

THE GOSPEL'S HEALING POWER

NO. 720

A SERMON
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“And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was present to heal them.”
Luke 5:17

LUKE, the writer of this Gospel, was a physician, and therefore had a quick eye for cases of disease and instances of cure. You can trace throughout the whole of his Gospel the hand of one who was skilled in surgery and medicine. From which I gather that whatever may be our calling, or in whatever art or science we may have attained proficiency, we should take care to use our knowledge for Christ, and that if we be called being physicians we may understand the work of the Lord Jesus all the better by what we see in our own work, and we may also do much for our Lord in real substantial usefulness among our patients.

Let no man despise his calling. Whatever instrument of usefulness God has put into your hand, consider that the Great Captain knew what weapon it were best for you to wield. Covet not your neighbor's sword or spear, but use that which your Lord has given you, and go forth to the battle of life to serve according to your capacity.

If you be placed in this corner of the vineyard or that, consider that you are in the best place for yourself and the best place for your Master. And do not always be judging what your fellow servants ought to do in *their* place, nor what you could do if you were in another place, but see what it is that you can do where you are, and use such things as you have in glorifying your Lord and Master.

One is pleased to observe in the language of a true man how the man's self shows itself. David frequently sings like one who had been a shepherd boy, and though a king he is not ashamed to own that he once grasped the crook. There is a manifest difference between the prophecies of Amos the herdsman and of Isaiah the royal seer. True men do not imitate one another, but each one, moved of God, speaks according to his native bias, and according to the circumstances in which providence has cast him.

It was destructive to Egyptian art when the great men of the land framed articles of taste, and laws of statuary and of painting by which every sculptor must be bound, for then everything like freshness and originality was driven away. The proportions of every colossal statue and of every figure upon the wall were rigidly fixed, and then the glory and excellence of art vanished from the land. To do the same in religion is even more unwise. To say, “Ye shall all speak after one fashion, and ye all shall conform to this manner of talk and life,” is folly at its height.

Let each man speak after his own manner, every man in his own order, each quickened soul bringing out its own individuality and seeking in that individuality to magnify God and to show forth the riches of His grace.

These remarks were suggested by the abundant record of cures in this chapter and elsewhere in Luke's Gospel. Luke does not write like John, nor copy the style of Matthew. He writes not as a fisherman or a publican, but as a physician.

Luke did not cease to be Luke when he was called by grace, but he was the same man elevated and refined, and taught to consecrate to noblest ends the gifts which he had acquired in his earthly calling. He was a physician before, and he became “the beloved physician” after his conversion.

I. The text, as we read it, suggests in the first place, that THE POWER OF CHRIST IN THE GOSPEL IS MAINLY A POWER TO HEAL.

“The power of the Lord was present to heal them.” The power of the Gospel, of which Christ is the sum and substance, is a healing power. My brethren, when Christ came on earth He might have come with destroying power. Justly enough might God have sent His only Son with the armies of vengeance to destroy this rebellious world. But—

*“Thy hands, dear Jesus, were not arm'd
With an avenging rod;
No hard commission to perform,
The vengeance of a God.*

*“But all was mercy, all was mild,
And wrath forsook the throne,
When Christ on the kind errand came,
And brought salvation down.”*

“I have not come,” said He, “to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.” Elijah calls fire from heaven upon the captains of fifties, and their fifties, so that they are utterly consumed. But Christ brings fire from heaven for quite another purpose, namely, that by its power men might be saved from the wrath to come.

The Gospel is not intended to be a power to destroy. “God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.” And if that Gospel be made a savor of death unto death unto any, it is not on account of its own intrinsic qualities or design, but because of the perversity and wickedness of the human heart. If men perish by the Gospel of life, it is because they make that to be a stumbling stone which was meant to be a foundation.

The Gospel does not even come into the world merely to reveal disease. It is true it does discover, detect, and describe the maladies of fallen man. One of the clearest exposures of man’s fallen estate is the Gospel of the grace of God, but it is rather the design of the law than of the Gospel to discover to man his ruin.

It is by the glare of Sinai’s lightnings that men tremblingly read the sentence of condemnation upon those who have broken God’s law, by the gentler light of Calvary they *may* read the same truth, and *must* read it. But this is not the main purpose of Calvary. Calvary is the place for the healing balm rather than for the lancet and the knife. The work of Jesus, our heavenly Physician, is not so much to point out disease as to indicate and to apply the remedy.

