

# ***Rest in Christ Free to Rest***

Lesson #8 for August 21, 2021

Scriptures: Mark 2:1-12; 3:7-8; 1 Kings 18; 19:1-8; 2 Kings 2:11; Matthew 5:1-3; Isaiah 53:4-6; Psalm 27:1.

1. There are many stories of healing in the Bible. No doubt, thousands came from every direction to be healed by Jesus. Consider this:

**Mark 3:7-8:** <sup>7</sup> Jesus and his disciples went away to Lake Galilee, and a large crowd followed him. They had come from Galilee, from Judea, <sup>8</sup>from Jerusalem, from the territory of Idumea, from the territory on the east side of the Jordan, and from the region round the cities of Tyre and Sidon. All these people came to Jesus because they had heard of the things he was doing.—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation\** (2nd ed., Mark 3:7–8). New York: American Bible Society.

2. With creative power Jesus could have healed many, many people with a single word. He often did that. Sometimes, He touched people. Sometimes, He sent them off to be healed on the way or even by going to the pool of Siloam. He healed all sorts of people: Men, women, children, Jews, Gentiles, rich people, poor people, and unassuming people. He even chose to raise people from the dead. As we have noted in previous lessons, He even gave His disciples the power to raise people from the dead. (See Matthew 10:8.)
3. Jesus lived in a country where there were no hospitals and where the priests were often the ones expected to try to help the sick. As far as we know, they had no medical training. What would you have done?

The people of Nazareth knew that He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by Satan. About them were whole villages where there was not a moan of sickness in any house; for He had passed through them, and healed all their sick. The mercy revealed in every act of His life testified to His divine anointing.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages\** 241.1.

4. This lesson will consider two very different examples of healing. In our first case, we see Jesus dealing with an individual who was so ill that he was near death. In our second case, it was not obvious to an observer that he was sick at all.
5. Try to imagine what would happen even in our day to have Jesus walk into a large hospital and heal everyone. He was the only one in the whole world who had or has that power. In His day, there were no scientifically trained doctors with modern medicines to help.
6. During this quarter, we have been discussing *rest* and its implications. When someone is sick, sometimes, s/he needs rest most of all. There are also many people who need mental rest, rest from all kinds of mental problems. Sometimes, those problems are relatively minor; but, sometimes, they can be life-threatening. People may have trouble sleeping because they are afraid they will not wake up! They may be wondering about earlier times in their life when they were doing unsafe things. They may be concerned about their current lifestyle. Some might even be worried about God punishing them.
7. To introduce our first story this week, read Mark 2:1-4.

**Mark 2:1-4:** <sup>1</sup> A few days later Jesus went back to Capernaum, and the news

spread that he was at home. <sup>2</sup>So many people came together that there was no room left, not even out in front of the door. Jesus was preaching the message to them <sup>3</sup>when four men arrived, carrying a paralysed man to Jesus. <sup>4</sup>Because of the crowd, however, they could not get the man to him. So they made a hole in the roof right above the place where Jesus was. When they had made an opening, they let the man down, lying on his mat.—*Good News Bible*.\*

8. There was no question in the mind of that sufferer that he needed help. Ellen White has given considerable detail about his background. See *Desire of Ages* 267-271, much of which is quoted below. This particular patient had caused his own illness; and, thus, he feared that there was no cure. Notice these important points from Ellen White's comments.

Like the leper, this paralytic had lost all hope of recovery. His disease was the result of a life of sin, and his sufferings were embittered by remorse. He had long before appealed to the Pharisees and doctors, hoping for relief from mental suffering and physical pain. But they coldly pronounced him incurable, and abandoned him to the wrath of God. **The Pharisees regarded affliction as an evidence of divine displeasure, and they held themselves aloof from the sick and the needy. Yet often these very ones who exalted themselves as holy were more guilty than the sufferers they condemned.**

The palsied man was entirely helpless, and, seeing no prospect of aid from any quarter, he had sunk into despair. Then he heard of the wonderful works of Jesus. He was told that others as sinful and helpless as he had been healed; even lepers had been cleansed. And the friends who reported these things encouraged him to believe that he too might be cured if he could be carried to Jesus. But his hope fell when he remembered how the disease had been brought upon him. He feared that the pure Physician would not tolerate him in His presence.

