

What If Someone You Love Gets Sick?

Luke 4:38-44

"Now Simon's mother-in-law was ill with a high fever..."

4:38

The Coronavirus pandemic began in China in December of 2019 with the sudden discovery of several cases. It has increased as of today (3/21/2020) to a global crisis including 304,037 cases. Thankfully, 94,674 have already recovered. Unfortunately, there have been 12,979 deaths worldwide. The US, thus far, has reported 15,219 cases with 201 deaths.

Of course, people that we love may not contract this virus, but they may become sick with the flu, develop heart disease, be diagnosed with some form of cancer, etc. So, the question is what should one do if any kind of sickness strikes someone that we care about?

This actually happened to one of Jesus' disciples named Peter. Luke was a physician before he joined the Apostle Paul on his mission trips, and Dr. Luke records in the fourth chapter of his Gospel a case history of Peter's mother-in-law. I would think that this passage could serve as a guide to us whenever someone in our family is diagnosed with an illness of any kind.

First, let's read the text. Read Luke 4:38-44. I am placing within this study guide the ESV version of this passage.

³⁸ And he arose and left the synagogue and entered Simon's house. Now Simon's mother-in-law was ill with a high fever, and they appealed to him on her behalf. ³⁹ And he stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her, and immediately she rose and began to serve them.

⁴⁰ Now when the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various diseases brought them to him, and he laid his hands on every one of them and healed them. ⁴¹ And demons also came out of many, crying, "You are the Son of God!" But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ.

⁴² And when it was day, he departed and went into a desolate place. And the people sought him and came to him, and would have kept him from leaving them, ⁴³ but he said to them, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose." ⁴⁴ And he was preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

Next, let's follow the doctor's record of events surrounding this fever that Luke alone tells us was a "high fever". This seemed to be the primary symptom that shut Peter's mother-in-law down that day.

Presence of the Lord with the Family, 4:38(a)

"And He arose and left the synagogue and entered Simon's house..."

This may be more pertinent to our current situation than we realize. Isn't it interesting that this passage tells us that the Lord left the synagogue and went inside Peter's house? This is a nice reminder that Jesus can also meet us when we are in our homes. He is not limited to a church building.

Think for a moment what this would say to those who are homebound and can no longer attend "church" on property owned by a local church. Would the presence of the Lord be there for them as He would be present for those who are able to gather in a local church building?

Take a moment to read Psalm 139:1-12. I would say that your address is also His address. No wonder Psalm 46:1 says that the Lord is a very present help in time of trouble.

What kind of troubles are weighing heavy on your heart today? _____

Perhaps it is a good time to thank the Lord that He is in the problem with you, right where you live.

Penetration into the Circle by a Fever, 4:38

"...Now Simon's mother-in-law was ill with a high fever..."

Thus far, everything seemed really exciting with Jesus coming over to the house. But then Luke takes the text in an unexpected direction. Sickness struck the home of Peter. What? Wait. I didn't think committed Christians or their families got sick. I am sure that there are some that may claim this to be true today, but the biblical record states otherwise. Peter's family wasn't exempt from sickness. His mother-in-law had a high fever. Probably in those days, this was a very serious issue.

Some may still be shocked to learn that one of the disciples was actually married. Whoa! Check out what Paul said about Peter (sometimes called, Cephas) in 1 Corinthians 9:5.

While some may be willing to go to the marriage altar, they may not be willing to concede that anyone in the New Testament ever got sick. Paul made an interesting reference in 2 Timothy 4:20 to leaving a man named Trophimus behind in Miletus because he was sick. Why didn't he just ask the Lord to heal Trophimus? How do we know that Paul didn't pray for Trophimus to be healed? Maybe he did request that he be healed, but perhaps the Lord didn't choose to heal Trophimus.

Heaven is the place where everyone will be healed. Here are on this Earth individuals are sometimes healed by the Lord. But sometimes, they are not healed, even after praying for them. Ultimately, however, no sickness will inhabit Heaven.

