

## Can God Heal Me?

✦ **body** (vv.29-34)

✦ **soul** (vv.35-39)

In the Epiphany light of our Savior Jesus Christ God, dear fellow objects of God's grace:

One of the great blessings of working with other cultures is that you find everyone is asking the same two questions. Sure there are other day-by-day questions about family and friends, jobs, technology, paying the bills or just finding enough food. But these are all group questions. When it comes to each individual, there seems to be a deep sense of reckoning. Whoever or whatever "god" is to them will finally call them to account. They'll have to answer for their deeds. Even atheists use these two questions to argue against God – which leads the philosophers to say that they aren't really atheists. How can you argue against something that does not exist? They choose to go to their own way to destruction.

But for all who do believe in God these two questions come up constantly. Does God have the power? And does God have the love? If God has the power to end suffering, why doesn't He use it? If God has the love to end suffering, doesn't He have the power? Power by itself in God is terrifying. Love by itself in God is toothless. We need both power and love from God. Now look at the question behind these questions. It boils down to this: **Can God Heal Me?** Here's where I feel it most in my...

✦ **body** (vv.29-34)

If you and I never got sick, we would have no concern about this, would we? We could look down on everyone else and wonder, "What's their problem? Don't they exercise enough? Not enough sleep? Not the right food? Supplements?" Our questions could go on and on. But when our own **body** is hurting, when last night's supper became history in the wee hours of the morning, when the aches and shaking and chills won't warm – then we come to the question atop the other two. **Can God Heal Me?**

One of the things I love about the God of the Bible is the way He does not get hung up on philosophical questions. He gets right down into our world and deals with the heart of suffering. Today's First Lesson is from oldest book of the Bible. (Job 7:1-7) It deals with suffering. Job's three friends argue that since Job is suffering so, he must have really sinned. God said otherwise, so Job jumps on that and demands that God tell him why he's suffering when he didn't do anything to deserve it. God said so! All are wrong. Adam's sin brought suffering and death into our world, but it does not always happen because of some specific sin. When we suffer, we don't get to demand an answer from God. Job was depressed. God would lift him up by repentance, then have Job sacrifice for his three friends. Blessings would come.

And yet that still was not enough for God. He wanted to experience suffering, then relieve it. So He came down in the person of Jesus Christ, God's own Son. During the Epiphany season we've seen Jesus shining in glory as God. Does Jesus have the power to heal? Does He have the love? Watch this!

Just a few streets across from the synagogue where Jesus healed a demon possessed man last week was the home of Simon Peter. Archaeologists are sure of its ruins because the Byzantines built an eight-sided church around it. *Eight* reminds us of Noah and his family on the ark, as the church is the ark of God's rescue in Baptism and Word. What a little aspirin and ice might relieve today, could be deadly back then. So right away they told Jesus that Peter's mother-in-law was in bed, sick with a fever. Did Jesus care? Did He have the power to help? He took her by the hand and raised her up. Gone! The fever was just gone! No days of rest and recovery needed at all. She got right to work serving them. Critics would cry, "Just a fluke! She'd a got better anyway."

Long day. Everyone needs to rest, but no! The whole town gathered, not “at” the door, but literally, “on” the door. Satan was attacking by demon possession in the face of God’s Son. Diseases and sicknesses too many to count were infecting them. Jesus did not say, “It’s a virus. Go home. Get plenty of rest and fluids. Maybe you’ll get better, maybe not.” He just healed them. And when the demons tried to speak up and mock Him by saying He was the Son of God, God’s own Son would not let them say a word. He will not accept praises from demons. To praise God is a privilege. You don’t get to do it just because you decide today you’ll go to church. You can only praise God by trusting in Jesus as your Savior – God who cares in infinite love, God who helps in infinite power. As predicted by the prophet Isaiah 700 years previously: **“He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases,”** (quoted by Matthew 8:17 NIV84). Yes, He **“carried our sorrows”** (Isaiah 53:4 NIV84) that sickness and suffering cause.

It’s awesome and wonderful to think that Jesus was willing to leave His Father’s home of light, His rainbow circled throne, leave it all for earthly night, for wanderings sad and lone. (CW \_) He had no reason to come to this sin cursed earth and bear our sorrows except pure, holy, eternal love. He had no way to come except by sheer, unbridled, invincible power. But Jesus knew all that would not end people’s criticism. In cultures the world over they would still keep asking: *If Jesus has the power, why doesn’t he? Does he lack the love? Why didn’t he just heal everyone? Why one-by-one so personally?*

### ✠ soul (vv.35-39)

Here you see how these questions and all the suffering around Jesus seared His soul. It got to Him. What was He to do as God’s own Son all alone on this lonely planet with hurting people who were too sick or stubborn or stupid to understand? He had to get away. He had to be alone. And yet not alone. **“Jesus got up early in the morning, while it was still dark, and went out. He withdrew to a solitary place and was praying there.”** (EHV)<sup>1</sup> Jesus just needed to pour out His heart to God. He is God, but He also calls His Father, **“my God.”** (John 20:17) He needed to find strength in His God to continue in that kind hearted patience and understanding that would help and heal in love rather than destroy in power. As God, Jesus too wants His mercy to triumph over judgment. (James 2:13) Jesus had a little time, but then **“Simon and his companions searched for him,”** literally they almost *hunted him down*. The massing crowds were out of their control. They did not have the power to help and heal like Jesus. And they lacked God’s love. **“When they found him, they said to him, ‘Everyone is looking for you!’ ”**

Moms and Dads, teachers and preachers, can you relate? You’re tired. Long day. Finally time to rest, just spend a little time in prayer and reflection. You get what you can. Like Christ you keep trying. Then when duty calls, His love and power kicks in for you too. Jesus did more than just go along.

**“He told them, ‘Let’s go somewhere else, to the neighboring villages, so that I can preach there too. In fact, that is why I have come.’ ”**<sup>39</sup>**Then he went throughout the whole region of Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.”** Do you hear echoes of this in Paul’s Second Lesson today? (1 Corinthians 9:16-23) **“Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!”** People still demand that we preach politics. But that’s sin. John the Baptist and Jesus would agree with Paul: **“I had no intention of knowing anything among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified.”** (1 Corinthians 2:2 EHV)

Does God want to use His power to heal me? Does God love me enough or at all? The cross is proof that cannot be argued away. So deeply He loves you that He sacrificed Himself in your place to take away every stain of guilt and shame. So powerfully that He rose from the dead. Centuries earlier in the ruins of Jerusalem the lamenting prophet Jeremiah wrote these comforting words: **“For men are not cast off by the Lord forever. Though he brings grief, he will show compassion, so great is his unfailing love. For he does not willingly bring affliction or grief to the children of men.”** (Lamentations 3:31–33 NIV84) In time or eternity God will surely grant complete and total healing. (Psalm 103) For now He gives the strength to bear up and conquer in His love. Sure as the cross! All good from God in Christ. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> EHV – Scriptures from the *Holy Bible – Evangelical Heritage Version*. The Wartburg Project, 2017. NPH: 800-662-6022. For *The Preacher’s Apprentice (TPA)* sermon study or copies: m.cordes@comast.net . New Life Evangelical Lutheran Church You can also call: 651-484-1169. Hear the sermon at [www.wels.us/newlife](http://www.wels.us/newlife) . 180 County Rd F - Shoreview, MN 55126