Certain philosophers have made it their business and delight, with grim sardonic smile upon their faces, to put forth the finger and mark out human wickedness and weakness as a theme for ridicule and sarcasm. The philosophy of the Stoics, the wisdom of such men as Diogenes, was but a heartless unpitying showing up of human folly and sin. It knew no remedy, and cared not to search for one. They showed poor manhood to be besotted, befooled, debased, and depraved, and there they left it, passing by on the other side as the priest and Levite did with the wounded man in the parable.

But Jesus came upon no such fruitless errand. He *does* convince the world of sin by His Spirit, but it is not to leave the world hopelessly despairing of its restoration, but to recover it by His power. Jesus bears with Him power to heal. This is His honor and renown. He has the eagle’s eye to see our sicknesses, the lion’s heart bravely to encounter them, and the lady’s hand to gently apply the heavenly ointment. In Him the three necessities of a good surgeon meet in perfection.

Beloved, I trust you and I have known this power to heal in our own cases, and if it be so we know of a certainty that it is a *divine power* which comes from our Lord Jesus because He is most surely God. It is the sole prerogative of God to heal spiritual disease. Natural disease may be instrumentally healed

by men, but even then the honor is to be given to God who giveth virtue unto medicine, and bestoweth power unto the human frame to cast off disease.

But as for spiritual sicknesses, these remain with the great Physician alone. He claims it as His prerogative, "I kill and I make alive, I wound and I heal," and one of the Lord's choice titles is JEHOVAH Rophi, the Lord that healeth thee. "I will heal thee of thy wounds," is a promise which could not come from the lip of man, but only from the mouth of the eternal God.

On this account the psalmist cried unto the Lord, "O LORD, heal me, for my bones are sorely vexed," and again, "Heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee." For this also, the godly praise the name of the Lord, saying, "He healeth all our diseases." He who made man can heal man. He who was at first the creator of our nature can new create it. What a transcendent comfort it is that in the person of Jesus Christ of Nazareth we have Deity Incarnate! "In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily."

My soul, whatever your disease may be, this great Physician can heal you. If He be God, there can be no limit to His infinite power. If He be truly divine, there can be no boundary to the majesty of His might. Come then with the blind eye of your understanding, come with the limping foot of your energy, come with the maimed hand of your faith, come just as you are, for He who is God can certainly heal you.

None shall say unto the healing flood of His love, "Hitherto canst thou go and no further." The utmost length of human sickness can be reached by this great Physician. Have you confidence, O poor doubting heart! have you unstagging confidence in the Divine Healer.

Although our Lord Jesus healed as divine, remember that He also possessed power to heal because of His being *human*. Is it not written, "The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed"? He used no other remedy in healing our sin-sickness but that of taking our sicknesses and infirmities upon Himself. This is the one great cure-all.

Blessed be the Son of God that the medicine, bitter as it is, is not for us to drink, but was all drained by Himself. He took the terrible cup in Gethsemane, and drank it dry on our account. The sharp but healing cuts of the lancet are not made in our bodies, but He bore them in His own flesh. When the ploughers made deep furrows, those furrows were not upon the sinner's shoulders, but upon the shoulders of the sinner's Substitute.

Did you ever hear, O earth, of such a Physician as this? who heals by suffering Himself, whose pains, and sorrows, and griefs, and pangs, and torments, and anguish, and death are the only medicine by which He removes the woes of men! Blessed Son of God, if I trust You, seeing that You are divine, how will I love You! how will I cling to You, seeing You are human!

With what gratitude will I look up to Your cross and view You, while those blessed founts of health are streaming crimson floods, and while Your heart, the source of all spiritual sanity, is pouring forth a heavenly torrent, efficacious to wash the sinner from all his sicknesses!

Come hither, all you sin-sick ones, and behold the glorious Son of God, made in the likeness of human flesh, breathing out His life upon the cross! Come hither, ye that mourn for sin, ye who are palsied and diseased with iniquity! here is power, power still present in the dying Savior to heal you, whatsoever your diseases may be. He healed all that had need of healing while He sojourned here, and the costly balm of His atonement has lost none of its power.

