

Intro: As we read of all the miracles that Jesus did in Luke's gospel, we must keep in mind the reason that Jesus did these things, lest we elevate the miracles over their intended purpose. Luke is presenting Jesus as the Divine King, the new Adam, the One who has the authority to restore all that sin has broken in Adam's fall. He is the Holy Son of God who reverses the curse. However, at Jesus' first coming, He did not reverse the curse in its entirety. He did not cast out every demon or heal every disease or weakness. His followers still needed moderated medicine for frequent ailments (1 Tim 5:23) and they would even die. So, Jesus' power to heal *at this time* was not His primary purpose. However, these miracles did give hope and Jesus casts a long shadow forward to the day when the Father would bring all things under His feet and even death would be completely abolished.

His miracles are like the down payment of His Kingship. They prove that He has the authority and that in the final day He will restore all that is broken for those who are in Him. To those who are in Him by faith, made righteous by His blood and raised to new life in Him are given the promise of that future day: "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be His people, and God Himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." (Rev 21:3-4)

So, even as we suffer today under the weight of the curse, let us fix our eyes upon Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith and entrust our plight to His authority and goodness, waiting upon the timing of the sovereign Lord to make all things new in His wisdom, for the One who performed miracles of healing to show His power over nature is the same One who was raised from the dead to prove His authority over death itself. For Him we wait, longing in expectation for the promised day, the certain day, the day of hope and healing and restoration when these bodies of death will be raised to the newness of immortality and life without sin to deceive us and sin's curse to pursue us any longer. This is the Divine King and He has the authority to redeem and restore in totality.

Having said that, there are some particular glories of Christ that we can see in this passage: He loves so greatly that He takes great personal risks to show compassion, and Jesus does have authority over Adam's curse and all its products such as sickness, physical brokenness, and even death.

1. Jesus Takes Risks to Love

- a. Probably stressed from the synagogue teaching/exorcism
 - i. What does this tell us about Jesus?
 - ii. He loves well – seeking to serve rather than glorying in His powerful experience from the synagogue
- b. Jesus goes into a place where someone is quite ill
 - i. This is very dangerous, particularly in those days
 - ii. Jesus loves in spite of danger
- c. These disciples knew that there was danger, but they didn't seem to consider Jesus, *but that didn't keep Him from loving them well*
- d. What we learn here is that Jesus enters into our suffering in a very real, intimate, compassionate, fearless, and warm manner
 - i. When you are ill or feel repulsive, it is important to remember that Jesus doesn't shrink back from you, but draws in close to you
 - ii. While others may feel danger and stay away, emotionally if not physically, here we see Jesus closing in, standing over, and moving to restore the broken.

2. Jesus Has Authority Over Our Cursed Bodies

- a. She has a "great fever"
 - i. Luke uses the word "oppressed"

1. means to "be bound up, surrounded"
2. used of being held prisoner in Luke 22:63 and being hemmed in 2 Cor 5:14 and hard-pressed (Phil 1:23) between two choices
3. This fever has her surrounded, she feels the weight of the illness and cannot get away
- ii. This is a type of ailment that isn't small, nor can be fixed by a "placebo effect"
 1. Luke notes that Jesus healed "various diseases", indicating that these were not merely your run-of-the-mill aches, pains, or headaches
 2. Luke, in particular, notes paralysis (from birth!), epilepsy, withered limbs, and blindness
 3. This separates Jesus from some of the "faith-healers" of our day (and His) as well as some of the alternative medicines that work on small things about 30% of the time (the same as published findings for the placebo effect)
- b. Like the spiritual oppression, there is the sense of being trapped, but this is by the physical body, not a demon
 - i. Luke is NOT saying that this fever is related to a demon
 1. There is no personal interaction with the fever
 2. There is no indication that this is anything but a high fever from a physical illness
 - ii. There is physical suffering that is so heavy that it oppresses the soul
 1. It is the feeling of being trapped, of being oppressed, that Luke is emphasizing for the purpose of showing that Jesus is the Deliverer promised in Isaiah 61
 2. Jesus has the authority to free us from the oppression of physical illness, brokenness, and disability
- c. We are complex people with complex issues, and the oppression of our souls has a multitude of various complex roots and causes
 - i. In the last pericope it was spiritual forces
 1. The spiritual forces of evil are against us
 - ii. In this pericope it is physical illness, the brokenness and cursedness of the body
 1. Our own bodies are against us b/c of sin
 2. We die, and death takes many forms in many measures when it comes to physical suffering, disabilities, and brokenness
 3. Our bodies are "not the way that they are supposed to be" in the same way that our souls are "not the way they are supposed to be"
 - iii. In the next pericope, we see that nature is against us, too
 1. Nature, under the curse of futility b/c of man's sin, is against us as well
- d. The people ask Jesus about her
 - i. Assuming that He either knows something, or can do something
 - ii. Seeing His power over spiritual oppression, they hope that He can do something about the physical oppression of illness

