bodies. So, barring the postponement of a miracle, until the day we die, may every suffering and pain remind you of how Jesus suffered on the cross to heal you from sin, death, and hell. And may every healing you receive be a mini-resurrection, a visible sign of Jesus' resurrection, knowing that in Jesus, you too are risen to do no more, no matter how sick your body may be. Amen.