**Yet it was not physical restoration he desired so much as relief from the burden of sin.** If he could see Jesus, and receive the assurance of forgiveness and peace with Heaven, he would be content to live or die, according to God's will. The cry of the dying man was, Oh that I might come into His presence! There was no time to lose; already his wasted flesh was showing signs of decay. **He besought his friends to carry him on his bed to Jesus, and this they gladly undertook to do.** But so dense was the crowd that had assembled in and about the house where the Saviour was, that it was impossible for the sick man and his friends to reach Him, or even to come within hearing of His voice.

Jesus was teaching in the house of Peter. According to their custom, His disciples sat close about Him, and "there were **Pharisees and doctors of the law** sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem." **These had come as spies**, seeking an accusation against Jesus....

The Saviour looked upon the mournful countenance, and saw the pleading eyes fixed upon Him. He understood the case; He had drawn to Himself that perplexed and doubting spirit. **While the paralytic was yet at home, the**

**Saviour had brought conviction to his conscience.** When he repented of his sins, and believed in the power of Jesus to make him whole, the life-giving mercies of the Saviour had first blessed his longing heart. Jesus had watched the first glimmer of faith grow into a belief that He was the sinner's only helper, and had seen it grow stronger with every effort to come into His presence.

Now, in words that fell like music on the sufferer's ear, the Saviour said, "Son, be of good cheer; **thy sins be forgiven thee.**"...

The rabbis had waited anxiously to see what disposition Christ would make of this case. They recollected how the man had appealed to them for help, and they had refused him hope or sympathy. Not satisfied with this, they had declared that he was suffering the curse of God for his sins. These things came fresh to their minds when they saw the sick man before them. They marked the interest with which all were watching the scene, and they felt a terrible fear of losing their own influence over the people....

It required nothing less than creative power to restore health to that decaying body. The same voice that spoke life to man created from [270] the dust of the earth had spoken life to the dying paralytic. And the same power that gave life to the body had renewed the heart....

The paralytic found in Christ healing for both the soul and the body. The spiritual healing was followed by physical restoration. This lesson should not be overlooked. There are today thousands suffering from physical disease, who, like the paralytic, are longing for the message, "Thy sins are forgiven." The burden of sin, with its unrest and unsatisfied desires, is the foundation of their maladies. They can find no relief until they come to the Healer of the soul. The peace which He alone can give, would impart vigor to the mind, and health to the body.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*\* 267.2-270.1.†

9. While this young man probably had some idea about why he was sick, trying to assign blame would never make him better.
10. Of course, God's original plan for the human race was to live perfectly healthy lives in the Garden of Eden; God has a plan to restore that condition when the time comes. But, today, no matter how carefully we may live, we will end up with one or more health problems, and finally, end up dying if that occurs before the second coming of Christ.
11. The Christian, of course, can look forward to a perfect life in the future, even if he dies in this world. **God promises real and ultimate rest to His faithful children.**
12. In our day when we have a clear idea of what causes many diseases, it may be helpful to know what those causes are. But, in the days of Jesus, little was known about the causes of disease; and knowing the cause likely would not have resulted in a treatment. They believed God was responsible.
13. A part of the roof of Peter's house had been torn out so his friends could lower this seriously ill young man down right in front of Jesus. He really wondered what Jesus would say about his previous sin and his illness.

**Mark 2:5-12:** <sup>5</sup>Seeing how much faith they had, Jesus said to the paralysed man, "My son, your sins are forgiven."

<sup>6</sup> Some teachers of the Law who were sitting there thought to themselves,  
<sup>7</sup> “How does he dare to talk like this? This is blasphemy! God is the only one who can forgive sins!”

