



The Omnipotent Christ-Part 3

Confident in His Power to Restore

Pastor Mike Fabarez

Well, as scheduled, I turned 50 last week. No need to applaud—I didn’t do anything; I just got older. Although I did want to thank you for all the birthday cards that you sent about being half of 100—aging, growing your hair, failing eyesight, falling asleep in the middle of the day, what kind of cane I should pick out now. I noticed they all kind of focused on my aging body.

Even people from the radio who don’t see my body—the first card I reached for, just as an example of these cards I got on my birthday, was from a radio listener (I assume he’s never seen me). But he wished me happy birthday, and on the front it said, “It’s your 50th birthday. Let me congratulate you.” You open it up, it says, “You opened this card without spraining, pulling, or hurting anything.” I just want to thank you all for the encouragement I received this week.

Now, these humorous cards are written, sold, and sent to me because obviously there’s some truth in them. I mean, I’d be lying if I said I’m not noticing pains and aches and problems that I didn’t have when I was 25. Clearly there are some difficulties that come with growing older in your physical body. In the words of the Apostle Paul, as he started to get older, he described it this way: though the outer self—here’s how the ESV translates it—is “wasting away,” the inner man for Christians is being renewed day by day. But that outer man is wasting away. And that’s really no joke, if you think about it. We are aging and it doesn’t get better for us physically.

And you don’t have to be 50 or 70 or 90 to figure that out. As a matter of fact, though that often is seemingly the thing that goes with aging—these problems and ailments—you can be 25 (I’m sure we’ve got plenty of 25-year-olds in the room right now) that have physical conditions and medical problems. Let me just ask my almost-12-year-old daughter—most of you know—a slew of medical issues and infirmities and problems and pains and all kinds of limitations because the body doesn’t work right. That’s a reality. And it’s something that causes pain and problems. And all of us are going to experience it. No one here is immune from that.

As we’ve been studying through Luke chapter 8, we’ve looked at three—two so far, a third one today—three different scenes that describe Christ’s power over various things that are hostile toward us. The first one was the world and nature itself, and we looked at that passage where Christ calms the storm, showing he has absolute power—omnipotence and authority—over natural evil and even, as we



looked at in terms of that message, even the moral evil in the world. Then last time we were together, we looked at Christ's power over those spiritual entities that seek to do harm in this world. And we noticed that—like the, you know, here's how we illustrated it at least—a bodybuilder with a poodle on a leash; I mean, he can yank that leash and throw them into the abyss at will. He has complete power and authority over the strongest and most powerful spiritual enemies.

So we've looked at those, and now this week we get to a text in verse 40 here of Luke chapter 8—which is your cue to grab your Bible—Luke 8:40–56. And we've come to the third element, kind of rounding out this trio of the world, the flesh, and the devil. What are we going to do with the flesh—that's your body. We're going to deal with that body that is, unfortunately, because of the fall and the curse in Genesis 3, filled with and subject to, and periodically in some horrible ways hostile toward us. It causes us pain and grief and trouble and physical harm. I mean, it's to us in many ways, and will be a source of great frustration.

In this text, we'll see that there are actually two scenes—and very helpful that they're put the way that they are—to give us some sense, and it ends the same way the other two pericopes/scenes do: that Christ is omnipotent over even the cells in our body. So let's read this text. We'll see two healings, if you will, here in this text—one is actually a resurrection, the healing. But we want to note how this all unfolds.

Verse 40, follow along as I read; we'll read all the way to verse 56.

Now, when Jesus returned—remember he was over in the Decapolis; that's where the demoniac of the Gerasenes was—and remember what they said, “Get out of here. Leave. We don't want you around here.” And so he goes back, goes back home to his hometown, we assume here in Galilee, to Capernaum. The crowd welcomed him—very different response than what he just left—and they were all waiting for him. And there was a man who came, and he was named Jairus. And he was the ruler of the synagogue there in Capernaum; and falling at Jesus's feet, he implored him—very strong word, fervently—he begged, pleaded with him to come to his house.

Verse 42: for he had an only daughter, about 12 years of age, and she was dying—some exceptional problem. Most 12-year-olds are happy, healthy, bouncing around, and this one—on her deathbed. And Jesus went; and since they'd all gathered around—have the Rabbi come back, I mean, there's one who had done miraculous signs—they're all there crowding in to see him; and the Bible says they were pressing around him.

