

# The Healer's Rebuke

---

## Introduction

### The Text

<sup>38</sup> 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. <sup>39</sup> And he stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her, and immediately she rose and began to serve them.

<sup>40</sup> 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. <sup>41</sup> 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 (Luke 4:38-41).

- A. I have three headings for us this morning: (1) A Private Residence (vv. 38-39); (2) A Personal Touch (v. 40); and (3) A Perplexing Rebuke (v. 41).

## (1) A Private Residence (vv. 38-39)

### He Entered Simon's House

- A. When we look closely at this text, we immediately start to get a sense of the intimate and personal concern Christ has for us.
1. Last week we watched in vv. 31-37 as Christ used the authority and power of His word to heal in the synagogue.
  2. But now we see that Jesus does not merely reserve this kind of activity for the synagogue, for those who decide to come out to Him. No! In our text, we watch as He moves from the public gathering at the synagogue to the private residence of Simon (Peter): "And he arose and left the synagogue and entered Simon's house" (v. 38a).
    - a. He has intimate and personal concern for each one of us and He pursues us even onto our turf, even into our homes, even into the everyday details of our lives.
- B. This is a suitable note to strike right now, seeing as it's precisely this truth about our God that we celebrate in the Christmas season: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). He's coming down from heaven and coming out after us.

### A Royal Priesthood

- A. As the story unfolds we find out just why Jesus has entered Simon's house: "Now Simon's mother-in-law was ill with a high fever" (v. 38b). And then we are given this little detail:

“and they [Simon, Andrew, James, John (Mark 1:29)] appealed to him on her behalf” (v. 38c).

- B. Here again we have the point that I made last week with the demoniac: It is not always the faith of the individual in need that draws down the healing. Sometimes the community can believe for a person what that person doesn't have the strength to believe for himself.
  - 1. This is the same kind of thing that we'll see again down in v. 40: “Now when the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various diseases brought them to him.”
- C. The Christian life is not something we live out alone.
  - 1. Some of us are in that place of feeling so sick, so doubtful, so despairing that we need others to bring us to Christ. That's not a check against you. That's what the church is for. We want to be a church that lifts the drooping arms of our brothers and sisters.
  - 2. Others of us are feeling fine in our faith, but we're quite personal with it. We've forgotten our call to be the royal priesthood, to be interceding and mediating for others. It might be that He has ordained our faith to draw down the healing they so desperately need.
    - a. Do you have people you're pleading to the Lord for? Do you have people you are carrying to Jesus?

## Three Observations

A. As we look at v. 39, three things in particular struck me about Christ's healing at this point:

### (1) The Immediacy of the Healing

- A. I love that Luke brings this out. Jesus didn't tell her to take a couple of aspirin, get a good night sleep, and she'd be feeling better in the morning. No! “He rebuked the fever, and it left her . . . immediately . . . ” (v. 39).
  - 1. And this, of course, is but a foreshadow of that last day healing when: “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet . . . the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed” (1 Cor 15:52).

### (2) The Fullness of the Healing

- A. By fullness here I mean that the healing doesn't just stop at this woman's body, it moves through her body to her heart and soul. How do I know this? By her response to Jesus' work on her body: “she rose and began to serve them.”
- B. It is not a full healing if the person is healed in the flesh and then runs off never to deal with Christ again. That's a tragedy. You missed it!

1. Full healing moves through the flesh to the spirit of the person. It heals him there. It brings a person back to God and puts him in the joy of His service.
- C. Isn't this our story? The goodness of Christ finally got to us. And we rose up from our place in the mire, so overjoyed with what He had done for us, that we found ourselves beginning to serve Him and others.
1. If you've lost the joy that is found in this kind of service, perhaps you've forgotten the fever He's saved you from.

### (3) The Order of the Healing

- A. And this leads into one final observation. Consider the order of events here. It is first sickness (v. 38), then salvation (v. 39a), then service (v. 39b). If that is not the gospel, then I don't know what is!
- B. We often think we have to serve Him to get saved. I've got to do my religious piece and then I'll be accepted.
1. This was the great error of many of the Jews in Jesus' day. And it still lingers with us today. We feel like we must earn His love in some way.
- C. But the gospel cuts in the opposite direction. God's love comes freely to the undeserving, to the sinner, to the people too sick to serve Him. Salvation is always coming to the least and lowest, to the have-nots and can-nots.
1. And it is only after His love has been received, after His salvation has come to our house, that we are released into the joy of His service.
- D. O brothers and sisters, don't distort this order. We labor not for His love but from it!