<sup>8</sup> At once Jesus knew what they were thinking, so he said to them, “Why do you think such things? <sup>9</sup>Is it easier to say to this paralysed man, ‘Your sins are forgiven’, or to say, ‘Get up, pick up your mat, and walk’? <sup>10</sup>I will prove to you, then, that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” So he said to the paralysed man, <sup>11</sup> “I tell you, get up, pick up your mat, and go home!” [What were the Pharisees thinking?]

<sup>12</sup> **While they all watched, the man got up, picked up his mat, and hurried away. They were all completely amazed and praised God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this!”—Good News Bible.\*†**

14. Often, we are unaware of the onset of a disease. Many infectious diseases may attack our bodies, and we can even spread them to other people before we know that we are sick. Furthermore, we often think that getting rid of the symptoms means healing. But, Jesus took a different approach to disease. He knew and He still knows that the very root of all disease is sin. He also realized, as we have already noted, that this man was desperately hoping for forgiveness from his previously sinful life.

15. **The Pharisees were just waiting for Jesus to do or say something that they could use against Him.** But, He did not let that prevent Him from going straight to the root of the problem. Jesus offered him the forgiveness for which he so longed. Reading again:

**Mark 2:8-9:** <sup>8</sup> At once Jesus knew what they [the Pharisees] were thinking, so he said to them, “Why do you think such things? <sup>9</sup>Is it easier to say to this paralysed man, ‘Your sins are forgiven’, or to say, ‘Get up, pick up your mat, and walk’?”—*Good News Bible.\*†*

16. It is important for us to remember that the One who chose to forgive and heal this young man was the Creator of our universe. Furthermore, God is Forgiveness Personified. Jesus demonstrated that by forgiving the men who were nailing Him to the cross.

**Luke 23:34:** Jesus said, “Forgive them, Father! They don’t know what they are doing.”—*Good News Bible.\**

17. **God, will always choose to heal the inside first. But, as we know, that often brought and brings healing of the physical being as well.**

18. We also know that every believing Christian who chooses God as his Guide and Protector will eventually be 100% perfectly healed, if not in this life, then in the life to come.

Based on data from the World Health Organization (WHO), the most common illness worldwide, affecting more than three hundred million people each year, does not always have obvious visible symptoms. **Depression is the leading cause of disability worldwide and is a major contributor to the global burden of disease.**—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Tuesday, August 17.<sup>†</sup> [Depression is a very serious worldwide problem.]<sup>‡</sup>

19. As Christians, we are sometimes reluctant to even talk about depression. We tend to think that a Bible-believing Christian should not get depressed. Would depression mean that there was something wrong with one’s relationship with God?

**A great deal of the sickness which afflicts humanity has its origin in the mind and can only be cured by restoring the mind to health.** There are very many more than we imagine who are sick mentally. Heart sickness makes many dyspeptics, for mental trouble has a paralyzing influence upon the digestive organs.—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*,\* vol. 3, 183.2.†

The managers of the sanitarium may as well conclude at once that they will never be able to satisfy that class of minds that can find happiness only in something new and exciting. [579] To many persons this has been the intellectual diet during their lifetime; there are mental as well as physical dyspeptics. **Many are suffering from maladies of the soul far more than from diseases of the body, and they will find no relief until they shall come to Christ, the wellspring of life. Complaints of weariness, loneliness, and dissatisfaction will then cease. Satisfying joys will give vigor to the mind and health and vital energy to the body.**—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*,\* vol. 4, 578.3-579.0.†

**Disease is sometimes produced, and is often greatly aggravated, by the imagination.** Many are lifelong invalids who might be well if they only thought so. **Many imagine that every slight exposure will cause illness, and the evil effect is produced because it is expected. Many die from disease the cause of which is wholly imaginary.**

Courage, hope, faith, sympathy, love, promote health and prolong life. A contented mind, a cheerful spirit, is health to the body and strength to the soul. “A merry [rejoicing] heart doeth good like a medicine.” Proverbs 17:22.