3. Jesus Shows Authority Over the Curse of Death

- a. Illness, disease, and brokenness are short-term down payments on death
 - i. They are not the way things are supposed to be, and they are a sign, or an indication, that sin is not the way things are supposed to be
 - ii. Luke is still comparing Jesus to Adam, showing us that Jesus reverses the curse that was placed upon humanity in Adam's (and, consequently, *our* unbelief)
 - iii. Luke is moving toward the root cause of all of our problems, whether spiritual forces, the brokenness of our bodies, or natural forces outside of us: "your sins are forgiven" (5:20)

- b. Again Jesus shows His authority by merely speaking and bringing physical brokenness under submission to Him
 - i. "rebuked the fever"
 - 1. this word, "rebuke" is the call for something to come under the submission of another
 - 2. When I rebuke as a pastor, I am calling one to come under the submission of God's Word
 - ii. When Jesus rebukes, He is calling someone or something (fever) to come under the submission of His Word
 - 1. Either way, His Word is the authority, and He, being the Word of God, is the authority to whom all must submit (Phil 2:9-11; Eph 1:21; 1 Cor 15:24)
- c. Luke is showing us, in brevity and simplicity, that Jesus is the Divine King, the Promised Seed to crush the Serpent's head, the Restorer of all that sin has wrought!
 - i. Note that there is no mention of Peter's M-I-L's faith, for this is not the point
 - ii. The point is the authority of Jesus over the Curse
- d. If Jesus has this much authority and exercises it for your sake, what do you think of Him?
 - i. How shall we respond to such power and authority?
 - ii. How shall we respond to His compassion that moves in to heal and restore at great personal risk to Himself?
 - iii. How shall we respond to the One who left the riches of heaven and became poor for us, from the wealth of life in the presence of the Father to the poverty of death and wrath from the Father for you and for me?

4. If Jesus is the Deliverer, Then Why Aren't All Christians Healed *Now*?

- a. Answer #1: Jesus' primary goal in His incarnation is not to alleviate our suffering here, but rather to proclaim His authority over sin and its consequences and to atone for our sin and its consequences.
 - i. He came to be our substitute: to take on our burdens and to pay down our debt against God.
 - ii. These miracles of healing are foreshadows, down-payments, and proofs of His authority not the final end of sin, yet
 - 1. His resurrection from the dead shows that He is making all things new *in His time*
 - 2. For now, He is reigning until He subjects all things to Himself, then the end will come and death will be annihilated
 - 3. 1 Corinthians 15:17ff
 - iii. Thus, Jesus didn't cast out every demon or heal every disease at His first advent, because that is not His point
 - 1. In fact, God uses suffering to bring about a greater good, the greater glory of deeper dependence upon Him and a greater recognition of our finitude and His infinity, our weakness and His power, our fallibility and His eternity
 - 2. This results in a great appreciation, even a greater love, of God and His glorious grace
 - 3. Through our weakness, He is revealed to be powerful to bring life to others (2 Cor 4:7-12)
- b. Answer #2: When God keeps us in the bonds of our suffering, it reveals *to us* what we really desire: Him or His gifts?
 - i. Luke shows us here that early in His ministry Jesus is very popular because of His healing and exorcism ministry
 - 1. When people need Jesus to make them more comfortable, they will pursue Him across great distances

