**The Great Physician**

We often sing, “The Great Physician now is here, the sympathizing Jesus…” While Jesus never called Himself the Great Physician per se, He did respond to criticism of His associating with sinners by saying, “It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance” (Luke 5:31-32). He wasn’t associating with sinful people to pacify them in their sin, He was working to influence them to turn from their sins so He could heal them.

The Old Testament often speaks of God healing His people when they repent and turn back to Him. Isaiah spoke of the Israelite people refusing God’s healing and Jesus quoted his prophecy, applying it to the Jewish people of His day. “You will keep on hearing, but will not understand; you will keep on seeing, but will not perceive; for the heart of this people has become dull, with their ears they scarcely hear, and they have closed their eyes, otherwise they would see with their eyes, hear with their ears, and understand with their heart and return, and I would heal them” (Matthew 13:14-15).

Before we become too arrogant considering the rejection of Messiah by many of the first century Jews, we should consider the fact that worldliness is one of the greatest enemies of spiritual health for all of us. The apostle Paul criticized the Christians in Corinth for a wide range of weaknesses and all of them could be summarized under the heading of carnality; worldliness. In 1 Corinthians 11:30 he said, “For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep.” While some were spiritually dead, others were spiritually sick. We all should be concerned about the influence of worldliness in our lives.

Jesus scolded the church in Laodicea for being lukewarm. Their lack of zeal stemmed from their confidence in their physical prosperity. Laodicea was a wealthy financial center, famous for production of fine garments and the site of a medical school renowned for its ear and eye ointments. Jesus used all three to illustrate their need to replace their confidence in material things with a trust and dependence upon Him.

Jesus told the Laodiceans, “Because you say, ‘I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,’ and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see.”

These Christians had become so complacent in their material comforts, they were blinded to their true spiritual condition. In modern American prosperity, it is easy to adopt the attitude of the Laodiceans and become blind to the wretched, miserable poverty that truly characterizes our spiritual lives. We must come to the Great Physician for eye salve so that we can see the world for what it truly is: a fleeting temporary existence on the brink of eternity, and make Him our highest priority.

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