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Body

1.

The Depth of Christ's Healing vv. 14-15

1.

Text. In vv. 14-15 we read of the depth of Christ's healing.

1.

14 And when Jesus entered Peter's house, he saw his mother-in-law lying sick with a fever.

2.

15 He touched her hand, and the fever left her, and she rose and began to serve him.

3.

The Scene. V. 14 presents the scene of the first miracle in this passage.

1.

Christ's concern for Peter.

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In this brief account we learn the depth of Christ's concern for Peter, by seeing how

Christ was concerned not only for Peter, but also for Peter's home and family.

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Christ's concern for Peter's marriage & wife.

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Notice Christ's concern for Peter's marriage and wife. This is one of the passages from which we learn that Peter was married. He had a wife.

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Because Christ cared specially for the mother of Peter's wife, we recognize that Christ approves of marriage as an ordinance instituted by God, and we find a corrective to the Roman Catholic belief that celibacy is more holy than marriage. It is not. For most people, marriage is more holy than celibacy. Rome forbids ministers to marry, but in doing so it fails to follow the godly example of Peter, from whom it believes the Pope derives an infallible authority! Christ did not disapprove of marriage as unholy, but rather approved of marriage, so long as it is a holy matrimony. If Christ's approval of Peter's marriage is too implicit for your taste, consider Paul's explicit approval in **1 Cor. 9:5**, "Do we not have the right to take along a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and
Cephas
?
"

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So you see that Christ's healing was not only aimed at healing the sickness itself. It was aimed at healing the sick, in the context of their whole life, throughout all their relationships. It was an expression of His compassion and concern for the whole life and health, in body and soul, of us His creatures, of us His people.

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Christ's concern for Peter's extended family

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Notice also Christ's concern for Peter's extended family. Christ healed Peter's mother-in-law. Peter probably was caring for his mother-in-law in her old age. Perhaps by this time she was a widow. Christ is concerned to help Peter continue to take care of his mother-in-law, that the honor and help Peter owed her would be given according to duty, and even beyond the call of duty.

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Christ's concern for Peter's household

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Notice also Christ's concern for Peter's household. We learn in this passage that Peter owned a house, or perhaps rented one. Peter was better provided-for than Christ. Though Christ did not own a house, and had " now here to lay his head
" (
Matt. 8:20
), though Christ dwelt in tents with us for a time, He is concerned that our tent, and our home, be provided for.

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Christ cares to make your home today holy and healthy. He taught us to ask the Father for our daily bread, and to trust that God will provide. And though today we are only pilgrims and strangers here on earth, and await the heavenly home Christ is preparing for us in glory.

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The Cure. V. 15 presents the cure of the illness.

1.

The Illness

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Notice first the illness. It was a "fever," an ailment common to all men, but this was an acute fever, according to Luke the physician. Christ is concerned about our suffering from great to small, even our suffering from the common cold. Christ said,

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Matthew 10:19-31

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29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father.

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30 But even the hairs of your head are all numbered.

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31 Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

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Reflecting on Christ's words here, Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 1 reminds us well that Christ our Savior is a great comfort amidst our present sufferings.

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Q. What is your only comfort in life and in death?

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A. That I am not my own, but belong-body and soul, in life and in death-to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ. He has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood, and has set me free from the tyranny of the devil. He also watches over me in such a way that not a hair can fall from my head without the will of my Father in heaven.

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The Manner: A Touch. Notice second the manner Christ employed in healing this woman: He touched her. This demonstrates Christ's concern and His power. It shows He is not merely interested in displaying His divine power, but He cares personally for those who suffer and is concerned to remove their pain. But it also displays His power—what physician can heal merely by touching his patient? But Christ "touched her hand, and the fever left her." There was no need of medicine, instruments, diagnosis or recovery rooms. Christ healed immediately with only a touch.

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The Restoration: Serving & the Sabbath

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Consider last the restoration Christ brought about. Peter's mother-in-law immediately "rose and began to serve Him." A moment before she had a great fever; now she needs no time to recover and regain her strength. Her restoration was complete, even perfect. Not only was she restored physically, but her first actions were actions of sanctified service to Christ Himself. Christ is concerned to heal you in body and soul, to give you life and health, a healthy home and family, in order that you may use them in service to Him.

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The Breadth of Christ's Healing v. 16

1.

Text. In v. 16 we learn of the breadth of Christ's healing.

1.

16 That evening they brought to him many who were oppressed by demons, and he cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick.

2.

Cast out Demons

1.

We see that Christ cast out demons with a word. We know that Satan's purpose in every trial is to tempt us away from obedience to God, and that he uses bodily illnesses for that purpose, as he did with Job. He can make special use of the diseases of the mind. During Christ's earthly ministry Satan appears to have been more active than at other times, in order to challenge Christ's dominion as the ruler of this world. All accounts of demonic possession in scripture agree that demonic possession aimed at the destruction of the person's soul, mind, and body, and made the person possessed a channel of Satan's hatred toward God. Demoniacs were frightening because they appeared to be completely under the control of Satan, unable to cast the demon out of themselves. But when Satan hurls his most vile evils at the Lord Jesus Christ, Jesus conquers Satan's power "with a word." With one little word. Martin Luther was right when he said,

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And though this world, with devils filled,
Should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God hath willed
His truth to triumph through us.
The prince of darkness grim,
We tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure,
For lo! his doom is sure;
One little word shall fell him.

