

Well or Sick, Righteous or Sinner

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Luke 5:31 And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick.

Luke 5:32 I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

The genius of the Lord Jesus' illustrations about spiritual things is striking in every place in scripture where we read about them. He had a way of getting down to the meat of a matter by relating spiritual lessons to every-day realities. The uniqueness of the parables He used to pass along spiritual object lessons were His signature. It is no wonder that people had to say "never man spake like this man!" (**John 7:46**). He could tell the whole story about the great work of the Kingdom of God on earth by referring to a simple grain-planting scenario, or summarize the impact of Christians on the world by referring to how people understand the use of salt. In fact, His teachings about things were so deep and layered that today we read about them and still find deeper understandings about God to apply to our own lives and our own times.

Our text here is one of those deep and meaningful lessons the Lord left us. It talks about simple things, but the meaning of it reaches into eternity. May God the Holy Spirit help us to take this simple but deep message to ourselves and see in it both the vagaries of human nature and the great message of God about our need.

I. First, let's establish two realities:

- 1. Well people don't need a doctor, and righteous people don't need repentance
 - ▶ We should learn in a few minutes that I am talking about what we call "subjective thinking" when I say this, because I am talking about how the person who sees himself as well thinks, and about how the person who sees himself as righteous thinks.
- 2. Sick people want and need a doctor, and sinners need a Savior
 - ▶ When a person gets real sick, they are ready to go to a doctor to seek help. When a person gets to a place that they see themselves as real sinners, they are ready to seek a Savior who can do something for them.

II. Wellness and sickness is relative to the human mind; so is righteousness and sinfulness

- Relative like deep water and shallow water, a fast car and a slow car, a steep hill and a small rise
- Wellness vs. Sickness as relative illustrated first, by using the Young Athlete Sudden Death Syndrome victims of the past two decades: NBA basketball star Hank Gathers (1990), Olympic figure skater Sergei Grinkov (1995), all pro NFL player Corey Stringer with the Minnesota Vikings (2001), and Darryl Kile, all-star pitcher for the St. Louis Cardinals (2002), Florence Griffith Joyner, Reggie Lewis, Pete Maravich, Hank Gathers, and Len Bias
 - ▶ These people could never have been convinced that they were sick - yet they dropped dead suddenly
- The reverse of this illustrated by famous hypochondriacs: Tennessee Williams (famous playwright and author): His severe hypochondria was one of the contributors to his debilitating alcohol and drug dependence.
 - ▶ Adolf Hitler: The dictator was a hypochondriac who was always obsessing about his health. He had a personal doctor who prescribed him countless pills, including amphetamines.
 - ▶ Howard Hughes: The billionaire eccentric was frightened of germs and illness to such an

extent that he became a recluse. He would not shake hands with people and kept several doctors on staff.

- ▶ You could never have convinced these people that they were well.
- So, wellness and sickness is relative, and so is righteousness and sinfulness
 - ▶ Look at two contrasting opinions about righteousness and sinfulness:
 - The testimony of some people themselves:
 - ✓ **Luke 18:10-13** Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men *are*, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. 12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. 13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as *his* eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.
 - Now listen to two statements from scripture itself:
 - ✓ **Rom. 3:23** For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;
 - ✓ **Prov. 16:2** All the ways of a man *are* clean in his own eyes; but the LORD weigheth the spirits.
- The sickest person in the world can't be convinced he needs a doctor unless he becomes acutely and personally aware of the severity of his sickness. In the same way, the worst sinner in the world can't be convinced that he needs a Savior unless he becomes personally and acutely aware of his sinfulness
 - ▶ Jesus was speaking to some self-righteous folks in **John 5**, and He said something that fits everybody who thinks they are righteous enough to not need a Savior: **John 5:40** "...ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."
 - ▶ He said something else to the same kind of people in **John 8:24** "... ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins."

III. Christ will never be the Great Physician to people who continue to imagine that they are well. He will never be a Savior to people who continue to imagine that they are righteous.

- Well folks will not seek a doctor
- Righteous folks will not seek a Savior
- The fundamental work of Christ for the souls of men goes something like this:
- **Rom. 5:8** But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
- **Rom. 5:6** For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.
- **1Tim. 1:15** This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.
- The entire matter of repentance is about thinking differently about whether you are a righteous person or a sinner.
- There will be a lot of people in the judgment who will present themselves before the Lord as though they were righteous. Listen to what He says about some of them (and note that these are the ones who really did apparently do some good in the world):
 - ▶ **Mat. 7:22-23** Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.