

# Jesus, A Healer to the Sick

Matthew 14:34-36

*Halifax: 11December 2005*

## **Introduction:**

For several weeks now, we have been exploring what Jesus, the Son of God, is among us...

- What a difference He makes when He comes among His people!
  - How glad you ought to be that He came into this lost and dying world!
  - How glad you ought to be that He has now come to us by His Spirit.
    - How you ought to yearn for Him to come and work in us each day...
  - How glad you ought to be that He has promised to come to us again
    - and that when He does, He take us to be with Him forever in glory.
    - How you ought to long that day.

You have every reason to desire that Jesus would come to us...

- We have seen that when He comes,
  - He offends the familiar who will not accept His deity, but only regard Him as a man...
  - He terrifies the impenitent who refuse to repent of their sins...
    - While these are negative things for the familiar and the impenitent, they are good things for God's people—
      - Jesus puts down all rebellion and establishes peace.
- We have also seen that when He comes,
  - He feeds the hungry as He fed the five thousand,
  - and He comforts the distressed as He relieved His disciples in the storm...
- And today we come to yet another reason we ought to rejoice that the Lord Jesus is pleased to come among us...
  - Because He is the one who heals all our diseases when He comes among us if we will but touch the hem of His garment as the people at Gennesaret did.
  - What a beautiful thing we see at this beautiful place called Gennesaret!
    - Gennesaret was a coastal plain on the Sea of Galilee, just north of Capernaum.
      - It was only about five kilometres long and one and half wide,

- but it was nourished by four springs and so produced an abundance of crops including walnuts, dates, figs, olives and grapes.
- The climate was so favourable that farmers could produce three crops of grain per year!
- In our text today, we see what happened on the day when the Author of all this abundance and fruitfulness came to visit this fair land.
  - It seems that the inhabitants recognised their benefactor and rushed to Him with gladness to find even more of His blessing!
    - We are told that they went all around even to the surrounding regions and brought people from every quarter to come and be healed by Him.
  - Now you might call them selfish for coming to Jesus like this,
    - What right did they to bombard Him to heal everyone they knew!
    - But I tell you that He was not offended!
      - Our Lord is most honoured when we recognise Him as our benefactor and come to Him for His blessing.
      - He delights in blessing His people and we honour Him when we recognise that.
      - We do not ever find Jesus grieved that people have come to Him...
        - We rather find Him grieved when they will not come:
          - Matthew 23:37: O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under *her* wings, but you were not willing!
          - You do not find our Lord lamenting this way at Gennesaret!
            - And I could wish that He did not have reason to lament about this concerning our city, but I fear He does.

## **I. Understand, my hearers, that our Lord Jesus is all about healing!**

- **Healing is what He is “in to.”**

A. Is this not the very reason He came into this world?

- Did He not come to heal us of our infirmities?
- 1. You can be sure that He did not leave the glories of heaven to come to this earth because He thought it would be a nice place to visit!
  - He knew that He was coming to place to defilement and sin.
  - He know that it was a place of death and sickness and bloodshed!
  - He came, not because He was attracted to these things in any way,
    - but that He might deliver us from them.

2. He looked upon His creation and saw how it had become marred, and He would not have it so.
  - His whole mission and His whole heart in coming to this place was to bring healing.
  - He was so earnest to do this work,
    - that He left glory and made Himself as one of His creatures that He might offer Himself for our sins.
    - He came to heal us of all our diseases.

B. And do you not find that healing is what He did wherever He went? Does He not show us clearly that healing is what He is about?

1. In every place He went,
  - He was like the sunshine with rays of healing shining out in every direction...
    - Those powerful, healing beams reached to every infirmity that was presented to Him.
  - In every place He visited, He found sickness,
    - but in no place did that sickness endure.
    - It could not bear His presence.
    - Just as darkness cannot stand before the sun,
      - so His healing beams drove away sickness in every place.
      - All who were brought before Him were completely healed.
2. Just think what a marvellous thing this was for the people at Gennesaret!
  - a. Sometimes it is easy to forget when you see an account like this...
    - an account where lots and lots of people are being healed...
    - that each one of those unnamed people has their own story.
  - 1) You can be sure that there was a husband and children who saw their dear mother restored to health that day!
    - Everything in the home had changed while mother was sick.
    - How glad they were to have her back, full of energy to love them again!
  - 2) You can be sure that there were parents there, deeply concerned about their children who lay almost lifeless in their arms...