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In the previous passage, the centurion believed Christ could heal by just saying a word. Now Matthew reminds you this centurion's faith has become sight; Christ heals "with a word."

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Healed the Sick

1.

The end of v. 16 says Christ "healed all who were sick." It is plain He healed them all, and healed them completely. There is no sickness too great for Christ's power to remedy, or too small for Christ's compassion to treat.

2.

The Point of Christ's Healing v. 17

1.

Text. Why did Christ heal the sick? And why does Matthew tell us about it? Matthew reveals the point of Christ's healing

in v. 17.

1.

17 This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: "He took our illnesses and bore our diseases."

2.

Messianic Fulfillment

1.

First, Jesus' miracles of healing were a fulfillment of God's promises about the coming Messiah, and so confirm that Jesus is the Messiah.

2.

Isaiah's Prophecy in Context

1.

Second, Jesus' healing ministry fulfilled a specific promise about the Messiah, found among Isaiah's prophecies concerning God's Suffering Servant in Is. 53. **Is. 53:4** reads, "Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. "
In context, Isaiah taught that although we would sinfully believe Jesus died on the cross for His own sins, in fact He died for
our
sins, and grieved because
we
grieved. His problems were not first
His
, but
ours
. Our problems became His only because He chose to take them upon Himself.

2.

The Apparent Differences. We can notice some apparent differences between Isaiah's words and Matthew's quotation. Isaiah speaks primarily of Christ's death on the cross, but Matthew speaks primarily of Christ's earthly ministry prior to His death. Isaiah speaks of eternal salvation; Matthew speaks of temporal blessings. Isaiah speaks of impurities of soul; Matthew speaks of bodily diseases. Isaiah speaks of Christ's passion; Matthew of Christ's compassion. Isaiah speaks of Christ's passive obedience; Matthew of Christ's active obedience. Does Matthew misinterpret or misapply this quotation from Isaiah?

3.

The Common Core

1.

No, he does not. You should recognize a common core between Isaiah's and Matthew's meaning.

2.

This common meaning is evident first in Matthew's accurate translation of Isaiah. The Greek translation of the OT called the Septuagint interprets Isaiah's words to mean Christ bore the guilt of our sins; it says "He carried our sins." 1 Pet. 2:24 alludes to this sense, and the Hebrew allows for " our griefs" to mean "our

sins ."
But the Hebrew term more commonly means "
sickness
" or "bodily disease," and this is how Matthew translates it.

3.

But what this means is Christ bore our diseases in Himself, even though He had no disease. Further, it means He bore our diseases on the cross, when He died for our sins. This is difficult to understand until we understand that our diseases, and all the miseries of this life, are the result of sin. Christ came to remove from His people sin and all of its results. So the differences between Isaiah and Matthew demonstrate the fullness of Christ's work. Spiritually, He came to give you a new heart in regeneration, a new record in justification, and a new life in sanctification. But He also came to give you a new body, and a new creation in the end. And in the present, He is the one who grants healing when we pray for it and even when we don't. He is the one who cares more than any other when we suffer in body, in mind, in soul, because He is our Creator, and He is our Savior. We belong, in body and soul, to our faithful Savior, Jesus Christ. He is the one who sent the Holy Spirit to convict us of our sin, but also to be our Comfort in grief and pain.

4.

Christ is concerned about all the ills and evils that plague us, from our sins to our diseases. He healed our diseases during His earthly ministry to demonstrate that through His death on the cross He would work the removal of not only our sins, but all our ills.

5.

Matthew Henry says well, "our sins make our sicknesses our griefs; Christ bore away sin by the merit of his death, and bore away sickness by the miracles of his life; nay, though those miracles are ceased, we may say, that *he bore our sicknesses* then, *when he bore our sins in his own body upon the tree*
; for sin is both the cause and the sting of sickness. Many are the diseases and calamities to which we are liable in the body: and there is more, in this one line of the gospels, to support and comfort us under them, than in all the writings of the philosophers—that Jesus Christ
bore our sicknesses, and carried our sorrows
."
[1]

6.

Conclusion

1.

Sin, grief, or illness? Spiritual, emotional, or physical? You need not ask, then whether Christ cares, whether Christ can heal, whether Christ will heal, you of your sin, your grief, your illness. Whether He will bring only spiritual, or emotional, or physical blessings. You who trust in Him He will bring at last to heaven where there is no mourning for sin, there is no crying for suffering, and there is no bodily pain.

2.

And even today He calls you to take part in the spiritual ministry of reconciling sinners to God and to one another, to mutual encouragement and edification in the faith and in Christian faithfulness in all parts of life, to taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, to doing whatever you do, in word or deed, eating or drinking, at work or at play, doing all to the glory of God. He calls you to the personal, social, mental, and emotional work of bringing truth and righteousness to your neighbors and your country, to work according to your positions and callings to transform not only the church, but workplaces, schools, governments, and families so they serve both the heavenly and the earthly good of those who suffer within them. He even calls you to give a cup of cold water, food and clothing, to the poor and needy, to heal bodies and souls which belong to Him as their Creator, and so that they may belong to Him as their Savior.

3.

We live now in a fallen world, in an age inescapably characterized by suffering, awaiting the final age of glory in the presence of Christ in the New Heavens and the New Earth. Neither we nor Christ will remove all suffering from this world before the end. But for this life and the next we have Christ's certain assurance, "In this world you will have suffering. But take heart, I have overcome the world. " (**John 16:33**)

1 Matthew Henry, 107.