

Conquering the Giant of Illness

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Today we are continuing our series on "Conquering the Giants". So far we have covered the top 3 giants that cause us fear and anxiety: temptation and finances. But the next survey item we as a congregation listed as a top concern is the giant of Illness, health related issues. And I can tell you it has been this year for me, too! Sometimes being ill can really wear upon your life.

My story: In November, I injured my Achilles tendon which has led to a 5 month journey of doctor visits, medicine and shots; at end of Nov I got a double ear infection which busted my ear drum—which just this week my doctor says I have some permanent hearing loss now...5 months later! In December you may remember my week and a half of laryngitis (yay! Some of you said...lol); and I've got some respiratory stuff lingering from the winter into the Spring! Plus, I turned 51 in Feb! This is definitely not my year!

Psalms Chapter 41. It is written by David, the same David who killed Goliath and went on to become the King of Israel. Read along with me:

"Oh, the joys of those who are kind to the poor! The Lord rescues them when they are in trouble. The LORD protects them and keeps them alive. He gives them prosperity in the land and rescues them from their enemies."

In other words, David says God takes care of those who honor Him and are obedient. He says,

"The Lord nurses them when they are sick and restores them to health. O Lord, I prayed, have mercy on me. Heal me, for I have sinned against you."

David looks to God for healing. Then he says,

"But my enemies say nothing but evil about me. "How soon will he die and be forgotten?" they ask. They visit me as if they were my friends, but all the while, they gather gossip, and when they leave, they spread it everywhere. All who hate me whisper about me, imagining the worst.

"He has some fatal disease," they say. "He will never get out of that bed!" Even my best friend, the one I trusted completely, the one who shared my food, has turned against me."

David's in a bad place here. Ever been down, in a low spot like David is? Feeling bad and being reminded at every turn how bad it is? And he goes on to say,

"Lord, have mercy on me. Make me well again, so I can pay them back! I know you are pleased with me, for you have not let my enemies triumph over me. You have preserved my life because I am innocent. You have brought me into your presence forever."

David is facing the Giant of Illness, just like you and I are today. He is calling on God to bring healing. Notice how brutally honest he is? He is just honest with God.

So today we will have more ammo to face and with God's help, conquer the giant of illness. Look in your sermon notes for **four ways to conquer the giant of illness**.

#1 is I must lean on God's power when I am weak.

The challenge for all of us is not to face life alone, in our own strength. Especially when we are sick. Listen, David was a literal Giant Slayer! But he says in Psalm 69 when he was in pain the following:

"I am suffering and in pain, rescue me O God by your saving power."

Remember, David is honest when he prays. And He is calling on God's power for help. But what happens when God delays or answers 'No'? We have to lean on God!

- One example for us is the Apostle Paul. The Bible says he had an affliction that he called a "thorn in his flesh", an ongoing, chronic illness. Probably an eye disease. Listen to how he dealt with it in **2 Corinthians 12:8-10**:

"three different times I begged the Lord to take it away. Each time He said, My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness. So, now, I am glad to boast about my weaknesses so that the power of Christ can work through me. That's when I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insult, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

What are you facing today on your own? An illness? A disease? A symptom in your body?

- It's painful, it hurts, it's an addiction or hurtful habit
- Accept the challenge: receive God's power to help you
- Let His grace whine while you are weak.
- Stand strong in God!

Now to the second key.

The **second key** to conquering illness is that I must **live out God's purpose in my illness.**

People who beat cancer are called 'Cancer **Survivors**'. And often they get involved in helping to encourage others with that same disease. They have walked in that person's shoes before. We might say this person has found their purpose in life.

Look at what God says about tough times we go through from James 1. It says,

"Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So, let it grow. For when your endurance is fully developed, you would be perfect and complete needing nothing."

- Painful trials / times WILL come, and this is how our faith grows
- Don't check out spiritually when you are sick...look for ways God can use you
- Remember Liz Marks who spoke here February? **Show Picture.** Though she has brain damage and a many health limitations, she told us she found her purpose through her injury: telling others to not text and drive.

So, #1: I must lean on God's power, #2: I must live out His purposes, the 3rd step to conquering the giant of illness is "**I must look to God for healing**".

- Both the OT and NT tell us God is our Healer
- This is one reason we have a place on our connection cards for prayer requests
- In fact the Bible says healing prayer should be part of every church. Listen to what James 5 says:

"Are any of you sick? You should call for the elders of the church to come and pray over you, anointing you with oil in the name of the Lord. Such a prayer offered in faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will make you well. And if you have committed any sins, you will be forgiven."

- What should we be doing? Praying for one another
- Having faith that God will bring healing
- Don't put God in a box! He heals in many ways. Here are three ways:

3 Ways God Heals:

1. Miracles

2. Answered prayers and

3. Medical Care

- Miracles still happen! “Lay hands on the sick” is the command Jesus gave to every believer. Believe God for miracles!
- Answered prayers. We are to “pray” for everyone. God has 3 answers: “Yes”, “wait” and “No”. Point is to keep going to God!
- Medical care. Overlooked the most. Give God credit for all healing!

The Apostle Paul to Timothy (1 Tim. 5:23),

Don't drink only water. You ought to drink a little wine for the sake of your stomach because you are sick so often."

- Modern day: "Hey buddy, you're getting sick all the time. Why don't you grab a bottle of Pepto, so you can keep going?" Wine was medicinal back then!

Pray

1. Name what your healing needs to be. Write it on your connection card so I can pray with you.
2. If you have received Jesus as your Savior today check it off so I can give you some info to help you grow in your faith.