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Wisdom & Discernment when a Christian is Afflicted

We live in a highly deceptive world including in the spiritual realm. There is no lack of spiritual confusion and delusion in the last days. Over the past decades, renewed worldwide interest in healing has emerged in both secular and Christian circles. Belief in miraculous healings by international faith healers had adversely affected many people including sincere, well-meaning Christians. Sickness



is common in any human society, and more are seeking non-traditional methods of healing. But for instant and quick cures, some have fallen prey to charlatans or gullible friends who think that they can heal others. **Some unsound or half-true statements concerning healing are passed around among churches or Christians as if it were biblical truths.**

The Defective Understanding of Sickness for Believers

God often allowed afflictions in our lives to draw us to him or to nurture us in patience or a spiritual cause. When we fall ill, we need to humble ourselves and seek the Lord in much prayers with patience waiting upon Him.

The following are some examples of deceptive or defective understanding of the matter of sickness, as listed by Richard Mayhue in his latest book, *The Healing Promise: Is It Always God's Will to Heal?* (BMH, 1997), 20–21.

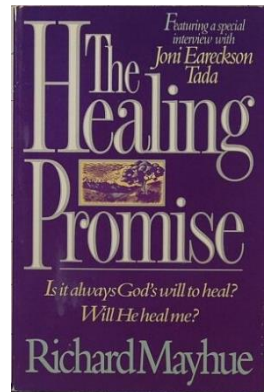
1. Because God wills that Christians enjoy His blessings, sickness shows that you are out of His will.
2. Sin is the root cause of sickness; therefore you must resist sickness as you would sin.
3. Since Christ died for your sickness and your sin, you can be freed from both.

4. If you had enough faith, you would be healed.
5. What you confess is what you possess; so talk sickness and you will get sick; talk health and you will get well.
6. All adversity comes from Satan; so sickness, like Satan, should be rebuked.
7. If you only knew the secret fact of God's healing power, you could be healed.
8. Since Christ and the apostles healed in their day, Christians can heal today.
9. Since sickness is from Satan, nothing good can come from sickness.
10. Since God wants you well, never pray, "Thy will be done" with regards to healing.
11. Since sin is the cause of sickness, if you are sick, then you have a pattern of sin in your life.
12. God has healed you, but the devil is not letting the symptoms leave.

Testimony of True Healing

In both the OT and NT, we see believers who are sick and there are those who are healed and others who are not. (1Tim 5:23) There was genuine supernatural healing brought about by God through the prophets, Christ or the Apostles. Where it happened, these are the distinguishing marks which include:

1. It was immediate (instantaneous).
2. It was public (eyewitness).
3. It took place on an ordinary unplanned occasion (not healing rallies).
4. It included illnesses that were established as true sicknesses and some even considered untreatable by the medical community at that time (ie, organic sickness, not psychosomatic sickness).
5. It was complete and irreversible (sickness did not return).
6. It was undeniable even to detractors and sceptics (and proven beyond a shadow of a doubt).



(See Mayhue, *The Healing Promise*, 34.)

False notions of Healing

When we hear of modern day so-called faith healing services by some mega church pastors who are supposed to be faith healers, it is often unauthenticated and unsupported by medical evidence that a real total remedy has taken place. Often migraines, depression, “short legs” and other symptomatic illnesses are “healed” instead of organic sicknesses. (See Peter Masters, *Healing Epidemic*, 202–227, and Mayhue, *The Healing Promise*, 63–85.)

(Read Prof Verna Wright, MD, FRCP, a world-renowned medical professor at Leeds University Medical School and a leading Rheumatologist, provides an objective medical assessment of modern miracle healers and some conclusions in the last chapter of the book, Peter Masters, *Healing Epidemic*, Metropolitan Tabernacle, Wakeman Trust 1988)

There is a popular US faith healer in Benny Hinn, , who came to Singapore some years ago, and his doctrine and practice was characterised by the following according to Dr Richard MayHue of Masters Seminary (Mayhue, *The Healing Promise*, 33–34).