## (2) A Personal Touch (v. 40)

### He Laid His Hands on Every One of Them

- A. I said at the opening of this sermon that Jesus has intimate and personal concern for each one of us—that He takes His powerful, authoritative, and healing word and comes after us with it.
1. But there is even more here that comes to light. For we might possibly read the healings to this point as Jesus still keeping a safe distance from people. After all, He uses His word to get the job done. He speaks from across the room and people are healed. It might seem like He doesn't want to get too close.
    - a. He certainly cares, but He doesn't want to get His white robes dirty in the process.

- B. But v. 40 now leaves no room for that interpretation. For we read: “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.”
1. With the laying of hands we get a sense of His solidarity with the suffering individual. We get a sense of His deep and abiding compassion (Compassion after all comes from the Latin meaning: with suffering, or to suffer with).
    - a. His touch is more than some sort of Harry Potter hocus pocus thing—as if lightning bolts are coming out of His fingers. It says: “I am with you in this. I want to bear this burden with you...for you.”
- C. The healing is certainly an exchange that moves from the Savior to the individual. His power goes out and restores and renews the sick.
1. But there is an exchange in the opposite direction as well that we might not initially see. It doesn’t become clear until the cross, but the sickness, the uncleanness from the individual is, in some mysterious way, being taken by Him.
- D. He is not just causing the sickness to disappear into thin air—like a magician. He is taking the sickness upon Himself—like a Substitute or a Sacrifice.
1. This is why, when Matthew tells this same story in His gospel, he ends by connecting Jesus to the Suffering Servant of Isa 53: “This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: ‘He took our illnesses and bore our diseases’ [53:4]” (8:17).
    - a. My stuff is not just being removed from me. It’s being added to Him.
      - i. Jesus will do more in the end than lay His hands on sick men, He will let sick men lay their hands on Him, tie Him up, and kill Him. And all this, so that by “His wounds we [might be] healed” (Isa 53:5).

## What Do We Do with Our Hands?

- A. How do you approach a person who is noticeably sick? And I’m not even talking about someone who has one of the more severe illnesses I imagine Jesus was curing here, but someone who just has a little head cold. You can see all the signs—the watery eyes, the red nose, the sniffles, etc..
1. Now imagine they just introduced themselves to you and they stick out their hand. Isn’t that a crisis moment? Sirens are blaring in your head. What do you do?
    - a. If you don’t shake it looks rude.
    - b. If you do, you’re all but certain that, not only will you get what they have, but the head cold will probably settle down into your lungs, turn into pneumonia, require hospitalization, and ruin your entire holiday season. Is touching this individual really worth this kind of risk?!

- c. You opt to go for something in the middle. You'll shake but you'll quickly slip away to the bathroom and wash your hands before any of those toxic germs can stage a rebellion on the rest of your body. Perfect!
- B. But here is Jesus: "He laid his hands on every one of them . . ." (v. 40). And wouldn't you know it, we're in the line with the sick here as well.
- C. The Don't you want to be like that?! Now I'm not saying don't be smart. But I am saying the Jesus moves towards our mess and we should do the same with others.
  - 1. This might be incredibly relevant for your Thanksgiving. Perhaps there's a relative that just bothers you to no end. What if you moved towards, what if you blessed, what if you laid hands on them in love?

## Every One of Them?!

- A. With Luke's mention of "every one of them" being healed are we not left to face the question that often haunts us in our suffering: "What about me? Why does it feel like He's leaving me in my pain? If Jesus heals every one of them, why doesn't He heal me?"
- B. Let me read from commentator Michael Wilcock on this point: "The general question which arises from the whole account of his healing ministry is, of course, 'Does he do the same today?'
 

My own view . . . is this. Luke presents throughout this whole section a Jesus who utters words of power, and in these particular instances a Jesus who is the Healer of men's ills. And Jesus is the same today . . . But his methods are his own, and not the over-simplified ones his patients would sometimes prescribe for him.

I would therefore make a broad distinction between two methods of healing . . . Where his object is to be known as Healer, he works immediately; such cures are, as it were, for the shop-window—the kind of success story which establishes the reputation of a great surgeon or physician. I see no reason why in some circumstances today Jesus may not choose to work in this way and for this purpose.