Prayer for the Sick out of Faith, 4:38

"And He arose and left the synagogue and entered Simon's house. Now Simon's mother-in-law was ill with a high fever, and they appealed to Him on her behalf."

Now, let's finish this first verse and see what happened after it was known that Peter's mother-in-law was ill. They "prayed" that Jesus would heal her. Admittedly, it was a different kind of prayer than we pray today, but prayer at its simplest form is appealing to Him on behalf of the need of another.

When we pray it is important that we address the Lord. This is where I think faith comes in to the picture. When someone we love becomes sick, of course, I think it is fine to take him or her to visit with the doctor. But, an additional part of the healing process is entered whenever we also take them to the Lord in prayer. Before you will even take this step, you will have to believe that praying to the Lord is worth your time and effort.

Pause for a moment to look up Hebrews 11:6. This verse asks us some good questions regarding drawing near to Him. What two issues does this verse say are decided by faith? _____.

Does praying in faith for someone mean that you believe the loved one will for sure be healed? Or does it mean that you are saying to God in prayer that you sincerely believe He has the power and the ability to heal him or her? _____.

Power to Restore to Fitness, 4:39

"And He stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her..."

The Lord healed the woman. From what we can tell in this passage, this healing was instantaneous. It is independently verified by two other sources. Matthew recorded the same event in Matthew 8:14-15, and Mark also included it in his Gospel in Mark 1:31.

The New Testament records at least 22 physical healings done by Jesus. He healed paralytics who could not walk, blind who could not see, mute who could not talk, deaf who could not hear, one with a withered hand, another with an issue of blood, a man whose ear was cut off by one of His disciples, lepers who were cast out of society, a child with epilepsy, just to mention a few.

Each time that Jesus would heal someone in the gospels, the region of the body that was affected by an illness was completely restored. I think there is a connection with these New Testament accounts of His limitless ability that verifies His limitless authority. Each of His miracles listed in Scripture were intended to provide substance to His claim of being the Son of God and the Messiah. More on this later...

What a glimpse of Heaven where we will have new bodies with none of the old ailments!

Perceptive to Service within the Fellowship, 4:39

"...and immediately she rose and began to serve them."

The Coronavirus pandemic that we are struggling with today is so unique that it has basically put a halt to life as we have known it in the United States. I am 60 years old and have never witnessed the shut down that I am seeing this month. This is when it hits me! Despite the many inconveniences of this hour, I have had 60 years of good health from the Lord without interruptions of a virus like this. The question that comes to me is what I choose to do with the health and the strength that I have been given.

What about you? Would you say that you are using your current good health to serve others? This was the default setting of Peter's mother-in-law once she was restored to health. This sweet little lady jumped up from that bed and began to serve all of these guests with renewed vigor and enthusiasm! Wow!

Make a list of the people that you could serve at this time. What kind of service could you render with the strength and the ability that you have? _____

Publicize the News to Friends, 4:40

"Now when the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various diseases brought them to Him..."

We need to consider a question at this point in the text. If people started bringing sick people to Peter's house for Jesus to heal them, then how did these people get the word about Him even being there at Pete's place? And, how did they know that their loved ones could be healed? _____

Who were these people anyway? Who do you think they were? _____

Were they neighbors? Were they residents from the community of Capernaum? Do you think any were Peter's kinfolk? Do you think any were from out of town?

Regardless of who they were and where they were from, I think we need to ask how they learned the news about Jesus and what He could do to help those who were suffering from an illness. There is a lesson in here about evangelism and outreach that begs to be released.

My guess is that some from Peter's household told a neighbor next door who in turn told another neighbor until it was unstoppable. Think about this. Jesus helped one dear lady and now the whole town is gathering at the door. Don't resist suffering if the Lord permits it to come. It just may be the door for others to learn about Jesus.

Preeminence of Christ without Flaw or Failure, 4:40

"...and He laid his hands on every one of them and healed them."