- rejoicing to see their children suddenly laughing and playing again as they returned home with them.
- 3) You can be sure that there were women with children to care for who all at once got their husbands back in the same way...
- They had wondered how they were going to carry on without them...
    - But suddenly, in a moment, they saw them restored to full strength.
    - What joy there must have been in Gennesaret that day!
- 4) You can be sure that there were those who had suffered blindness that received their sight,
- lepers that were restored to their families after months of estrangement!
  - persons who were able to remember again what it was like to live without pain.
  - those who received the use of their legs and were able to walk home with their friends who had carried them to Jesus!
- b. It is clear from Matthew's account that every single person who came to Jesus for healing was healed!
- 1) Matthew tells us in verse 36 that
- "as many as touched it [the hem of His garment] were made perfectly well."
- 2) There was not person who was exposed to Jesus' healing rays that was not completely healed.
- They all got well and they all got completely well!
  - There were no exceptions among those who came to Him.
    - The only ones that were excluded from the healing virtue of the Lord Jesus were the ones who refused to come.
- 3) No case was too hard for Him!
- It did not matter how great the infirmity or how longstanding it may have been...
    - It didn't matter whether the doctors understood what was wrong.
  - With Jesus it was all the same.
    - He heal a deformity that a child was born with as easily as a scratch on a finger,
      - a terminal illness as easy as a spot of dry skin.

- It makes very little difference to the ocean if you bring a bucket or a thimble to fill.
    - The ocean can fill the one as easily as the other.
    - There was nothing too hard for our Lord.
- c. And just look at how much virtue there was in the Lord Jesus!
- The people found that they only had to touch the hem of His garment to be healed.
- 1) This hem was probably the blue fringe with tassels that God commanded His people to wear in the Law of Moses.
- a) There was nothing magical about this garment of the Lord Jesus...
- It was simply that it was connected to Him.
  - The translators have done well to say,
    - “they begged Him that they might **only** touch the hem of His garment...”
    - They knew that if they had closer contact, it would be just as good—but all that was needed was to touch the garment!
- b) Perhaps they learned this approach to Jesus from the woman with haemorrhage of twelve years that was healed in this way...
- c) Whatever the case, Jesus was certainly not bound to this means,
- He could have as easily healed them without their touch or His if He had wanted and if they had so asked...
    - We read of the centurion who received healing for his servant without Jesus ever entering His house...
      - His faith taught him to say to our Lord, “Only speak a word and my servant will be healed.”
    - How right He was...
      - But the touching of Jesus’ garment was the way the people at Gennesaret requested.
- 2) And what a glorious way it was!
- It showed that His healing power was so great that it extended even to the length of His garments!
    - It teaches us that our Lord Jesus is so saturated with healing virtue that it comes out the edges of His very clothing!

- He is our High Priest Aaron even as Aaron is described in Psalm 133—
  - So full of the anointing of God that it flows from His head to the very bottom of His skirts!
    - The blessing of Christ reaches to every member His body—
      - even those that are the farthest away from Him.
      - Every member is saturated by His anointing!
      - Every member has access to His Spirit.
- It only takes but the slenderest contact with our Lord Jesus to be healed—
  - the small, trembling hand of faith reaching up to touch Him is sufficient to bring the fullness of His blessing.
  - not because of the greatness of the hand, but because there is so much virtue in Him.

TRANS> How our Lord was honoured and glorified at Gennesaret by this garment touching people!

- How pleased He was to heal them all and how pleased they were to be healed by Him!
  - See how our Lord makes it clear that He came to this world to heal!
- But there is a question that presents itself to the minds of those who read about the healing the ministry of our Lord today as it is presented to us in passages like this...
  - At least, there is a question that ought to present itself to you; namely...

## **II. What does the healing ministry of the Lord Jesus mean to us today?**

A. It is very plain that when Jesus was here on earth,

- He went about everywhere healing.
  1. It must have been a marvellous thing for those in pain to have their pain relieved,
    - for children to have their mothers and fathers back and parents to see their children fully restored to health...
    - for the lame to walk and the blind to receive their sight.
  2. But what good is all this to us now?
    - a. Let's be honest about it!
      - 1) We have seen some wonderful answers to prayer just lately...

