

Come, Lord Jesus – make these words your Word, that our hearts may become your heart. Amen.

You know how it is when you're sick... you don't think you'll ever feel well again.

This was only a bad cold, I suppose, but it laid me out. I always keep going, no matter what. But this one came with a bad fever and it put me to bed.

And of course these days you always have to wonder... is it something worse?

I was in and out of sleep, but I heard the boys come in with Jesus and the gang.

They drop in like that, expecting me to feed them – which I've been doing since they were kids, before Simon and my daughter were even married.

Peter, Jesus calls him. Their friends always knew they were welcome at our house, and there was always plenty to eat.

So I don't know if it was hunger, or kindness, that made them bring Jesus to me.

They really thought he could do something for me.

I thought he was just coming to bring comfort, like pastors usually do.

Well, that's not what this Jesus did at all. He came into my room, looked at me –

his eyes were very intense – took my hand, and said, "Get up."

It wasn't a command – it was more like an invitation,

"Get up. You don't need to be stuck in that bed.

You don't need to let this fever "run its course."

There is a power greater than your fever – and it's right here."

And I could feel, from his hand into my hand, a surge of heat coming into my arm,

and then into the center of me, and I felt filled with light, and –

the only way I can describe it is this:

The reality of him was so much stronger than the reality of my illness.

It just slipped away. My body was strong again, my head clear.

The fever was gone. It left me in a sweat, the way fevers do break;

It was still my body's natural healing process, but much, much faster than my body would have done it on its own.

I felt re-energized, and well. And I realized there was no reason I couldn't make them all some food. After all, that's what I do.

Jesus had done what he did. Now I was going to do what I do.

And as I got up and started cooking, I realized something else.

Jesus had healed more than my fever. He healed my anger at my son-in-law.

I thought it was worse than irresponsible for Simon to have left his family, his business, all his responsibilities to go traipsing around after this itinerant rabbi. Who did he think he was? “The Rock,” indeed. I’d have understood it better if he’d left my daughter for another woman.

But now, I knew. I saw what he saw, felt what he felt.

This Jesus wasn’t just a teacher, just a rabbi.

He wasn’t just loving, he was Love itself.

He wasn’t just powerful – he was Power itself.

All I wanted was to serve him, and those who’d made sacrifices to follow and support him. Or course, I made them some food.

It’s what I could do, feed him so he could get out there and offer that healing to some other people. There are many who need His touch, his love, his power. Maybe you’re one of them?

[Pause.]

Are you one of them? Is there anything in your life for which you desire healing? Something physical, or something emotional, some kind of forgiveness or release? Jesus is always asking: “What do you want me to do for you?”

Before he tells us what he’d like us to do for him, for his people, he offers us healing. Because he loves us. And because he knows we’ll be much more effective bearers of his love and power to others if we’re well and strong ourselves.

Health and vigor are part of our inheritance as saints of God.

That’s what the beautiful prophecy from Isaiah says:

He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless.

... those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength

Healing is in God’s nature. It was in Jesus’ nature. And guess what?

As we are united with him in baptism, it becomes part of our nature.

Yet is a part that many keep undeveloped – it makes us nervous to think

God could heal through us. But what does the New Testament tell us?

Jesus’ followers, as they allowed the Spirit to work through them,

began to manifest that nature of God too. To make whole is who God is.

And if ever our world needed God’s healing let loose, it’s now.

Does it sound ridiculous to talk about healing in the face of a global pandemic?

In the face of a 400-year legacy of racial hatred and inequity?

In the face of national divisions that could lead to armed conflict?

Friends, we don't worship a small God. We worship a mighty God!

Whose power to heal is not diminished by the magnitude of the hurt.
The only thing God needs is us, exercising the power God has given us.
We conduct supernatural power and love into the natural sphere –
but it can't go anywhere if we don't exercise it,
any more than electricity can power a lamp if we don't turn it on.
His power and love run through us, as we make ourselves available.

Yet it can be overwhelming to us, right? That's because we look at the whole.
But look at this story we just heard. Jesus healed one woman. One.
Word got out, and many came for the same thing.
And then he healed many, but how? One person at a time. One person.

That's how God heals through us, as we conduct his power into one person at a time. I do it any time I injure myself, "Come, Lord Jesus, let your healing love flow."
What if we did that when people we know are sick or injured?
What if we did that when we got mad at someone, when we were hurt?
What if we did that when we saw something in the news that made us hurt?
Just pray, "Let your healing love and light flow, Lord; restore and renew."
Don't need to say a whole lot – Jesus just took a sick woman's hand. And notice,
she didn't get healed and then rise. She got up at his invitation and was healed.

Who do you know who's locked into bitterness and mistrust?
Who may seek violence to impose their preferred future on others?
You can pray for that hurting soul to be healed – prayer can soften the ground.
God knows what God can do with our prayers!
God acts in powerful ways much more often than we like to think.
And we see God's power at work through us much more often when we exercise
our faith. Just ask those who gather every weeknight for Night Prayers.
I want you to try it this week, and let me know what happens.

Friends, God invites us to be more ambitious to make an impact on our community.
I long for us to get more active in the ministry of healing.
I want us to expect God's power to heal and transform all the things we think
cannot be transformed, or need to run their course.
That includes our economy, our divisions, Covid, systemic racism, all of it.
Christ our healer is alive and at work through us.
And nothing is impossible for the God we worship. *Amen?*

Mark 1:29-39

Jesus left the synagogue at Capernaum, and entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. **Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them.**

That evening, at sundown, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. And the whole city was gathered around the door. **And he cured many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.**

In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. And Simon and his companions hunted for him. When they found him, they said to him, "Everyone is searching for you." He answered, "Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do." **And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.**

Isaiah 40:21-31

Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning?

Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?

It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to live in; who brings princes to naught, and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing.

Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth, when he blows upon them, and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like stubble.

To whom then will you compare me, or who is my equal? says the Holy One.

Lift up your eyes on high and see: Who created these?

He who brings out their host and numbers them, calling them all by name;

because he is great in strength, mighty in power, not one is missing.

Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, "My way is hidden from the LORD, and my right is disregarded by my God"?

Have you not known? Have you not heard?

The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth.

He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.

He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless.

Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted;

but those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength,

they shall mount up with wings like eagles,

they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.