In the treatment of the sick the effect of mental influence should not be overlooked. Rightly used, this influence affords one of the most effective agencies for combating disease.—Ellen G. White, *Ministry of Healing*\* 241.2-4.† [The brackets and the content in brackets in the paragraph above are in the source.]‡

To take people right where they are, whatever their position or condition, and help them in every way possible—this is gospel ministry. Those who are diseased in body are nearly always diseased in mind, and when the soul is sick, the body also is affected.—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*,\* vol. 6, 301.1.

20. Depression often sneaks up on people. It may drain a person completely—emotionally and even physically. Think of all the ways people respond to depression. Some people turn to the refrigerator and try to eat themselves happy again. Sometimes, a person looks to new relationships, a new job, or a new location to deal with the depression. Others try to bury themselves in their work. Others use drugs or medications which may or may not help.
21. Now consider the story of **God’s faithful prophet Elijah after that incredible experience on Mount Carmel.** Read 1 Kings 18 to review the story of Elijah on Mount Carmel.  
**1 Kings 18:40:** Elijah ordered, “Seize the prophets of Baal; don’t let any of them get away!” The people seized them all, and Elijah led them down to the River Kishon and killed them.—*Good News Bible*.\*

22. In addition to having that incredible experience on the top of Mount Carmel and supervising or maybe even participating in the killing of 850 of the prophets of Baal and Asherah, Elijah had essentially run a marathon, guiding the king back to his home.
23. And what happened next? Remember, Jezebel was from Sidon and a prophetess of Baal.

**1 Kings 19:1-5:** <sup>1</sup> King Ahab told his wife Jezebel everything that Elijah had done and how he had put all the prophets of Baal to death. <sup>2</sup>She sent a message to Elijah: “May the gods strike me dead if by this time tomorrow I don’t do the same thing to you that you did to the prophets.” <sup>3</sup>**Elijah was afraid, and fled for his life;** he took his servant and went to Beersheba in Judah.

Leaving the servant there, <sup>4</sup>Elijah walked a whole day into the wilderness. He stopped and sat down in the shade of a tree and **wished he would die.** “It’s too much, LORD,” he prayed. “Take away my life; I might as well be dead!”

<sup>5</sup> He lay down under the tree and fell asleep. Suddenly an angel touched him and said, “Wake up and eat.”—*Good News Bible.\**<sup>†</sup>

24. When the word came to Elijah as he was sleeping outside the capital city of Ahab and Jezebel that Jezebel was going to end his life in 24 hours, he began to run again. But, as he ran he prayed. What a difference between his previous prayer on Mount Carmel and this one. On Mount Carmel he had prayed:

**1 Kings 18:36-37:** <sup>36</sup> At the hour of the afternoon sacrifice the prophet Elijah approached the altar and prayed, “O LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, prove now that you are the God of Israel and that I am your servant and have done all this at your command. <sup>37</sup>Answer me, LORD, answer me, so that this people will know that you, the LORD, are God, and that you are bringing them back to yourself.”—*Good News Bible.\**

Contrast that with what Elijah prayed after he found that Jezebel was trying to kill him. As we read earlier:

**1 Kings 19:4:** Elijah walked a whole day into the wilderness. He stopped and sat down in the shade of a tree and wished he would die. “It’s too much, LORD,” he prayed. “Take away my life; I might as well be dead!”—*Good News Bible.\**

25. It is a well-known fact that people who experience real emotional highs are often liable to emotional crashes. A famous Adventist evangelist would sometimes take one to two weeks of quiet time after a particularly successful evangelistic series in order to prevent this problem.
26. Elijah recognized that instead of running, he should have stayed and followed up on that wonderful opportunity to correct the problems that had been caused by Jezebel. But, instead, he found himself far away in a different country, wishing he could die. Elijah was beginning to experience self-revelation. That can be painful.
27. Have you ever had a painful experience of self-revelation? Consider this from Paul.

**Philippians 3:9:** ... and be completely united with him. I no longer have a righteousness of my own, the kind that is gained by obeying the Law. I now have the righteousness that is given through faith in Christ, the righteousness that comes from God and is based on faith—*Good News Bible.\**

28. In light of Elijah's running away from his responsibilities, should God have just abandoned him? God does not do that! God understands our thinking even better than we do.