The power which dwelt in Christ to heal, coming from Him as divine and human, was *applicable*, most eminently, *to the removal of the guilt of sin*. Reading this chapter through, one pauses with joy over that twenty-fourth verse, "The Son of Man hath power upon earth to forgive sin." Here then, is one of the great Physician's mightiest arts, He has power to forgive sin. While here He lived below, before the ransom had been paid, before the blood had been literally sprinkled on the mercy seat, He had power to forgive sin. Has He not power to do it now that He has died?

Brethren, what power must dwell in Him who to the utmost farthing has faithfully discharged the debts of His people! He has indeed power, seeing that He has finished transgression and made an end of

sin. If you doubt it, see Him rising from the dead! behold Him in ascending splendor raised to the right hand of God! hear Him pleading before the Eternal Father, pointing to His wounds, urging the merit of His sacred passion! What power to forgive is here! "He hath ascended on high, and received gifts for men." "He is exalted on high to give repentance and remission of sins."

At this moment, sinner, Christ has power to pardon, power to pardon *you*, and millions such as you are. He has nothing more to do to win your pardon, all the atoning work is done. He can, in answer to your tears, forgive your sins today, and make you know it. He can breathe into your soul at this very moment a peace with God which passeth all understanding, which shall spring from perfect remission of your manifold iniquities.

Do you believe that? I trust you believe it. May you experience now that the healing power of the Gospel is power to forgive sin! Waste no time in applying to the Physician of souls, but hurry to Him with words like these—

***"Jesus! Master! hear my cry;
Save me, heal me with a word;
Fainting at Thy feet I lie,
Thou my whisper'd plaint hast heard."***

This is not the only form of the healing power which dwells without measure in our glorious Lord. He heals *the sorrow of sin*. It is written, "He healeth the broken in heart and bindeth up their wounds." When sin is really manifest to the conscience it is a most painful thing, and for the conscience to be effectually pacified is an unspeakable blessing.

Sharper than a dagger in the heart, or an arrow piercing through the loins is conviction of sin. He that has ever smarted under the prickings of an awakened conscience well knows that there is no pain of body that can be compared to it. When crushed under the hand of God a man may form some idea of what the miseries of hell must be. Correspondingly joyous is the relief which Immanuel brings to us when He brings better balm than that of Gilead, and ministers heaven's infallible specific to a soul disease.

When Jesus is received by faith, He lifts all our sorrow from us in a moment. One promise applied by His Spirit, one drop of His blood brought home to the conscience, and at once there is such a peace, so deep and profound that nothing can rival it. What the poet wrote concerning recovery from bodily sickness is doubly true of spiritual restoration.

***"See the Man that long has tost
On the thorny bed of pain,
At length repair his vigor lost,
And breathe and walk again:
The meanest floweret of the vale,
The simplest note that swells the gale,
The common sun, the air, the skies,
To him are opening Paradise."***

God grant, that to you who fear His name the Sun of righteousness may arise with healing beneath His wings!

Jesus also heals the *power of sin*. Sin may be in your case, dear friend, so mighty, that like a whirlwind it hurries you away at its pleasure. You feel like the sere leaves which are driven by the tempest. You have scarcely power to resist your passions. You have perhaps, yielded so long to certain forms of evil that now you are positively powerless in strife against them.

Do not however despair. Christ can surely deliver you. The demoniac had such an energy of evil within him that he broke the chains and bands with which he had been bound, he cut himself with

stones, and howled all night amidst the tombs. But when Jesus came near to him he was soon seen clothed and in his right mind, sitting meekly at the great Physician's feet. And so will you, poor captive of evil.

Do not think that you need to be a drunkard, or that your angry temper need always to be your master. Do not conceive that you must always be a slave to lust, or led captive at the devil's will. There is hope for you, where Christ is, and though your disease be of as long standing as your very life, yet a word from the powerful lips of the Son of God can make even you whole. The power of the Gospel is a power to heal the guilt, the sorrow, and the influence of sin. Jesus Christ came into the world to destroy the works of the devil in all their forms.

It should not be forgotten that the Lord Jesus is able to heal us of *our relapses*. I have heard men say that a relapse is what the physician frequently fears more than the primary disease, and that there is frequently a period in the healing process when the virus of disease gathers renewed energy, and the physician feels that now and not at the first the true battle has to be fought.

We have met with men who have professed conversion, and we trust were changed, who have gone back like the dog to his vomit, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. We have had to mourn over those in whom the change appeared to be great, but it was superficial, and soon the power of evil returned upon them.