1. Benny Hinn does not pray “Lord, Thy will be done.” Jesus Christ did (Luke 22:42).
2. Hinn believes that God always intends for believers to be healed. In contrast, the Bible teaches that some of the greatest saints had physical infirmities from which they were never healed, including Jacob, Paul and Timothy.
3. Hinn teaches that believers should command God to heal. The Bible teaches we are to ask (1 John 5:14–15).
4. Hinn suggests that miraculous healing from God is gradual. Healing by Christ and the apostles occurred instantly.
5. Hinn teaches that faith on the part of the sick person is essential to healing. Lazarus and Jairus’ daughters could not have exercised faith when they were raised from the dead.
6. Hinn writes that we must do our part before God can heal. The Bible teaches that God is sovereign.
7. Hinn believes that Christians should not be sick. The Bible teaches that Christians can be sick and all will eventually die.
8. Benny Hinn implies that a person’s healing can be lost and that the healed person must do certain things to keep the healing. Nowhere in the Bible do we find such teaching.

So what then should believers do when they are ill? A proper study of James 5:16–20 is requisite to answer this pressing question.

Biblical Guidance for the Afflicted

James addresses many practical issues in the Christian life. In the fifth chapter, in verses 16–20, he deals with this subject of sickness and the believer’s response to it. In James 5:13, *“Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.”* Suffering is a general word to depict mental, physical or even emotional afflictions. **We are to pray and seek the Lord for grace and strength and relief from such afflictions and wait patiently upon the Lord.** Then James went on to speak of sickness in the same way in verse 14, *“Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.”*

What are we to do when we are sick? We are to call for the elders of the church. We are not to seek out faith healers but to summon or call alongside the elders or leaders of the local church and they are to do two things:

1. Pray with and over him committing the person to the will of the Lord.
2. Anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. (ie has a therapeutic value).

The spiritual overseers of the church are to intercede and beseech the Lord together for the spiritual and physical well-being of the believers. It is proper and biblical that we share with the church our prayer requests including our sicknesses. **The church leaders must be responsible to pray earnestly for the recovery of its members, while at the same time submitting to the will and timing of the Lord. There is a call to examine ourselves and to seek God in confession of sins if necessary as we seek His mercy and pardoning grace.**

The Proper Place of Medical Science

Secondly, they are to anoint the member with oil. What does that mean? For the first century, olive oil was used in a medicinal sense, the ancients believe that it has a healing effect on people. Remember the Samaritan applied oil on the wound of the injured person (Luke 10:34). The Apostles also anointed people with oil (Mark 6:13). The word used here for “anoint” is a special word. It is normally used in extra biblical Greek Literature to speak of anointing or oiling with oil for medicinal purposes.

This is consistent with the teaching that prayer should not negate proper medical care that God has given to us. While we pray, we are also to seek medical assistance, and both are not inconsistent (some have added that the action here is also symbolic of health and vitality). So we

have a principle to apply: **To seek the Lord fervently in prayer and to do our part in consulting a medical doctor as well. God can heal today in a miraculous and supernatural way as He wills and also by using the normal course of medical care and established medically proven treatment. and a proper recovery process**

Notice that in verses 15–16,

And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he hath committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

If there is sin in the life of the person concerned, we should seek the Lord in confession and repentance. Sin has its consequence and sickness is one of them, although we have to be careful not to equate every sickness with sin (eg, Job's sickness was not due to his sins although he is not sinless).