Verse 43: But there was this woman in this crowd who had a discharge of blood, and that ailment had lasted for 12 years—the whole lifespan of this child. And though she had spent all of her living on physicians—I mean, she sought help, she went to the doctor, she spent a lot of money—she could not be healed by anyone. So she came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment. Now you need to understand, if you are someone living under the Old Testament rules of cleanliness and uncleanness and ceremonial laws of acceptability and not, you would never walk up to the Rabbi who is seen as a spiritual leader—speaking of Yahweh, here’s this Christ—and even if you don’t believe he is the Christ, you believe he’s a good Rabbi, a prophet doing miraculous signs. And you have this ailment that certainly makes you ceremonially unclean. I mean, you’re not going to walk up and have a conversation; you can’t imagine touching. So she, surreptitiously—or at least in a stealthy way—comes up just to touch the fringe of his garment.

And when she did make contact with his clothing here, immediately her discharge of blood ceased. And Jesus said, “Who was it that touched me?” When all denied it, Peter said, “Come on, what kind of question is that? Master, the crowd surrounds you and are pressing in on you.” But Jesus said, “No, no, someone touched me. I’m not talking about bumping around in the crowd; I perceive that power has gone out from me.”

When the woman saw that she was not hidden—she was going to be found out—she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him, and how she had been immediately healed. And he said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace.”

While he was still speaking, someone from the ruler’s house came and said, “Your daughter is dead. Don’t trouble the Teacher—don’t trouble the Rabbi—any more.” And Jesus, on hearing this, answered him, “Do not fear; only believe, and she will be well.” And when he came to the house, he allowed no one to enter except Peter, John, and James, and of course the father and mother of the child.

All were weeping and mourning for her. But he said, “Do not weep, for she is not dead but sleeping.” And they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead—“We were there; we watched her expire.” But taking her by the hand, he called, saying, “Child, arise.” And her spirit returned—interesting description, based on our discussion last time about the ontological nature of our bodies being, you know, both body and spirit. So here the spirit returns—that’s called life—and she got up at once. And he directed that something should be given her to eat. And her parents were amazed—and that ties these three scenes together. Remember: the disciples, calming the storm—amazed, “Even the wind and



the waves obey him”; the people in the Gerasenes over there in the Decapolis—amazed, “Look at how this man directs the spiritual entities, and they obey him”; and here, parents—amazed. But he charged them to tell no one what had happened.

And we’ve seen this before in Luke—that he had a delicate balance of information here. Because once these kinds of things got out, sometimes we find—as John explicitly says—they wanted to come and take him by force and make him the king, and that wasn’t quite time for that yet. For something so spectacular, this was put on hold for a while from being publicly announced.

Now this text in both cases—if you look back up at verse 41—starts with someone coming to Christ wanting help. This man Jairus comes and implores—strong word—begs, pleads with him: “Come, I’ve got a sick daughter. You need to come and help.” And this woman, verse 44, against all convention, coming up to the Rabbi—no, she should have no audience with him if you’re going to follow all those ceremonial rules—and she comes and breaks through the crowd and reaches out, and she wants help.

And in the case of the woman—and we’ve discussed before the kenosis and the Incarnation and the fact that there’s something about the humble state of Christ, being Deity in human form, but having a limited exercise, in some cases, or at least the independence of the exercise of the divine attributes set aside—so he asks this question. And you can say, “Well, Christ here didn’t really heal this woman—he was the avenue—but certainly God did.” Here was a woman wanting help, and she reaches out and goes to the source that she believes can heal her. When she reaches out to touch Christ, God compassionately responds.

I just want to look at that connection there: Jairus coming to ask something because he has someone he loves in great physical pain, reaching out to Christ saying, “I need your help”; and this woman, in great faith in God, wanting God to fix her physical problem—and she’s going to go through the crowd and reach out and touch Christ because she wants help.

Both these healings, of course, express—and it’s very clear to see throughout the Gospels—Christ’s great compassion and God’s compassion for people who are hurting. But what I want to see as we look through this text is the connection between those attributes—as we’ll look at three of them today, the attributes that we see on display here—and the response of the people that should be our response. In other words, we need to recognize that because Christ is compassionate, we should have the determination in our heart that when we have need, we come and ask him. Let’s put it down that way.



Number one, if you're taking notes, you'll see each statement on the outline today—we've got a statement that we're going to make about Christ, and then we're going to have an arrow, and we're going to have the action step. And let's parallel—because it's a good thing for us to parallel in this text—that Christ is compassionate about our pain, even if it's not some huge spiritual issue; even if it's just a physical ailment: "I'm in pain, God, I need help." That's a very appropriate thing—as we'll see later, even a commanded thing—for us to do.