But my backsliding hearer, Jesus is able to heal your backslidings. What a mercy that is! "I will heal their backslidings, I will love them freely, for my anger is turned away from them." What if you be sevenfold more a child of hell than you were before, yet even now eternal mercy that drove out a legion of devils from one of old can drive them out of you.

The healing power of my Master is such, that if you have backslidden ever so far yet He saith unto you, "Return! Return! Return." There shall be more joy over you, you poor lost sheep, than over ninety and nine that went not astray. He shall be more glad to receive you, you wandering prodigal child, than He has joy even over that righteous son who remained always in the father's house.

To sum up much in little, my Master, as a physician, works cures *very suddenly*. He touches, and the deed is done at once. He works cures *of all kinds*. Such as have been the stumbling stones of other physicians have been readily overcome by Him. *He never fails*. He has not in His diary one single case that has overmatched His mighty power.

He heals *effectually*, the disease never again reigns when He has once dethroned it. When He casts the devil out of the man, the devil shall not return. He heals with His word even those who think that they cannot be healed. There is no hospital for incurables now as to souls, for incurables there are none. The Friend of sinners is "able to save unto the uttermost those who come unto God by him." Cases of disease so putrid that men say "Put them out of sight," vice so detestable that the very mention of it makes the cheek of modesty blush. Such as these the master hand of Immanuel can heal.

With God nothing is impossible, and with the Son of God nothing is difficult. He can save the chief of sinners, and the vilest of the vile. In the highest conceivable degree the power of the Gospel is power to heal. Come, poor sinner, and behold Him who is able to heal you of your deadly wounds, come look upon Him now and live.

*"Raise to the cross thy tearful eyes,
Behold, the Prince of Glory dies;
He dies extended on the tree,
And sheds a sovereign balm for thee."*

II. A second remark arises from the text, THERE ARE SPECIAL PERIODS WHEN THE POWER TO HEAL IS MOST MANIFESTLY DISPLAYED.

The verse before us says that on a certain day the power of the Lord was present to heal, by which I understand, not that Christ is not always God, not that He was ever unable to heal, but this—that there

were certain periods when He pleased to put forth His divine energy in the way of healing to an unusual degree. The sea is never empty, it is indeed always as full at one time as at another, but yet it is not always at flood. The sun is never dim, it shines with equal force at all hours, and yet it is not always day with us, nor do we always bask in the warmth of summer.

Christ is fullness itself, but that fullness does not always overflow. He is able to heal, but He is not always engaged in healing. There are times when the power to save is more than usually manifest—times of refreshing, seasons of revival, days of visitation, acceptable days, days of salvation.

Any student of the world's history who has read it in the light of true religion will have observed that there have been favored periods when the power of God has been peculiarly present to heal men. My solemn conviction is that we are living in such an era, that this present moment is one of the set times when God's power is peculiarly manifest. I gather this from many signs, but even the text assists me in my belief.

Observe that on the occasion mentioned in the text *there was a great desire among the multitude to hear the Word*. In the opening of the chapter we read that they pressed upon our Lord by the sea. Further on we find them coming from all parts of the country in multitudes. Especial mention is made of doctor's of the law and Pharisees, the last people to be impressed, who nevertheless, overcome by the common enthusiasm, were found mingling with the throng. We are told that the people thronged the house at such a rate that the palsied man could not be brought into the congregation except by the expedient of breaking through the roof.

When God's power is moving, there will be a corresponding motion among the people. They will long to hear when God's power is with the speaker. Take it as a sign of grace when the houses dedicated to worship are full. Consider that the Lord is about to fill the net when the fishes crowd around the boat.

We cannot expect the Gospel to be blessed to those who do not hear it, we may lawfully and properly expect it will be a blessing to those who have an intense anxiety to listen to it. At the present hour I see a religious awakening among the masses of London, not so great a one as we desire, but still there it is, and we must be grateful for it. We shall not long have to put up with the pernicious nonsense of Puseyism, public opinion will aid us in putting it down. It has taken a long time to wake up our nation, but it will awaken after all.

I think I see the tide of popular feeling turning in the right direction. Men are just now occupied about religious thought, and whether they think rightly or wrongly, there is more attention just now paid to religious truth than has been for many a day. And where ministers do but preach simply and lovingly the Gospel of Christ at this moment they find no lack of hearers. This is a sure sign that the power of the Lord is present to heal.

