

“LIFE IN HIS NAME”:
THE PURSUIT OF WHOLENESS AND THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

THE HOPE OF THE SICK
(JOHN 6:1-2)

I. Introduction

II. “The Signs that He was Doing on the Sick” (John 6:2)

- A. Jesus goes back north to the region of Galilee.
- B. At this point in his ministry, he draws the crowds through his signs of healing.
 - Jn 6:2: “And a large crowd was following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing on the sick.”
- C. When God’s reign appears, the sick will be healed. The appearance of the Kingdom is accompanied by healing and liberation of the oppressed.
 - Mt 4:23: “And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people.”
 - Mt 4:24: “So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, those oppressed by demons, epileptics, and paralytics, and he healed them.”
 - Mt 8:16: “That evening they brought to him many who were oppressed by demons, and he cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick.”
 - Mk 1:34: “And he healed 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.”
 - Lk 4:40: “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.”
- D. By healing the sick, Jesus is demonstrating that *he* is where the Kingdom begins. *He* is where the Kingdom is. All who come to him will experience the healing power of God.

III. Human Flourishing

- A. By healing the sick, Jesus is demonstrating what kind of a Kingdom God brings.

- B. The Kingdom of God is not a Kingdom that is in competition with life, with human flourishing.
- C. When God's Kingdom comes, evil will be vanquished. Decay will be reversed. Humanity will be restored. The lights will come on again.

IV. To Be Healers

- A. *What does that mean for the life of the Church?*
 - 1. If the Kingdom of God brings healing, the people of the Kingdom should be people of healing as well.
 - 2. While we may not be gifted with our Lord's ability to perform miraculous healings (though in the Church's history there are believers who are enabled by the Holy Spirit to manifest some similar ability), we are nevertheless called to serve the sick and those who are broken.
- B. God calls us to be people of healing, people who will manifest his healing grace to the world. In a sense, every believer is called to be in some form of "health care," because God is pro-life.
- C. What do we see in Scripture? We see the Father calling us to:
 - 1. use words that edify our brothers and sisters in Christ.
 - Eph 4:29: "Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear."
 - 1 Thess 5:11: "Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing."
 - 2. protect widows, orphans, poor, and the oppressed amongst us.
 - Jer 22:3: "Thus says the LORD: Do justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor him who has been robbed. And do no wrong or violence to the resident alien, the fatherless, and the widow, nor shed innocent blood in this place."
 - Mic 6:8: "He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"

—God calls us to be people who desire both mercy for wicked sinners and justice for the oppressed.
 - 3. practice kindness, tenderness, and forgiveness to one another.
 - Eph 4:32: "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."
 - 4. shine forth love to one another.
 - Col 3:14: "And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony."

- D. When the Kingdom of God appears, that's what happens: Sins will be forgiven, people will be healed, the oppressed will have their chains broken. That is what the rule of God *feels* like.
- E. May healing, grace, mercy, forgiveness, and justice for the oppressed always be at the center of who we are as a church.

V. Look Where the Sign Points

- A. At this stage in Jesus' ministry, his healings are "signs" (v 2), which means that the reality to which these signs point is yet to arrive.
- B. The miracles our Lord accomplished were signs to point us to an even greater reality that is to come, the Kingdom itself when it is manifested in its fullest power, at its highest pitch.
- C. When that day comes, death will be forever eradicated; eternal life will break out on a global scale.
- D. We get our very first glimpse of this Kingdom in Jesus himself.
 1. When Jesus rose from the dead, he entered eternal life on behalf of all his people.
 2. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus is healing of the ultimate kind. It is healing that is final and irreversible.
 3. Jesus was the first human to make the leap from this present evil age into the Age to Come—and he did so for you and for me.
 - Jn 14:1-3: "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ²In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also."
 - 1 Cor 15:20-22: "But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. ²²For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. ²³But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ."
- E. In his resurrection and ascension, Jesus experiences perfect healing on behalf of his people.
 1. He goes into the sheltering presence of the Abba Father.
 2. He promises that if we believe in him, he will take us there one day, to the place where all sickness is healed.

VII. Healing Is in Jesus Alone

We are not the ones who bring the healing Kingdom of God into the world. The One who brings the Kingdom is God. And God gives the Kingdom in all of its healing power through Jesus Christ: "...they saw the signs that he [Jesus] was doing on the sick" (Jn 6:2). Those signs were not meant to point to Christians, but to Jesus himself. It is Jesus who carries eternal life. It is Jesus who bestows the Kingdom of God with all of its saving, healing, dignifying, and liberating power on those who believe in him alone for salvation.

Questions for Reflection

1. Was there anything in particular about today's sermon that blessed and encouraged you?
2. Was there anything that you disagree with or found difficult to accept?
3. How does Jesus' healing signs relate to the Kingdom of God?
4. The Kingdom of God brings healing and liberation. What does this teach us about the values of the Kingdom and its citizens?
5. How do we enter the Kingdom?
6. What are some healing habits you can practice in your life today? To whom can you offer Christ's healing love today?