As we stated earlier, the miracles of Jesus pointed beyond each miracle itself. The purpose of the healing was to demonstrate the identity and the supremacy of Christ.

This is why it is so significant that it states that when He would place His hands upon *"each one of them"* they were *"healed"*. He didn't face a virus or a sickness that was beyond His ability. He was Lord!

As a matter of fact, He went beyond just restoring good health to the sick. Remember? He also raised some from the dead after everything within their bodies had shut down. See if you can remember the three people Jesus raised to life after they had passed away.

Luke 7:7-11 _____

Luke 8:49-56 _____

John 11:1-44 _____

There were 10 people total in Scripture who were raised from the dead. Can you list all ten? The three above are a good start. You only have seven more to go! Of course, don't forget the main One who was raised from the dead!

Position of the Son over the Foes, 4:41

"And demons also came out of many, crying, 'You are the Son of God!' But He rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that He was the Christ."

There was a spiritual breakthrough that happened in that city as a result of all the sickness being brought to Jesus. The Lordship of Christ forced the demonic world to acknowledge Who He was. Those ole demons cried out, *"You are the Son of God!"*

The demonic world is real. Don't make fun of it and certainly never take it for granted or try to simply ignore it. Ephesians 6:10-20 arms us for battle against a foe that has been against God from before this world was established. If we are going to side with God, then we are going to become a target from His enemy. But what this passage reminds us of is the truth that this contest is not between two equals. The Lord can shut His enemy down any time He so desires.

The Coronavirus may have been started by the Devil or by evil men driven to evil deeds by him, but just know this that Jesus is King and ultimately the Coronavirus will bow its knee at the "corona"-tion of the Lord Jesus Christ! It is also possible that the Coronavirus began as a result of the brokenness of this old world. Romans 8:20-25 tells us that this fallen creation groans beneath the consequences of sin, but it also longs for the day when Jesus will return and fix all the broken pieces in this world.

Priority of Time with the Father, 4:42

"And when it was day, He departed and went into a desolate place. And the people sought Him and came to Him, and would have kept Him from leaving them..."

The good people of Capernaum liked having Jesus in their community. He had singlehandedly turned things around for many of the families living in that area. They didn't want Him to leave. They actually were pressuring Him to keep in performing miracles for them.

What I want you to notice is what He was doing when they were looking for Him. He slipped away to a quiet place to spend time with His Father. Luke doesn't tell us what Jesus was doing in that desolate place, but Mark describes why Jesus had pulled away from the crowds and the activity in Mark 1:35.

Many are spending the additional time given to them during the limitations related to the control of the Coronavirus in frustration. But, it is likely that the response the Lord would have us to offer would be to turn to the Lord in prayer and bible study. Waiting upon Him. Looking to Him. Thanking Him. Seeking Him.

Proclamation of the Gospel to the Frontiers, 4:42-44

"...but He said to them, 'I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose.' And He was preaching in the synagogues of Judea."

I will close this study the way Luke closes the chapter. Since Jesus had spent time with the Father, He was in a great position to discern what the Father's priority was. Jesus turned away the crowds from a focus on healing. If healing was not the focus for Jesus, then what could be more important than healing? The proclamation of the gospel to those who had never heard it!

He wasn't passionate about healing every disease, but He was passionate about preparing every soul for eternity. We like this life and this world. If it were up to us, I think we might just settle in and live forever here without the Lord. But, we were made for Him not self and not this world. This life will eventually wind down for everybody. So, we have to get the simple message of the gospel to those areas and to those individuals who have not yet heard it.

As we close this study today, think about the people in your circles of influence who do not have a personal relationship with God through Christ. How can you get the gospel to them? Think about a phone call, a text message, an email, a post on Facebook, a note over Messenger, a card sent in the mail, etc. Even with social distancing, there are so many ways that we can get that message of Jesus out to those who are still on the frontiers of lostness. I had an opportunity to lead a man to Christ yesterday. Ask God to show you someone who needs the Lord!