Observe next that the healing power was conspicuously present when *Christ was teaching*. Note carefully the favored hour, "when he was *teaching* in a certain place." Jesus linked the healing with the teaching. It was so with the material healing, much more with the spiritual healing, for "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

Brethren, is there not among our own brethren, of whom we can speak with the most certainty, more teaching of Christ now than there was? I am persuaded that the most of my brethren preach more faithfully and fully the simple truth of Christ Jesus than they once did. Teaching is returning to the pulpits. Now mark, dear hearer, whether you be saved or not, if you are present where Christ is fully preached, where He is lifted up, exalted, proclaimed, and commended to you, you are in a place where He also is present to heal, is it not written "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me"?

A further sign of present power is found most clearly in *the sick folk who were healed by Jesus*. Now we know that in this very house not a Sunday passes without souls being converted. We have before our church meetings the cases of hundreds whom God has blessed by the simple telling of the story of the cross. This then is proof positive that when Christ is being taught, and souls being blessed, He is in a remarkable manner present to heal.

One other thing must be noted, namely, that this particular time mentioned in the text *was prefaced by a special season of prayer* on the part of the principal actor in it. Did you notice it? He withdrew Himself and prayed, and then the power of the Lord was present to heal them. Is it so that even with regard to Christ Himself, the Lord and Giver of life, in whom dwells the fullness of the Godhead, and who has the Spirit without measure, yet before that Spirit is publicly manifested in any high degree there must be a special retirement for fervent prayer? How plainly does this say to us that the church must pray if she would have the healing power!

But my brethren, we have prayed. There has been such prayer put up by this congregation as I believe was never excelled, even in apostolic times. And last Monday was a day of wrestling of such a kind that the blessing could not be withheld. I have almost ceased to ask further, I wait in joyful anticipation of the heavenly Visitation! I come not forth today so much as a sower as a reaper. I believe that the fish are taken in the net, and that we have only to pull it to land.

God grant the net may not break by reason of the multitude of fishes! God is with us, and that of a truth in this house this day.

Wonders of grace are being wrought, while we are yet speaking men are being inclined to look to Christ, while we are lifting Him up tearful eyes are looking to Him. And in many a heart there may be heard the cry, "I will arise and go to my Father."

Now with all these signs meeting together, a desire to hear, a set time of private prayer, the teaching of the Word, and the manifest blessing of souls under that Word, I gather that we have arrived at this present moment at that state which is described in the text.

III. Passing on to a third thought, we observe that WHEN THE POWER OF THE LORD IS PRESENT TO HEAL, IT MAY NOT BE SEEN IN ALL, BUT MAY BE SHOWN IN SPECIAL CASES AND NOT IN OTHERS.

It is a melancholy reflection that men may be in the region of divine power, and yet not feel its operations. I have read this verse through a great many times with one object, I have tried, if I could, to make the text mean that the Pharisees and doctors of the law were present, and that the power of the Lord was present to heal *them*.

But the text does not so teach us, the power of the Lord was not present to heal the doctors and Pharisees, for they were not healed. The word "them" agrees with the noun further back, according to the frequent usage of the New Testament by which the pronouns are not made to refer to the nearer noun, but to another more remote.

The power of God was present to heal the sick, not to heal the doctors, nor the Pharisees, and yet how nearly they seem to have gained it, for had they but known *their* sickness, and been willing to confess *their* infirmity, there was power enough to have healed even them. But as it was, we do not find that one of them was healed—not so much as a single doctor of the law or a Pharisee felt the power which was passing so near to them that they were amazed and staggered and fell to caviling at it.

Dear hearers, this very melancholy observation must be applied to some that are present now. You may be in the midst of this congregation which is under remarkable visitations of God's grace, and yet there may be no power present operating in your heart to heal you. You will observe that those who missed this grace were not the harlots, infamous as they were by character, they felt the power of the love of Jesus and entered into His kingdom. We do not find that this power was wanting among the publicans. We have an instance here of one of them who made a great feast in his house for Christ.

Where then was the power lacking? Where was it unsought and unfelt? It was in the first place among *the knowing people*, the doctors of the law. These teachers knew too much to submit to be taught by the Great Rabbi. There is such a thing as knowing too much to know anything, and being too wise to be anything but a fool. The knowledge of the doctors was that which puffs up, and not the knowledge which comes from God.