We may have no remarkable evidence at the time that the face of our Redeemer is bending over us in compassion and love, but this is even so. We may not feel His visible touch, but His hand is upon us in love and pitying tenderness.—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ\** 96.3-97.0.

29. Sometimes, God, knowing what we were going through, lets us hit bottom before we fully realize our great need. There are many promises in the Bible that should come to our minds on such occasions.

**Psalm 34:18:** The LORD is near to those who are discouraged;

he saves those who have lost all hope.—*Good News Bible.\**

**Matthew 5:1-3:** <sup>1</sup> Jesus saw the crowds and went up a hill, where he sat down. His disciples gathered round him, <sup>2</sup>and he began to teach them:

<sup>3</sup> “Happy are those who know they are spiritually poor;  
the Kingdom of heaven belongs to them!”—*Good News Bible.\**

**Psalm 73:26:** My mind and my body may grow weak,

but God is my strength;

he is all I ever need.—*Good News Bible.\**

**Isaiah 53:4-6:** <sup>4</sup> “But he endured the suffering that should have been ours,  
the pain that we should have borne.

**All the while we thought that his suffering  
was punishment sent by God.**

<sup>5</sup>But because of our sins he was wounded,  
beaten because of the evil we did.

We are healed by the punishment he suffered,  
made whole by the blows he received.

<sup>6</sup>All of us were like sheep that were lost,  
each of us going his own way.

But the LORD made the punishment fall on him,  
the punishment all of us deserved.”—*Good News Bible.\*†*

30. Instead of condemning Elijah, God fed him with miraculous food that made it possible for him to travel for 40 days without any further food. One might think that this would be the end of the story, but it was not.

31. Finally, Elijah found himself in a cave on the side of Mount Sinai. He was resting and hiding. I do not know if he still thought that Jezebel could find him there; but, there he was. Then, God called him to the mouth of the cave where he experienced wind, earthquake, and fire!

**1 Kings 19:12:** After the earthquake, there was a fire—but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire, there was the soft whisper of a voice.—*Good News*

*Bible.\** [Why was the Creator of the universe whispering?]<sup>‡</sup>

32. But, we find that God had not given up on Elijah. He still had some very important plans for Elijah.

**1 Kings 19:15-16:** <sup>15</sup> The LORD said, “Return to the wilderness near Damascus, then enter the city and anoint Hazael as king of Syria; <sup>16</sup>anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king of Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet.”—*Good News Bible.\**

33. God wanted Elijah to train his successor, Elisha. And Elijah was not even finished calling down fire from heaven!

**2 Kings 1:10:** “If I am a man of God,” Elijah answered, “may fire come down from heaven and kill you and your men!” At once fire came down and killed the officer and his men.—*Good News Bible.\** [Was that God’s ideal?]<sup>‡</sup>

34. From these two stories of (1) the healing by Jesus of the paralyzed man and (2) Elijah, including during his depression, we should be able to recognize that with God on our side, we must never give up.

With the continual change of circumstances, changes come in our experience; and by these changes we are either elated or depressed. But the change of circumstances has no power to change God’s relation to us. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever; and He asks us to have unquestioning confidence in His love.—Ellen G. White, *In Heavenly Places\** 120.4.

Keep looking unto Jesus, offering up silent prayers in faith, taking hold of His strength, whether you have any manifest feeling or not. Go right forward as if every prayer offered was lodged in the throne of God and responded to by the One whose promises never fail. Go right along, singing and making melody to God in your hearts, even when depressed by a sense of weight and sadness. I tell you as one who knows, light will come, joy will be ours, and the mists and clouds will be rolled back. And we pass from the oppressive power of the shadow and darkness into the clear sunshine of His presence.—Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages,\** Book 2, 242.4-243.0.

35. How should we, as Christians and especially as church groups, relate to those who may be suffering with depression? What should we do to support them and help them? Sometimes, it is difficult to be honest and truthful in dealing with such problems.