Before David repented of his sins, he shared in Psalm 32:1–4 of physical and mental afflictions, which stopped after he confessed and repented. Paul spoke to some of the Corinthian brethren who were sick because they partook of the Lord's Supper unworthily (1 Cor 11:30). We are all to learn to pray fervently like Elijah, supported by a life of holiness and godly purity in obedience and submission to the will and timing of God (v 16). **It is not wrong to ask others to intercede for us as well. in church corporate intercession and we are to pray for ourselves and others too.**

Conclusion

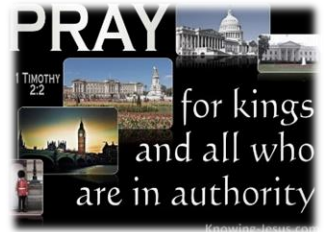
We need to be vigilant and prudent in these last days of deception even if we are afflicted or our loved ones too. Many young unsuspecting believers can be swept away by the showmanship and psychological pressure of faith healers, spiritual quacks and charlatans. **We need instead to place our faith and confidence in a prayer-answering Sovereign and Almighty God, submitting to His holy and perfect will for us and waiting upon him patiently in fervent effectual intercession and the reading of His word always.**

Jack Sin

(For deeper studies, read Richard Mayhue *The Healing Promise: Is It Always God's Will to Heal?* BMH, 1997 and Peter Masters, *Healing Epidemic*, Metropolitan Tabernacle, Wakeman Trust 1988)

Praying Daily for the Royal Family

As Christians, we should make it our practice to pray daily for the Royal Family. Our motive in doing so should be to honour God who alone has the sovereign power to appoint kings and rulers to govern the nations of the world. Our national governments are very important to us as Christians.



God makes this duty clear in these words: “*Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king*” (I Peter 2:17).

In order to observe this divinely given duty it is good to pray daily for our royal family.

