



HEALTHY,  
WEALTHY  
& WISE?

## Healthy, Wealthy and Wise?

One of my friends in Jamaica died after a prolonged illness. Knowing how her entire family suffered because of her illness, I am tempted to ask why she was sick for so long. Why didn't the Lord heal her? Why should those who are redeemed by the blood of Christ suffer such pain and discomfort?

Some of my Christian friends tell me that such suffering is unnecessary and that we need only to claim the healing that belongs to us as children of God. Let me quote an article I read:

*"The full good news is that Jesus has already accomplished your healing on the cross, when He went in your place and died for your sins and made available your healing, your wholeness, your deliverance, your freedom, your victory, your every need. We need only to learn how to receive it by faith as we received our eternal salvation by faith. It is available and due to us if we believe in and receive Jesus' atonement for our sins on the cross."*

Doesn't this sound attractive and reasonable? After all, since God is all-powerful can He not deliver us from all our sufferings? And since He is all-loving will He not do so? Didn't Jesus die to deliver us from all sickness and poverty?

Another friend of mine believed this wholeheartedly. When she developed a serious case of cancer a few years ago, she simply claimed her healing. She was convinced that God must heal her or He would be unfaithful – but He didn't! At that point serious doubts began to fill her mind; she began to ask herself, "Can God really be trusted?"

Many are struggling with these same questions and they are important questions. They touch the very essence of God's character – His faithfulness, His power, His love, His will. Does the Bible really teach that we need never be sick or poor? Should we view God as a vast cosmic vending machine who must deliver the goods (healing, deliverance, safety, freedom, prosperity, etc.) whenever we put in the right coins (our "faith" in demanding of Him our rights and dues)?

Just as people turn away from an unreliable vending machine, so have multitudes turned away in disgust and disillusionment from God when their only knowledge of Him has been this unworthy idea of Him. The byways of Christian profession are strewn with the sad wrecks of those who have turned away from the true and living God because of the false claims of those who claim to represent Him.

Of course, the Lord could heal every sick person today if He purposed to do so. Scripture teaches that He is infinite in power. But He is not limited by our feeble understanding of Him nor even by our capacity to draw upon His power. He acts according to His thoughts of what is best for each individual child of God, and ultimately, what is for His own glory. Therefore He does not always give the same measure of physical well-being and deliverance to His own, nor does He give these things according to our obedience and faith.

Acts 12 gives no evidence that Peter had more faith than James. Yet God allowed

James to be killed and Peter to be miraculously delivered from prison. Paul was a man full of faith, yet his life was riddled with sufferings of every kind (2 Cor. 11:23–30). Stephen was filled with the Holy Spirit but was violently murdered by an enraged mob (Acts 7:54-59).

The full and free salvation which we receive when we believe the Gospel does not include a promise of freedom from sickness, disease, depression and poverty. True, we can draw upon God's grace when we are in these difficult circumstances, and we will always find His grace more than enough for us (2 Cor. 12:9). But we still live in a groaning creation which suffers from the effects of sin.

Our full deliverance from suffering and death awaits the coming of Christ (1 Th. 4:16-17). Then He will transform our lowly bodies and make them like His own glorious body (Phil. 3:20,21). Then we will no longer be a part of this "groaning creation" (Rom. 8:18-23). Then "death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 15:51-54).

In the meantime, we need help to live for God in the midst of our problems and suffering. "Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day." (2 Cor. 4:16).

In Acts 14:22 the Apostle Paul exhorted new disciples to continue in the faith, saying to them, "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God."

– G. Steidl

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