36. **It is important to recognize that faith is not feeling!** Someone might be depressed, discouraged, fearful, even worried; but, that does not mean s/he does not have faith in God. And we must not let those feelings distract us from our relationship with God.

37. The Jewish leaders, especially the Pharisees by their thinking, had set themselves up for a real problem when facing Jesus. Today, we recognize that sin and forgiveness are one side of the issue; but, disease and death are something separate. However, in the days of Jesus, they believed that disease was a direct result of a person’s sinful life. Thus, they believed that in order to be healed, one had to be forgiven of his sins. And they believed that only God had the power to forgive sins. Isn’t that true?

38. Jesus knew what their thinking was; and so, He took the approach that He did to this young man. The young man himself was most desirous of having his sins forgiven. And when



Jesus forgave him, he was content to rest back on his couch, praising God. But, Jesus was not finished. **To prove that He had the ability to forgive sins, and thus, by implication that He was God Himself, He not only forgave his sins but also healed the young man.**

39. Notice that Jesus rewarded the faith of the men who carried the paralyzed man to Jesus.

The New Testament contains approximately 30 separate instances of Jesus' healing miracles. In two thirds of these stories, somebody brings somebody else to Jesus. Often physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual healing takes place in the life of another individual because someone cares enough to minister to that person's needs in Jesus' name. Did you notice the words "When Jesus saw their faith" in Mark 2:5? This is fascinating. Faith is something you see. It is not something that is intangible. It is always revealed in action. In this instance, Jesus honored the faith of this man's friends. Of course, the man himself must have had a measure of faith [as we read earlier from Ellen White] by expressing his willingness to have his friends bring him. We can be Jesus' agents of healing as we lead others to Jesus.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** 107.‡

40. God is always ready to help, and His ear is always open to our cries for help. As we read earlier in Item #8 above:

The paralytic found in Christ healing for both the soul and the body. The spiritual healing was followed by physical restoration. This lesson should not be overlooked. There are today thousands suffering from physical disease, who, like the paralytic, are longing for the message, "Thy sins are forgiven." The burden of sin, with its unrest and unsatisfied desires, is the foundation of their maladies. They can find no relief until they come to the Healer of the soul. The peace which He alone can give, would impart vigor to the mind, and health to the body.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages\** 270.1. [Do we need to do that more?]<sup>‡</sup>

41. Jesus knew what the Pharisees did not know, i.e., that He had the power to heal people from the inside out.

Grief, anxiety, discontent, remorse, guilt, distrust, all tend to break down the life forces and to invite decay and death.—Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing\** 241.1.

42. God always seeks to heal the entire person—physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually. He wants to restore us into His full image. By contrast, sin destroys; it destroys every aspect of a person's life. **We recognize that the root cause of all illness is sin. Sin is a sickness.** But, Jesus is a complete health restorer while Satan is the health destroyer.

43. Accidents happen. It may not be our fault. But, we might be very adversely affected. On the other hand, many illnesses are self-imposed. No matter what the cause, God is there to help.

44. Once again, review the story of Elijah. He was a man who eventually lived a life so close to God that God took him in a fiery chariot to heaven. Elijah had the courage to stand up to King Ahab and Queen Jezebel. He trusted God to feed him by the ravens and by the help of the woman of Zarephath. Elijah was able to speak God's word and cause a drought that lasted three and one-half years. Surely, nothing could shake the faith of someone like

that! Right? But, it happened. And we know the story of what followed. Elijah is now in heaven, celebrating with his Savior. And he is wishing that every one of us could have experiences like his experiences. Are we prepared?

45. Let us not make the mistake of being judgmental of people who are sick for one cause or another. **The cause of their sickness may be self-imposed, and we may know what it is; but, it is not our responsibility to judge and condemn.** We are called to bring the gospel to a hurting and sin-sick world. Sometimes, we can bring help to them physically and spiritually. On other occasions, we may bring them hope and comfort even though they are dying of some incurable disease. We can promise them that eternal life is possible to those who place their trust and faith in Jesus Christ.

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