

Does God Always Heal?

Dr. Walter Martin, *CRN*, Vol 6, No. 3, 1993

1 Peter 2:24 says of Christ,

“Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.”

A number of times in Scripture the word healing has specific reference to spiritual healing. There are diseases of the soul that have to be healed – and the primary disease of the soul is man’s unregenerate state, which is rooted in sin. The good news is that God has provided healing for this disease of the soul. And that is what Peter is talking about here: Jesus dying on the cross for us, enduring punishment and bearing our sins, thereby providing salvation for us. He is not saying here that physical healing of the body is guaranteed for every believer.

Certainly, healing for the body is a benefit of Christ’s death on the cross, as a result of His atoning sacrifice. However, it is not – it never has been in the history of the church – a guarantee that God has to heal our bodies. He doesn’t have to!

God does say He will graciously entertain our prayers. He says that if we exercise faith, and if our request is in accordance with His will, He will hear us. But He never said the mark of true spirituality is that we would never sneeze.

There are certain lessons we might never have learned unless the Lord flattened us out long enough to get our attention. Sometimes God teaches us things through our suffering.

Moreover, a person, after praying for a healing, may receive a ‘no’ from God – a benevolent ‘no’, a kindly ‘no’, a protective ‘no’ maybe, but ‘no’ nevertheless. Tragically, however, there are teachers who tell people that if they were more spiritual, if they had more faith, if they believed like they believed, they would be well. Such faulty teaching can crush whatever faith these poor people have.

We should go to the Lord and believe Him for healing, and trust Him for healing, and pursue Him for healing. And we must search our soul to make certain there is nothing in our life standing in the way of healing. But we must come to Him and lay ourselves out on His conditions. The Scripture says,

“And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us” (1 John 5:14).

If perhaps God intends to teach us something through an illness, He might not heal us immediately.

So don't think you are being neglected by the Holy Spirit if you don't get healed. Don't assume that the Lord is against you. Don't conclude that you necessarily have an absence of faith or a secret sin.

1 Peter 2:21 says,

“Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow in His steps.”

Here we are told that Jesus suffered. And He left us an example. We are to follow in His steps.

And what is the meaning of Philippians 3:10, which refers to “the fellowship of His sufferings”? Let us be clear on this: suffering is an integral part of the fact of life, and is often used by God in the development and maturation of the Christian.

The apostle Paul had a greater standing with the Lord in terms of his ministry than anybody else has ever had. According to 2 Corinthians 12:1-10 Paul requested healing from the Lord three times. And three times he got an answer back:

“My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness” (v9).

God said ‘no’ to Paul’s request for healing. And God had a purpose in saying ‘no’. Did Paul have lack of faith? No. Was Paul suffering from some secret sin that he was carrying around? No.

God loves us and any healing that may come is in His sovereign hands.

