



Living with Pain. What About Healing?

by Roxanne M. Smith

What would you do if you could meet Jesus face to face? I've spent many hours imagining this, and I'm pretty sure I'm not alone. While reading the New Testament, I've longed to be one of the many sick people who came to Jesus for healing while He walked on this earth. There are numerous descriptions of Jesus' healing ministry and, as far as I can tell, He healed anyone who came to Him and received His touch. Oh, how I've envied them. I thought if only I could have lived 2,000 years ago in that small part of the world — Israel — during Jesus' three years of public ministry ... I could have been lifted from my bed of pain and — imagine! — been restored to a normal life!

But since Jesus really is God, time and location shouldn't matter. He is equally capable of healing me in this current year, in the country of the United States of America, as He was in the year 30 A.D. in Israel. In the same vein, He is equally capable of healing you. So why doesn't He heal us of all of our diseases and pain when we cry to Him now? Jesus does heal His children now, but our understanding of healing needs to be broadened.

Open in Prayer

Read Mark 2:1–12

From this passage, what does Jesus do for the paralyzed man?

Which of the two actions does Jesus do first? _____

Which seems to be of greater value to Jesus and, by extension, to His Father: forgiveness of sins or physical healing? _____

Would you consider forgiveness of sins to be spiritual healing?

Which type of healing has temporary value? Which has eternal value? _____

Is Jesus' spiritual healing available to all? _____

Forgiveness of sins is Jesus' first priority, and it is a type of healing, since our deepest spiritual need is rebirth in Christ through the forgiveness of our sins. Physical healing has temporary value, and we naturally long for it, but even those who receive it will eventually die. Spiritual healing, by contrast, brings eternal life! This

truth can comfort us as chronic pain sufferers who know Jesus, because we have already received the greatest healing of all! Forgiveness can also have an impact on our physical well-being. Jesus showed that He knew our sins could weigh us down and prevent physical healing. It has been important in my life to forgive and to be forgiven, to let go of anger against people and systems which have damaged me. I've also had to ask my husband and son to forgive me for the short fuse which pain can create in me. Forgiveness eases tension and stress that we hold in our bodies, which in turn affect pain and healing.

Is there anyone whom you need to forgive? _____

Is there anyone from whom you need to ask forgiveness? _____

We usually think of the New Testament as the place to read about God's healing power, but it is also recorded in the Old Testament. Over 3,000 years ago, Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Aram, traveled to seek help for his health problems.

Read 2 Kings 5:1–15

What was wrong with Naaman's health? _____

How did Naaman hear about God's power to heal? _____

Contrast the faith of the king of Israel with the faith of the servant girl. _____

Why do you think Elisha gave such simple advice for Naaman to follow? _____

Why did Naaman find it difficult to comply with such a simple request? _____

Was Naaman ultimately able to follow God's leading? _____

What outcome did Naaman receive? _____

Why do you think God required some effort from Naaman, when God could have easily healed him without it? _____

Was curing Naaman's leprosy God's ultimate goal, or was it having a relationship with Naaman? See **verse 15**. In other words, is physical healing God's highest priority? _____

In curing Naaman, God displayed His power and revealed Himself as the only true God. God's ultimate goal for His people is that He *desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth* (**1 Timothy 2:4**).

Could God be leading you to a treatment for your pain that you are hesitant to try? Ask Him to guide you as you weigh potential treatment options. Pray for the courage and the resources to follow through with what He leads you toward.

Read Psalm 23

List the verbs from **Psalm 23**. _____

What do they tell us about the Shepherd? _____

What is God's character, especially in relating to His children? _____

Can you visualize yourself being the lamb in this Psalm? If you are hurt (suffer chronic pain), what does the Shepherd do? Does He gently pick you up and hold you tenderly, close to His heart? Does He whisper reassurances of His love and care? What else might you picture the Shepherd doing to care for you?

Take some time this week to read God's Word about and reflect on the image of the Good Shepherd — who carries you in His arms, who tenderly bandages your wounds, and who will never leave you nor forsake you.

Close in Prayer

Closing Hymn: Say or sing "The King of Love My Shepherd Is" (*LSB* #709; *LW* #412; *TLH* #431) or "The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want" (*LSB* #710; *LW* #416; *TLH* #436).

Blessed by God, Roxanne M. Smith is witnessing to the love and comfort God can give through pain and struggle. Her love for her Savior and devotion to Him explodes through this Bible study and through her book, *Struck Down But Not Destroyed*. She is a Stephen Minister and a member of her parish health ministry team. She and her husband, Andy, and their son, Jakob, reside in Michigan. To read more, visit her website: www.RoxanneSmith.org.