

Bodily Ills and Spiritual Health

by John Newton

John Newton's sermon explores the contrast between physical suffering and the need for spiritual healing through faith in Jesus.

Scripture: Psalm 103:3, Psalm 146:8, Isaiah 53:5, Romans 8:18, Revelation 21:4

Topics: "Spiritual Healing", "Eternal Life"

Description

John Newton, in a letter dated August 19, 1779, reflects on his physical ailments while acknowledging the miraculous preservation of his body from pain and sickness. He contrasts the frailty of his body with the diseases of his soul, expressing his reliance on the infallible Physician, Jesus Christ, for spiritual healing. Newton finds hope in the promise of a land where there is no sickness, longing for the day when he will be free from all ailments and sin, praising God for the glorious hope of eternal life.

Transcript

Aug. 19, 1779.

My dear Friend,

Among the rest of temporal mercies, I would be thankful for pen, ink, and paper, and the convenience of the post, by which means we can waft a thought to a friend when we cannot get at him. My will has been good to see you; but you must accept the will for the deed. The Lord has not permitted me.

I have been troubled of late with the rheumatism in my left arm. Mine is a sinful, vile body, and it is a mercy that any part of it is free from pain. It is virtually the seat and subject of all diseases; but the Lord holds them, like wild beasts in a chain, under a strong restraint. Was that restraint taken off, they would rush upon their prey from every quarter, and seize upon every limb, member, joint, and nerve, at once. Yet, though I am a sinner, and though my whole texture is so frail and exposed, I have enjoyed for a number of years an almost perfect exemption both from pain and sickness. This is wonderful indeed, even in my own eyes.

But my soul is far from being in a healthy state. There I have laboured, and still labour, under a complication of diseases; and, but for the care and skill of an infallible Physician, I must have died the death long ago. At this very moment my soul is feverish, dropsical, paralytic. I feel a loss of appetite, a disinclination both to food and to medicine: so that I am alive by miracle: yet I trust I shall not die, but live,

and declare the works of the Lord. When I faint he revives me again. I am sure he is able, and I trust he has promised to heal me: but how inveterate must my disease be, that is not yet subdued, even under his management!

Well, my friend, there is a land where the inhabitants shall no more say, "I am sick." Then my eyes will not be dim, nor my ear heavy, nor my heart hard.

"One sight of Jesus as he is,

Will strike all sin for ever dead."

Blessed be his name for this glorious hope! May it cheer us under all our present uneasy feelings, and reconcile us to every cross. The way must be right, however rough, that leads to such a glorious end.

O for more of that gracious influence, which in a moment can make the wilderness-soul rejoice and blossom like the rose! I want something which neither critics nor commentators can help me to. The Scripture itself, whether I read it in Hebrew, Greek, French, or English, is a sealed book in all languages, unless the Spirit of the Lord is present to expound and apply. Pray for me. No prayer seems more suitable to me than that of the Psalmist: "Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name."

I am, &c.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/john-newton/bodily-ills-and-spiritual-health/>

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