- The remarkable recovery of Rachael's friend Gail who was taken off life support by the physicians to die...
  - We have seen the recovery of Gerry Mynders that caused the physicians to marvel...
  - We have seen an end to the internal bleeding of Elisabeth Mosher...
- 2) How thankful we should be.
- All this is evidence of God's mercy!
    - It is an answer to our prayers...
- 3) But it is nothing like it was at Gennesaret!
- Gerry and Gail have had remarkable recoveries,
    - but they have not yet fully recovered,
    - and Elisabeth has to remain on a very restricted diet.
  - What's more, we had to wait for the turn around to even begin—
    - there was a time when there was no improvement...
  - And still further,
    - there are many others we have prayed for that did not recover from their infirmities... some who even died in their sins.
- b. What does all this mean?
- 1) Does this mean that Jesus is not among us as He was among the people at Gennesaret?
- Yes it does mean that!
    - He is no longer among us according to the flesh as He was then.
- 2) When He was among us according to the flesh,
- There was no sickness that could stand before Him!
  - It was just that simple...
    - Everybody that was brought to Him was healed, no matter how bad their condition...
      - and not in stages either—
      - All at once they were completely healed—with no after effects, not building up of deteriorated muscle, no remaining pain!
  - That's the way it was when Jesus was here in the flesh and we must not pretend that it is like that now.

- It is simply not the same.
- c. Then what good is it to read about what happened at Gennesaret and other places Jesus went where people came to Him?
- 1) Is it just to make us sad that Jesus is not here with us today as He was with them?
  - 2) Well, yes... and no!
    - Let me explain...
- B. Yes, you should be sad that Jesus is not with us in the flesh as He was with them.
1. Jesus said that we would be sad when He was taken away from us and that we would fast, longing for His return.
    - It is always a painful thing when a person we love departs this world.
      - We would be quite hard-hearted if we did not miss them—though we are glad if we know they went to heaven...
    - But there is a certain loss in not having Jesus here with us in the flesh...
      - Wouldn't it be marvellous if we could go to Jesus with our problems,
        - if we could see Him with our eyes and touch Him with our hands and hear Him with as our ears...
        - if we could take our sick friends to Him to be healed!
  2. Brothers and sisters, you are not be glad that Jesus is gone—you are to long to be with Him again.
    - You are to long for His bodily return!
      - There is an over spiritualised theology that does not care for the bodily presence of Jesus, but it is not a proper theology.
- a. Jesus promised that when He comes back to receive us to Himself,
- immortality will swallow up death—
    - death and sickness and sorrow and pain will be banished!
  - We will be one hundred per cent healed!
    - The whole creation groans together until that great comes and it is supposed to groan—
      - Not as those who have no hope, but as those who do hope!
      - We are to yearn for the physical presence of Jesus.



- b. When Jesus comes back again it will be better than it was the first time because when He comes again He will be with us forever...
  - When He healed people on earth, they were subject to new sicknesses after He left.
  - In fact, most of the people at Gennesaret who came to Jesus in our account probably had relatively new illnesses...
    - Gennesaret was quite close to Capernaum where Jesus had spent so much time.
    - Many of the people who came to Him on the day referred to in our text may well have been healed by Him before.
      - We are told that when He came, they recognised and went to round people up that needed to be healed.
    - He had been gone from their region for a while, and they had contracted new injuries and illnesses...
      - Some had been injured, some had fallen sick, and it was the season for malarial fevers.
      - Just because they had been healed by Him in the past did not mean they could not get sick again.
        - The time came when everyone He healed while on earth died.
    - But when He heals us at the last day it will be for keeps.
      - We will not be subject to sickness ever again.
      - How we should long for His physical presence to be restored to us!

TRANS> And so you see that there is a sense in which we should be sad that Jesus is not with us physically as He was with the people at Gennesaret on that day.

C. But there is also a sense in which we should be glad that Jesus is not with us as He was with the people at Gennesaret...

1. We should be glad because although He is not physically present,
  - He is spiritually present with us in a way that is superior to His physical presence at that time.
    - He told His disciples that it would be better for Him to go away, because if He did not go away, the Holy Spirit would not come to them.
    - He went on to explain that when the Spirit came,
      - the Spirit would do a greater work than ever,
        - even convicting the world of sin righteousness and judgement with respect to Jesus!

