

‘A Few Sick Folk’

The little phrase ‘a few sick folk’ describes the blessed people to whom the healing power of Jesus Christ came in Nazareth during the Lord’s visit to that city. While the majority saw no miracle because of their unbelief, ‘a few sick folk’ were touched by the Lord and healed. What a beautiful picture that is of sovereign, electing grace.

A local hero?

The visit of the Lord to His hometown might have gone differently. The Lord’s fame was spreading, His power had been witnessed in other towns and cities and His reputation was growing as a teacher and healer. But at Nazareth the townspeople were offended that One whom they knew so well, knew as a common working man from a poor local family, should be so regarded and even worshipped. It was as though they said, ‘You can’t kid us, we know who you are’.

Pressing danger

But it was not Jesus who was kidding, it was their own wicked hearts that were deceived. Their spirits were blinded to the presence in their midst of the Son of God. They had neither eyes to see nor ears to hear, and must, but for divine intervention, remain insensible to Jesus’ true identity. Indeed, that any sinner can truly and properly discern the Lord Jesus Christ is a heavenly gift of grace and faith. Our sickness is not only serious, but deadly. Except we know the merciful touch of the Healer’s hand we shall all likewise perish!

The Great Physician

These ‘few sick folk’ upon whom the grace of God fell were no better, or deserving, than the others, except that they were loved of God, and on this day God had come to Nazareth to show it. In the eternal purpose of Almighty God they were ordained to better things. Their sickness brought a sense of need, but it also brought a Saviour. Likewise, all who know themselves to be sick with sin discover both a need of cleansing and One fit to provide it. By the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ they find forgiveness and acceptance at the hand of the holy Lord God.

Hope

Perhaps you wonder why sin weighs so heavily upon you, why guilt in your conscience and the state of your soul bothers you when it never did before. Friend, it is because you are sick in your soul. But there is good news. Jesus heals sick folk by the work of His Spirit and the power of His gospel. He heals the broken-hearted. May He heal a few sick folk today!

A necessary lesson

As the Saviour continued to teach His disciples about the nature of the gospel and the distinguishing work of grace, these twelve men saw how men and women by nature oppose the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet they also saw God’s purpose to save His elect worked out in the individual lives of a few needy sinners. These are lessons for us and the church of all ages. It helps explain the reactions of our families, friends and neighbours, indeed all men and women, to our witness for Christ and the call of the gospel.

It is as though the Lord said to His disciples, ‘I’ve told you, now I’ve shown you, “Except a man be born of water (sovereign grace) and of the Spirit (in regeneration), he cannot enter into the kingdom of God”.’ It was a necessary lesson for the apostles to learn then, and the church to know now.

Our hymns for today are below.

Hymn 1

1130

Prayer to God the Spirit. 1 Cor. 12. 6-11; 1. 5

J. Newton (altered) L.M.

1

O thou, at whose almighty word

The glorious light from darkness sprung,
Thy quickening influence afford,
And clothe with power the preacher's tongue.

2

'Tis thine to teach him how to speak;
'Tis thine to give the hearing ear;
'Tis thine the stubborn heart to break,
And make the careless sinner fear.

3

'Tis also thine, Almighty Lord,
To cheer the poor, desponding heart;
To speak the soul-reviving word,
And bid the mourners' fears depart.

4

Thus, while we in the means are found,
We still on thee alone depend
To make the gospel's joyful sound
Effectual to the promised end.

Hymn 2

1113

"The very hairs of your head are all numbered." Matt. 10. 30

J. Berridge 8.8.6.

1

How watchful is the loving Lord,
How sweet his providential word,
To children that believe!
Your very hairs are numbered all;
Not one by force or chance can fall
Without your Father's leave.

2

Why should I fear when guarded so,
Or shrink to meet a deadly foe?
His mouth is held with bit;
I need not dread his utmost spite,
Nor can he bark, nor can he bite,
Unless the Lord permit.

3

No cross or bliss, no loss or gain,
No health or sickness, ease or pain,
Can give themselves a birth;
The Lord so rules by his command,
Nor good nor ill can stir a hand,
Unless he send them forth.

4

Since thou so kind and watchful art,
To guard my head and guard my heart,
And guard my very hair,
Teach me with child-like mind to sit,

And sing at the dear Saviour's feet,
Without distrust or fear.

5

So, like a pilgrim let me wait,
Contented well in every state,
Till all my warfare ends;
Live in a calm and cheerful mood,
And find that all things work for good,
Which Jesus kindly sends.