

FEVER

Isaiah 40: 21-31

Mark 1: 29-39

Years ago I became ill with RMSF – Rocky Mounted Spotted Fever. It was subtle in its onset. I felt fine but was running a slight fever for two or three days. One afternoon my temperature suddenly spiked to 104.2 degrees. When it was rising I shivered uncontrollably, even on hot, July days. When I took aspirin it would come down some and I would break out into a sweat. Fortunately the Doctor sensed it might be RMSF and placed me on 1500mg of Tetracycline. It was a massive dose and I had side effects from so much anti-biotic in my system. But it was in time. I fully recovered from the fever.

Peter's mother in law lay ill in bed with a fever. She could not serve. Jesus came to her, took her by the hand, and lifted her up. The fever left her and she began to serve Jesus and the four disciples who were with him.

One way to look at this story is to understand that women had a subservient role and were expected to serve and wait on others, especially men. Then we could go off and talk about how unfair that system was and how awful women were treated in that day.

If we go in that direction we will miss one of the main points of this passage. There are several important points being made in our passage, among them is the fact that Jesus was a great healer and preacher. The main point I want to make has to do with fever, the fevers from which Jesus can heal.

The question becomes: from what kinds of fevers do we suffer; what kinds of fevers do we need the healing touch of our Savior?

Another account in the Gospel of Luke comes to mind, the story of Mary and Martha, when Jesus was visiting in their household (Luke 10:38-42). Mary was sitting at Jesus' feet and listening to Him teach. Martha became frantic with the task of preparing a meal. It distracted and upset her. She was feverishly rushing about trying to do everything. She rushes to the place where Jesus is teaching and blurts out, "Master, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone?" Martha scolded Jesus for not insisting that Mary come and help her. Martha had become feverish. She needed to hear from Jesus that service is not necessarily running around like a chicken with its head chopped off.

From what fevers do we suffer?

Jerome, a Christian preacher and scholar of the Fifth Century put it very well. Listen:

O that he would come to our house and enter and heal

the fever of our sins by his command. For each and every one of us suffers from fever. When I grow angry, I am feverish. So many vices, so many fevers.” (*Corpus Christianorum* LXXVIII, page 468.)

Wow! 1600 years ago, and Jerome nailed it on the head!

From what fevers do we suffer?

None of us are exempt from the fevers of sin. We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Like Martha, we also have fevers such as trying to get too many things done at once; today we call it multi-tasking. We have fevers of rage and hurt. We become ill with the pain that has been inflicted upon us and have allowed them to turn into the fever of anger. We suffer from the fevers of our sin we have committed to others. We all suffer from the fever of sins of omission (what we haven't done that we should have done) and commission (what we have done that we should not have done).

One of the reasons we have a worship time for confession and declaration of forgiveness is because it is designed to clear the slate so that we can be free to offer our worship and Praise to God.

From what fevers do we suffer?

It is up to us to know what particular “fevers” we suffer from and need to let Jesus come to touch us and heal us. The

question is: are we ready to let Jesus come and pick us up by the hand and remove the fever of our sin?

When we say, “yes,” then we are ready to serve Christ. We are ready to be better disciples based upon what he has done for us. We have waited upon the Lord and he touches us, cures our fever and lifts us up so that we soar like eagles. Our strength is renewed.

You know, I find it very interesting that we can go about doing things at the church and become overwhelmed, distracted, and even feverish by our church activities. Although we may be seeking to serve, it may be just feverish activity. The very human attempts to serve tend to be feverish, unless we rely upon the God who gives us the strength. But when Jesus heals us from the sin of self righteousness, the fever is gone and we are well, free to serve the Lord. Amen

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