- Up until now, the world had, for the most part, ignored the Lord,
  - but after Jesus went away, the gospel would go world wide...
  - and it would have a much greater impact in Israel and even in the lives of each individual so that the least in His kingdom would be greater than the greatest Old Testament prophet.
- What's more, the work of physical healing was limited to wherever Jesus was present (more or less),
  - but the work of the gospel would not be so limited.

2. Consider how great this spiritual work is:

a. It is the work of the new birth, which involves the spiritual healing of the sin sick souls.

1) It has to do with taking a person who is an enemy of God and causing him or her to love God.

- Now I know that most people would claim that they are not at enmity with God,
  - but in fact they are.
- They don't think they are because they worship and serve idols they call God,
  - but these idols are not the true God.

2) When Jesus heals sin sick souls, He restores them to the true God.

- He turns them from independence and rebellion to genuine love and service.
  - This change of heart is nothing less than the beginning of Spiritual life.
  - That is why it called a new birth.
    - It is a spiritual resurrection that transforms you forever.
    - Once this seed of life has been planted,
      - you will forever thereafter be a person who wants to please the true God and to know Him better.
      - This is better than any healing of your body!

b. And with this healing of the sinner's heart, Jesus also applies His sacrificial death in the sinners' behalf to wash away his sin...

- For having offended God, the sinner justly falls under God's condemnation...

- It is not just that he feels guilty; he truly **is** guilty—whether he feels it or not.
- But He forgiven when he comes to Jesus for forgiveness (as the people at Gennesaret came to Him for healing).
- And so you see that Jesus not only heals sin sick hearts, but also brings the forgiveness of sin.
- This is the way every Christian is brought into a right relationship with God...
  - Once this spiritual work has been done, we are no longer under condemnation and no longer in rebellion against God.

TRANS> But then there is yet another spiritual work that Jesus begins...

- c. If your sin sick heart has been healed by Jesus, there is yet another kind of healing you seek from Jesus and that He also provides.
  - And that is the cleaning out of your remaining corruption resulting in fruitfulness for God.
    - Uncleaness gives way to purity
    - Bitterness gives way to sweetness
    - Pride gives way to humility
    - Slothfulness gives way to service
    - Cowardliness gives way to boldness
  - This is a progressive work that Jesus begins in all who believe and a work that He promises to bring to completion.

TRANS> And so you see here that Jesus' work of healing among us has not ceased!

- It has simply changed into a new phase—a superior phase!
  - His healing ministry is not presented to us in the Bible so that we might imitate it like apes,
    - but in order that we might learn to seek Him for the spiritual healing He performs today.
  - And not only that,
    - but we are also to give us hope for the promise of physical healing at the resurrection on the last day.

**III. And so now I want to urge all of you to come to Jesus for healing the way the people at Gennesaret did.**

- Surely you don't want to miss the day of opportunity.

- How sad for those who did not come to Jesus while he was in their region and were not healed.

A. I urge you to come to Him for your own healing while there is still time!

1. Do you not wish to have your sin sick heart healed so that you will love the true God and find the forgiveness of sin in Jesus?

- And you who already believe,
  - Are you not tired of dragging around with your remaining corruption?
- What do you do so?
  - Is there no balm in Gilead?
  - Is the Lord Jesus not able to help you with that slothfulness or that selfishness or that fear or that anger?
    - Why do you drag along as if there is no Saviour?

2. You see how earnestly the people of Gennesaret came to Him...

- They begged Him to let them touch but His garment because they believed they would find virtue from even so slight a connection with Him.

a. It will do you no good to see Him and not come to Him...

- There may have been persons who saw him and did not come to Him to touch that they might be healed...
- You would ask,
  - Why? Why would anyone not come to be healed?

b. That is a good question...

- How there could be a Saviour like Jesus,
  - but that some do not come to Him?
  - I would have to say that there is no good reason for it.

c. Perhaps like these people, there was a question as to whether you might be allowed to touch Him for healing...

- They asked him for permission to touch Him in this way...
- Are you afraid that He will not receive if you if you come to touch Him?
  - Well that is not true!

1) You need to remember that you have invited to come to Him...

- He says, "Come to me, all you that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest..."

- You are invited to come to Him if you want to be healed.
- It is no reluctant invitation on His part...
  - All of heaven rejoices for every sinner that comes.

2) And not only does He invite you, He also pleads with you to come...

- He argues with you—
  - “Why will you be stricken any more?”
  - Paul, speaking for Him says:
    - 2 Co 5:20: Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God.