2. When people needed Jesus to fix their woes, they came in droves
- ii. However, when Jesus stopped giving them the things that they wanted (healing, food, etc.), they stopped showing up
 1. Ultimately, when Jesus needed companionship in His greatest need, they had all deserted Him
 2. When Jesus need friends, these healed people were nowhere to be found
- iii. What this reveals is that often people come to Jesus so that He can make them more comfortable (comfort, strength, inclusion), but not make them whole-hearted worshippers
 1. While Jesus did heal people, always calling them to the Kingdom of God under the rule of the King, most people didn't follow when they got their gifts
- iv. Thus, often God will leave us in our suffering so that we will believe two things:
 1. The genuineness of our faith and the presence of God's Spirit upon us
 - a. 1 Thess 1:2-7
 2. We are never out of the need of God's grace for today
 - a. And, according to His promise, we *always find grace for today* in His sovereign reign as King
 - b. We can go boldly to the throne of grace to find mercy and grace in our time of need (Hebrews 4:16)
 3. God's ultimate purpose is to glorify Himself through our dependence, not the alleviation of our suffering here on earth: Physical comfort is never God's highest goal
- c. Answer #3: God's greater purpose is to glorify Himself by making you holy, like His Son.
 - i. It is through suffering that we learn to trust in God like the Son trusted the Father
 1. Look how Jesus speaks of His relationship to the Father
 - a. "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me"
 - b. "I can do nothing on my own but only what I see the Father doing"
 - c. "Not my will, but Your will be done."
 - d. "Glorify Me as I glorify You"
 2. He learned obedience, being made complete through His suffering (Heb 2:10)
 - ii. Jesus suffered and we are called to follow in His footsteps, entrusting ourselves in the times of great pains, to the wisdom and goodness of the Father
 1. "Not my will, but Yours be done." (Luke 22:42)
 2. This is the purpose of every suffering: to shape into the image of Jesus, who trusts the Father and loves Him, and who serves others and loves them
 3. Suffering teaches us to rely upon Him to do what He asks with His power alone and nothing in our own power.
 4. We are to "do good" as we entrust ourselves to a faithful Creator in our suffering (1 Pet 4:19)
 - a. He is faithful to keep His promise
 - b. He is the Creator who made you...and will remake you
 - iii. God is shaping us to see the eternal things as of greater value than the temporal things: hope in His glory
 1. Suffering produces perseverance (of faith), which produces character (proof or evidence), which works out hope which doesn't humiliate us for God loves us (Rom 5)
 2. Rom 8:17-18 – sharing in His sufferings *so that we might share in His glory*
 - a. This present sufferings are incomparable to the glory to be revealed in us (Christ-likeness)v18

3. 2 Cor 4:17-18 – “momentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison...for the things that are seen are passing away, but the unseen are eternal.”
- iv. There is a strong connection in Scripture between present suffering and hope in glory
 1. Our glory is tied up to suffering here, thus Peter can tell us to rejoice and not be surprised at our sufferings:
 - a. 1 Pet 4:12-13
 2. “eternal weight of glory” being produced through these temporal pains

Conclusion:

This glory which is promised and being produced is our hope. What is this glory? It is to be like Him, to see Him as He is, to glory in His presence and praise Him for His grace...without death or sickness or selfishness (Rev 21), to be rid of this “body of death” and this “sin which dwells within me” (Rom 7-8). Sharing in God’s glory is the goal of learning to value the things that He values, to hate the things that He hates, to work the works that He does, etc. That is my longing, to be like Jesus! To walk in His footsteps, suffering well with hope, moving toward others with great risks to my own body and psyche for the sake of the King’s glory so that all might believe in Him, longing for the day of redemption when this body will be raised to immortality always to proclaim the greatness of the glory of the grace of God through Jesus Christ.