

PHYSICAL HEALING

Acts 14:8-10 ... “And in Lystra a certain man without strength in his feet was sitting, a cripple from his mother’s womb, who had never walked. This man heard Paul speaking. Paul, observing him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed, said with a loud voice, ‘Stand up straight on your feet?’ and he leaped and walked.”

There are many accounts in the Bible of people healed of disease and crippling conditions, such as we find in today’s verses. There are also accounts of people living their entire lives crippled or sick. I can mention several very godly men and women who effectively serve God despite serious health problems and crippling conditions. In today’s passage, the Apostle Paul was teaching in the Greek city of Lystra and saw a crippled man in the crowd. The man apparently did not seek healing, but the Holy Spirit gave Paul the discernment to see the man’s great faith. Paul then ordered the man, who had never walked since birth, to stand up healed. This public display of God’s healing power through Paul, gave him credibility among the people, which is probably why God healed the man in this manner.

It seems that God used Jesus and his disciples to heal people for similar reasons; to demonstrate their integrity and God’s power; God’s control over life and death. If Jesus had come to earth primarily to heal sickness, everyone would have been healed, not just a select few. It is a popular teaching today that you can merely “claim” your healing (or your prosperity) as a demonstration of your faith. There is a problem with this belief. If you proclaim your healing but are not healed, others may presume your faith is weak. God is sovereign. He has full control over life, health and death, and he may have vital reasons for you to remain crippled, ill or poor. Your faith is important, but it does not override God’s will or plan for your life. Of course, you are responsible for your poor health and safety if you are eating unhealthy food, letting vices control you, or taking inappropriate risks with your body.

Many godly people suffer from perpetual illness, blindness, and other crippling conditions. Some of them have served God for decades and led hundreds or thousands to the Lord. Their personal faith seems to have no limits, yet God has not healed them. Paul himself – author of most of the New Testament and the first missionary – suffered from some condition, which he called a “thorn in the flesh.” We do not know what his condition was, but it was apparently serious and there is no record that he was healed of it.

We cannot explain all that God does, but we can see in our own lives and the lives of others, how God works for his purpose. I have experienced poor health all my life, spending literally years in hospitals and beds due to a variety of serious illnesses and crippling conditions, coming close to death numerous times. It has made me dependent on God (rather than myself). It has also made me sympathetic to others who are sick or crippled. Blind Christians are excellent ministers to other blind people. Poor Christians are often more effective in ministering to poor people than rich believers. Whatever state your body is in, God has a purpose for your life. You can claim your healing if you like, but do not be discouraged if God chooses to let you remain in your broken condition so that you can more effectively minister to others who are broken.

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