TRANS> Here is the glorious Lord of heaven, humbling Himself to invite you and then further to plead you to come and be healed...

- He is not holding you off.
  - He is urging you come.

3) And if there is still any doubt that you may come to be healed—no matter what your condition may be...

- Consider that He not only invites you to come and entreats you to come,
  - He even **commands** you to come.
- He has sent out His command in all the earth, commanding us to repent and believe on the gospel... the good news about spiritual healing.
  - If you are commanded to come, you do not need to wonder if you may come.
  - If He tells you to honour your parents, you do not then ask Him if you **may** honour your parents...
    - That is ridiculous.
    - Of course if you are **commanded** you **may** do so.

TRANS> And so you see that you have every reason to come to Him and be healed.

- But now I want to add something to this that is also found in our text...
- Not only do I urge you from this text to come to Jesus to be healed...

B. I also urge you to bring others to be healed.

1. You see how the people of Gennesaret were eager to bring others!

- a. You can be sure that this involved no little inconvenience for them...
- 1) Some of these persons were sick and likely had to be transported in some way.
    - Work had to be put aside, expenses had to be incurred, sacrifices had to be made.
  - 2) Perhaps there were some also who had gone to other physicians and did not want to bear the expense and the harsh treatments that were sometimes involved...
    - They had to be persuaded and convinced that Jesus was different.
    - There was the difficulty of having to convince them and answer their arguments.

TRANS> All sorts of difficulties had to be borne to get them to Jesus to be healed.

- b. But you would say,
- Yes, but surely these would have seemed small to them if they could see the healing of their friends and relatives.
    - Wouldn't anyone be willing to make a small sacrifice for the health of the one they love?
    - Of course they would...
  - But how much more should you who know Christ be willing to inconvenience yourselves to seek the salvation of the **souls** of the ones you love...
    - Parents, is it too much trouble to discipline your children?
      - too much trouble and expense to give them a Christian education?
      - too much effort to lead them in daily family worship?
    - Neighbour, is it too much trouble for you to reach out to your neighbour,
      - too much expense to buy him a Christian book?
      - too much inconvenience to give him a ride to church?
      - too much time to answer his questions about the faith?
    - Why is it that we are so much more ready to care for their bodies than their souls?
      - Parents will feed and clothe their children, but they don't have time to give them God's word!

- What? Are their souls not of much more value than the bodies?
- And how well do you really care for their bodies if they are not converted?
- You are only preserving them for destruction.

2. I know the objection...

a. You would say,

- “If I were to tell them of physical healing, they would want to be healed, but when I tell them of spiritual healing, they refuse.”
- Well, with covenant children, the Bible teaches us that we are to command them to keep God’s ways...
  - We are to enforce covenant keeping in our home.

b. But certainly refusal to come by those who are not under us is a great problem and I do not deny it.

- The human heart is very hard and stubborn.
- I am not suggesting that you can or should try to force anyone to come to Christ for healing...
  - But I am suggesting that you should make getting them to Jesus for spiritual healing your highest priority for them,
    - You should endeavour to set an example...
      - One of the best things you can do is tell other what the Lord has done for you to encourage them to come to Him also.
      - I think it is quite reasonable to suppose the woman with the haemorrhage influenced these people to come to Jesus,
        - because when they came, they all did what she had done—they touched the hem of His garment.
        - When they saw or heard what the Lord had done for her, they were encouraged to come to Jesus with their needs.
        - A lot of people think the Lord cannot help them in their case, but what encouragement can come from the testimony of the person He has helped.
          - If you find it hard to tell others what he has done, why not send them a letter or an email?
  - You should make the most of every opportunity to speak to them or bring them to church or give them something to read or listen to...
  - You should give yourself to earnest prayer for their sake...

- And if you are talking to those who already believe,
  - how much more should you encourage them and urge them to come to Jesus to be healed of their ongoing spiritual infirmities.
  - It is so easy to become discouraged, but the Bible calls us to continually encourage one another in the Lord,
    - reminding each other of what great things He can do.

## **Conclusion**

So what is it that makes you hesitant to come to your Saviour and be healed?

- He greatly desires to have you come,
  - and He has plenty of virtue to heal you for your worst infirmities.
  - The whole reason He came is to heal,
    - that is what He is all about.
    - He is here with us today, ready to heal,
      - and you may come and touch Him this very hour.
      - I hope you will.