But where he is already known, he may well say to his trusting patient: 'I could of course give you immediate relief; but I would rather take the opportunity to do something more far-reaching, which will be to your greater benefit in the long run. You will find it more protracted and perhaps more painful, and you may not understand what I am doing, because I may be treating disorders of which you yourself are unaware.' He will then set to work to deal with the needs of the whole person, rather than with the obvious need only. He may aim at a calming of spirit, or a strengthening of courage, or a clarifying of vision, as more important objectives than what we would call healing. Indeed the latter may not be experienced at all in this life, but only at the final 'saving and raising' of the sick, when their mortal nature puts on immortality.

. . . [Our faith is] not faith that Jesus will heal in some particular way (i.e. the way we should advise him to do it!), but faith in Jesus the Healer, who will choose his own timing and method."

### (1) He Gives the Miracle

- A. Do you hear what he is saying?! When Jesus is first making Himself known to a person or a place (like Capernaum), He might often choose to do the miracle.
  - 1. Miracles are intended to help people discover who He is and what He's come to do. So when He casts out a demon or rebukes a fever we see His authority and power, His care and compassion—we see that He has come to put this fallen world back together.
    - a. He gives the miracle to initiate and awaken faith.
- B. This is why miracles often cluster significantly on the frontline of things, as Christ is pressing into places where He has been previously unknown.
  - 1. We see this here in Luke's gospel as He moves into Israel. We see this in the book of Acts as Christ is making Himself known to the Gentiles. We see this on the mission field today where Christ is pursuing unreached peoples. And we see this play out with the unbelieving individual, as Christ begins to make Himself known to a person.
    - a. Maybe this was your experience in getting to know Christ at first. You feel like you can almost watch Him working things for good around you.

## (2) He Withholds the Miracle

- A. But as a person moves deeper into relationship with Christ, it actually gets harder doesn't it. There are times where we don't see what He's doing, where we don't feel His presence, where we don't get the miracle we're praying desperately for.
  - 1. There are times where Jesus withholds the miracle to do the more important work.
- B. If He gives the miracle to initiate and awaken faith, He withholds the miracle to deepen and refine that faith.
  - 1. He gives the miracle to convince us that He is able to deliver on all that He's promised about a new world and a new humanity.
  - 2. But He withholds the miracle to remind us that we are not there yet, that we need to trust His word more than we trust our eyes, that we still walk by faith and not by sight, that because of our sin and God's curse on this world, glory will come, but only through suffering and the cross.
- C. This is Paul in [2 Cor 12](#), pleading with Jesus to do the miracle: "Remove the thorn in my flesh. Rebuke the messenger of Satan." But Jesus says, "No. *'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness'*([2 Cor 12:9](#)). We're going deeper than skin here. Trust Me."
- D. I am not implying here that we stop praying for the miracle. O we most certainly do pray! But when the last word of our prayer has been uttered into the ear of our Savior, we trust Him to do what's right with it. We don't chase the miracle, we trust the Person.

1. He is always healing, but only sometimes does this involve immediate, miraculously healing. O brothers and sisters, trust Him!

### (3) A Perplexing Rebuke (v. 41)

#### The Cross Before the Crown

- A. As we turn now to v. 41, it is at first glance perhaps not all that surprising to us that Jesus is rebuking and silencing the demons. Demons are nasty. Silencing them makes sense.
  1. But when once we look a little bit closer—when we consider what these demons are saying and why they are saying it—the situation gets a bit more perplexing: “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” (v. 41).
- B. Jesus’ great mission, from chs. 4-9 especially, is to help people discover who He truly is and come to confess it. So if these demons are here confessing who He truly is—the Son of God, the Christ—why silence them?
  1. Certainly it is not that Jesus is ashamed of His identity as the Christ. It is rather that Jesus is concerned for the Jewish misunderstandings that surround this title. For the Jews, the Christ stood for freedom from Rome. They expected a political figure who would bring political liberation.
    - a. There was no room in their understanding of the Christ for the cross.
- C. So Jesus was very cautious with this title. This is why when Peter finally confesses that Jesus is the Christ in Luke 9:20 (the very first time this confession is taken upon human lips), Jesus immediately responds with a prediction of His death: “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised” (v. 22).
  1. “The cross is the Christ’s mission, Peter. Don’t you miss it!”
- D. Jesus knows that a Christ without a cross is no Christ at all. It would do us no good to be liberated from Rome but left under the oppression of the devil and the wrath of God against our sin.
  1. So He silences the demons because they would have Him shortcut His mission: “Let the Jews make you King now, Christ.” “Silence! I have come to die for sinners and be raised for their healing. The cross must come before the crown!” Hallelujah, what a Savior.