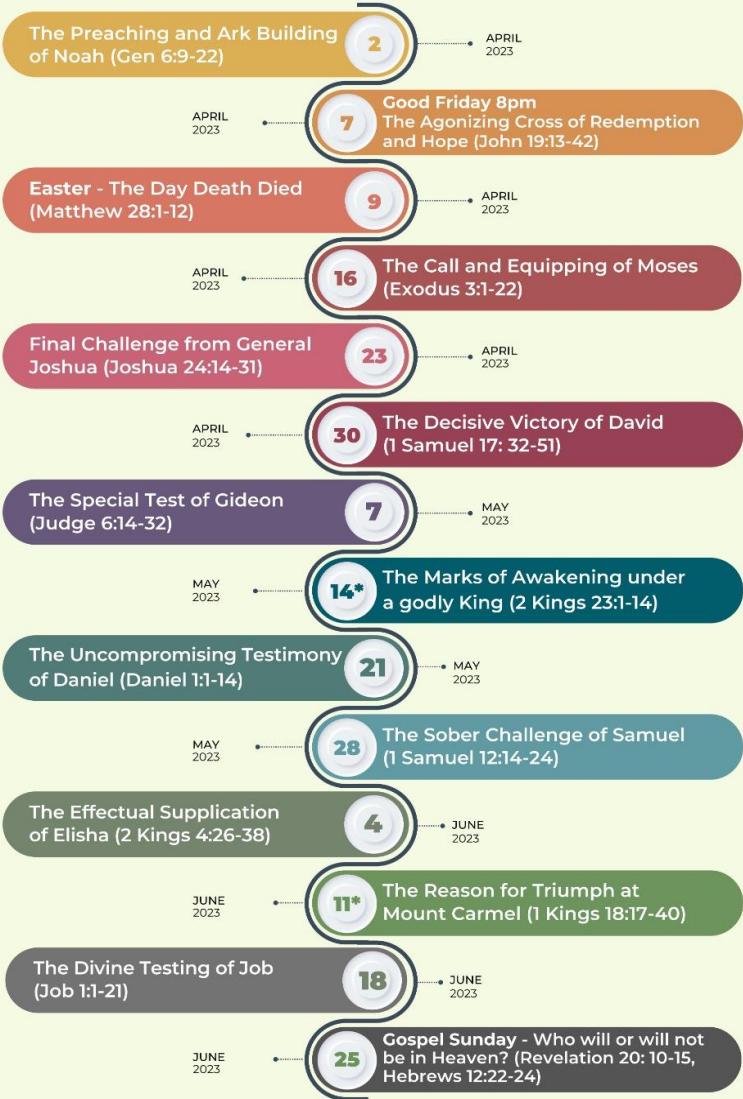
PRAYER FOR THE KING

1. That the secular laws which the King and government make are consistent with the Moral Laws of God.
2. That God be honoured and worshipped as the Bible teaches us. God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He is eternal, perfect and unchangeable.
3. That the Bible be treated as God’s inspired revelation.
4. That Jesus Christ be honoured as the Son of God and Saviour of the world.
5. That our national laws should be conformed to the Moral Laws of God in respecting the life, health and safety of citizens.
6. That the Bible should be an important part of our educational system in schools and colleges.
7. That there should be no laws allowed in our country which promote persecution or religious cruelty.
8. That the sexual identity of our citizens should be determined only by their God-given sexual body.
9. That our relationship with other nations should be that of benevolence, kindness and affection as far as possible.
10. That our nation should treat other nations as far as possible with kindness, protection and love.

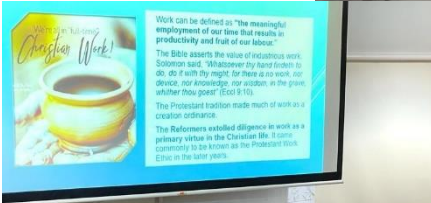
*Rev Maurice Roberts
Free Church of Scotland Continuing,
Inverness, Scotland*

LORD'S DAY PROGRAMME FOR APRIL - JUNE 2023

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS IN THE OT FOR OUR LEARNING



SHBPC 2023 May Day Seminar Biblical Perspective of Work & Retirement



Fellowship around Food & Books

Memory Verse

Jud 6:24 Then Gideon built an altar there unto the LORD, and called it Jehovahshalom: unto this day it is yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

Announcements

1. Welcome to our Lord's Day Sunday Worship Service! If you are here for the first time, do leave us your contact numbers in our guest book before you leave. Those who share the church vision to acquire a place of worship in due time, may designate your offerings to the SHBPC Church Building Fund.
2. Pastor brings us God's Word this morning on "**Special Test of Gideon (Jud 6:14-32)**", **continuing the quarterly series on "Significant Events in the OT for our Learning"**.
3. Pastor will preach next Sunday on "**The Marks of Awakening under a Godly King (2 Kings 23:1-14)**".
4. Sunday School classes after worship service:
 - Westminster Confession of Faith – Pastor
 - Studies in 1 Chronicles – Dn Kwong Leen
 - Book of Acts – Pr Mok
5. Chinese Fellowship meets on every Sunday night at 7pm via Zoom with both local and overseas brethren. We have systematic studies on Basic Theology, and the Parables of Jesus. Join us for a time of profitable learning. [**Zoom ID:883 9662 4157 Passcode:625551**]
6. Do send your prayer items to Pastor and join us for Church Prayer Meeting on Wed at 8pm via Zoom. The prayer list is available in church. [**Zoom ID:863 7527 5431 Passcode:218178**]
7. The **Annual Church Camp** will be held at **Pulai Springs Resort (Johor Bahru, Malaysia), June 7-10, 2023**. Rev Philip Heng is our camp speaker "**Exercise unto Godliness in an Ungodly World**".
8. We need willing hands and hearts to assist in the weekly cleaning of the premises. Do let Dn Yue Kay if you are available to serve in this area.
9. Love gifts, Offering and Tithes to the Lord can be given in the following ways:
 - **Cheque** payable to **Sovereign Hope Bible Presbyterian Church** and mail to church address. (Kindly write the full name of the church as indicated.)
 - **Fund transfer** to Church **UOB** Account **392-308-825-1**
 - **PayNow** to Church UEN: **T19SS0116FSOV**

Kindly indicate "**Church Building Fund**" if you would like to designate towards this cause.