Ah, dear hearer, beware of head knowledge without heart knowledge. Beware of being so orthodox as to set yourself up as a judge of the preacher, and to refuse to be obedient to the truth. Beware of

saying, "Oh yes, yes, yes, yes, that is very applicable to So-and-so, and very well put." Do not criticize but feel.

It were better for you that you had been a common plough boy, whistling at the plough, who never heard these things until today, and have now listened to them, and have received them in all their novelty, and power, and beauty for the first time. This were better for you than to have heard them till they ring in your ears like the bell which you have heard every Sabbath day, of whose monotony you are weary.

Beware of going down to hell with a millstone of sound doctrine about your necks, for if you will be damned you may as well perish knowing the truth as not knowing it. Nay, if you catch the formula and lay hold upon the creed, and imagine yourself to be teachers of others, it is even easier to perish in that state than it is if you came in to hear the Word untaught heretofore in its glad message. These were the knowing ones who had no power to be healed.

Those, moreover, who had a good opinion of themselves were left unblessed. The Pharisees! no better people anywhere, from Dan to Beersheba, than the Pharisees, if you would take them upon their own reckoning.

Observe with due respect their public character. Were they not most eminent? See the breadth of the borders of their garments! How visible were their phylacteries! How diligently did they wash their hands before they ate! How scrupulous about straining out gnats from their wine! How careful to tithe the anise, and mint, and cumin! Yet these were the people who obtained no blessing from Jesus. They were too good to be saved.

How many people there are of this kind! "Well," says one, "I know I never robbed anybody. I have brought up my family respectably, and conducted myself with such decorum that nobody could possibly find fault with me." Just so, and you will not have Christ because you are whole, and have no need of a physician.

"Ah," says another, "surely if we do our duty to the best of our ability it will be all right with us." If you think thus you will find that when you have done your duty to the best you can, you will have no part nor lot in a Savior, because manifestly, on your own showing, you do not require one. The Lord Jesus will take your own showing and will say, "I never knew you. How could I know you? You were never sick, you never needed Me, you declared that you were whole, and you would not stoop to accept the salvation which I, the Savior, came to bring." Thus will Jesus speak to you who now proudly despise His grace.

Once again, the people who did not get the blessing were not only the knowing ones and the very good ones, but they were also *the people who stood by*. As one observes, they did not come to be preached at, they came for Christ to preach *before* them. That used to be the old style of sermon prefaces—"A sermon preached *before* the honorable or worshipful company of So-and-so." Now that is the worst kind of preaching anywhere, preaching *before* people, preaching right *at* people is the only preaching worth hearing and worth uttering.

But they did not come for Christ to operate upon them, they were not patients, they were visitors in the hospitals. Like visitors they went round to the beds and looked at the prescriptions put over the sick, and observed upon each case, and when the physician came in and began to exercise his art upon the sick, they stood by and criticized his treatment, imagining all the while that they were not sick themselves. If they had been lying on the bed sick they could have been healed, but they took only a superficial interest in the healing, for they came not to partake in it.

Beware, my dear hearers, of going to places of worship merely to be lookers on. There will be no lookers on in heaven, and there will be no lookers on in hell. Take care that you do not play the looker on in the worship of God here. Every truth as spoken by God's servants has a bearing upon you. If it be threatening, and you are in the gall of bitterness, it is yours, tremble under it! If it be the promise of divine love, then if you have no part in it, be afraid, be ashamed, be alarmed, and fly to Christ that you

may partake in it. Those who get no blessing are those who suppose they do not particularly need it and stand by, having merely come to see and to be seen, but not to receive a cure.

Those who felt not the healing power sneered and caviled. They said further down in the chapter, "Who can forgive sins but God only?" When a man gets no good *out of* the ministry, he is pretty sure to think there is no good *in* the ministry. And when he himself for want of stooping down to drink finds no water in the river, he concludes it is dry, whereas it is his own stubborn knee that will not bend, and his own willful mouth that will not open to receive the Gospel.

But if they quarrel, if they raise questions, if they dispute, we know their breed, we understand the race to which they belong, and we know how Jesus said to them of old, "Ye generation of vipers, how shall ye escape the damnation of hell?" If any shall not escape, surely they shall not whose only hearing of the Gospel is to make it the butt of their sarcasm and the object of their ridicule, who look derisively even at the cross itself with a dying Savior upon it, and thrust their tongue into their cheek, and make jests and merriment of the agonies of the world's Redeemer.

Beware, lest you have those jests in your mouth on earth, which you will have to digest in hell! Beware, lest your mockery return upon you at the last great day when the words of Solomon shall be fulfilled, "Because I called and ye refused, I stretched out my hands and no man regarded, I also will mock at your calamity, I will laugh when your fear cometh." There were persons then to whom the present power of Christ to heal was of no service whatever, and there may be such now. Friend, are you such an one?

IV. In the last place, I want Christian people here to observe that WHEN THE POWER OF CHRIST WAS PRESENT, IT CALLED FORTH THE ENERGY OF THOSE WHO WERE HIS FRIENDS TO WORK WHILE THAT POWER WAS MANIFEST.

My dear brethren, the members of this church especially, what I have to say is earnestly addressed to you. You will perceive that as soon as ever it was discovered that the power of healing was present, loving hearts desired to bring in others that they might experience it. Four persons took each a corner of a bed and brought in a palsied man who could not come of himself, and they let him down with much inconvenience through the roof.

God is blessing the church now. Christian men and women, join together to pray for your friends who cannot or will not pray for themselves. And if you meet with any in deep distress, palsied with despair, who cannot lift the finger of faith, strive to bring them to hear the Gospel, bring them where Christ is working miracles.

If one of you cannot prevail to lay the case before the Lord, let two of you unite. If two should not be enough, let four blend their petitions. If four should not suffice, tell it to the church and ask the whole to pray, but do strive to bring dying sinners where Christ is working spiritual miracles. If you read further on in the chapter you will learn how to bring some persons to the Savior who would never hear of Him else.

Levi made a great feast, for he thought to himself, "I should like Jesus to come and preach to the publicans. They are such great sinners, just such as I am. If I could but get them to hear Him they might be converted. But," he thought, "if I ask them they would say they could not afford to give up a day's work, they will not care to listen to a sermon, so," (he said) "I will get them this way, I will invite them to my house to a feast. They will be sure to come then, and then I will ask Jesus to come and eat with them, and I know He will not let them go without saying a good word." So you see he used arts as fowlers do when they are anxious to catch their prey.

Now cannot you be as watchful and thoughtful in your generation as Levi was? Cannot you get the outcasts and the neglecters of the Sabbath to your own house or to anybody else's house, and use means to bring them under the sound of God's Word?

Why, if you have a few flowers in your back room, if it rains in the summer time, do not you always put them out in it? All the pots you out in the garden to let them catch the shower. Do so with your friends, your neighbors, your children, your kinsfolk, while the rain of grace is dropping, try to get them

under the influence of it, and if they will not come by one means try another, only get them where the power of the Lord is present, for perhaps Jesus may look upon them and they may look to Him and may be healed.

And oh! let me say in closing, if they should not be saved the responsibility will not then rest with you, even as the responsibility this morning does not rest with me. We have proclaimed to you in this house many times that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. We have told you that the heavenly Father is willing to receive returning sinners, that He delights in mercy, that He is free to blot out sin.

We have told you that the blood of Christ can make the blackest clean, that all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men. We have urged you to flee away like doves to Jesu's wounds. The power of the Spirit of God has led many of you to come to Him, and you are saved. But alas! there still remains a multitude who are unsaved still.

Well, if you perish, it is not because Christ has not been taught in your streets. You will go down to hell, some of you, with the light shining on your eyelids, but with your eyes willfully closed against it. You will perish with the voice of mercy ringing in your ears. And in hell you will be awful monuments to the justice of God who will then say to you, "You sinned against light and knowledge, and against love and mercy." If they perish who despised Moses' law, how shall ye escape if ye neglect so great a salvation?

May the Holy Spirit now with mighty energy apply the precious blood of Jesus to every hearer, and unto God shall be glory world without end. Amen.

*"Blest Savior, at Thy feet I lie,
Here to receive a cure or die;
But grace forbids that painful fear,
Almighty grace, which triumphs here.*

*"Thou wilt withdraw the poison'd dart,
Bind up and heal the wounded heart;
With blooming health my face adorn,
And change the gloomy night to morn."*

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—LUKE 5

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.