Now, I want to underscore the compassion of Christ, because sometimes our assumption about God is not where it ought to be. And because of that, sometimes we're reluctant to come and ask for some kind of relief from something that doesn't seem to be, in the scheme of things theological, really that big of a deal. In some ways we even see the request being contrary to what God has promised. And I mean that in terms of what we often say as we look through the problem of sickness, disease, and death in the Bible. And that is, we go back to Genesis 3, and we see that that's exactly what God decreed. That's exactly what he said would happen: "You're made from the dust, to the dust you'll return." And to the dust, he says just before that, the material elements of this world are cursed because of the moral sin of people. So we know our bodies are subject to disease and decay and sickness and death.

So we can think very theologically when we get sick—though I doubt you respond this way: "God, you're just keeping your promises. This is exactly what you said is going to happen." What I want to recognize is that we should come to God knowing there's more than just his sovereign plan at work when we get sick. There's also, in God's heart, a great sense of empathy and compassion. And he cares. And that is expressed, certainly, in the way he responds to these people—even this woman, where he wants to stop and acknowledge her when he really "should" be on the way to Jairus's house and not stop and have a conversation with Peter about who touched him. And yet he's going to stop and attend to this gal, and respond to her, and commend her for her faith. This is a big deal.

I think back to when I was a new Christian. I heard a sermon from a preacher from the East Coast, and he was just phenomenal. I'd never heard such a sermon. I'd only been a Christian a while, and I heard this message—I was in Bible school—and I was like, "This guy hung the moon." I mean, I've never heard such preaching before. And I looked him up, and I realized that he had been noted—even secular publications like Time magazine—as like the greatest communicator in the country, and he's always making the top-10 list of communicators and preachers. And so I was like, "Wow, this guy is amazing." And so that always sat there in my memory as one of the most amazing sermons I ever heard. He was just shipped in for chapel one day or some special event—I don't remember what it was—and off he went. And that sermon was etched in my mind: "That is the quintessential preacher. Amazing."



Well, I finished Bible school; I go into seminary; become a young pastor in a church here in Orange County; and I always had that thought in the back of my mind: Wouldn't it be amazing if that guy would come to my church and grace this pulpit and preach to my little church here in Southern California? And every time I had that thought, I would shoot it out of my mind: "Never happen. Never happen. Why would he come? He can't hear me. He doesn't know who I am. I mean, this church over here is not some big, giant church." He wouldn't do that.

And I don't know what it was, but something nagged over and over in my mind every time I thought about, "Who can I get to fill the pulpit when I have to go somewhere else or when I'm on vacation—who can I get?" And finally, one day through some series of events, somehow I got a number to the school where he taught. And I thought, "I'm just going to call—just call." And so I call, and when I call the main number, they say, "Well, yeah, I'll patch you through." And so I'm thinking I'm going to get the department—the department head. So I'm going to get some secretary in the department head, and that's going to put me on to some assistant, and I could picture like eight rows of defense until I could ever talk to this guy.

Well, the main operator patches me through, and the phone rings, and it's him. He picks up the phone. And I was, you know, starstruck—just hearing his voice again. And then I thought, "Okay, you know what—you called. Just do it—just ask." And so I asked. It was probably the most pathetic ask ever: "Well, I don't know if ever you're on the West Coast, and there's ever a time that I don't—You know, I'm sure you can't, and you won't..." And so I spit it out. And then I brace myself for the, you know, "There, there, now little preacher. I'd never come to your church." That's what I was ready for. He literally picks up his own phone, listens to my babbling request, and he says, "Hold on. Let me check my calendar. When do you want me out?" I threw out a date—"Next Sunday. I mean... whenever you can"—and he goes, "Yeah, I can do that." And he flew out here, and he spent four days with me. We had yogurt together—I mean, it was amazing. And he climbed into the pulpit and preached in the pulpit that I actually preach in—every night. And I was flabbergasted.

Because I didn't really take into consideration where his heart was. His heart was to preach the Word. He loved to preach the Bible. And if he had an open opportunity, he was eager to preach the Word to people. And I said, "Would you come preach here?" "Well, if I can do it—yeah, I can do that." See, I underestimated this man's heart. I thought, "There's no way he would stoop to that."

All I'm saying is, sometimes when we get ill, when we get sick—maybe it's easier when we're praying for someone else's illness—but to really think the God of the universe is going to come and stoop



and... just sometimes we think, “Well, you know, it’s just the way it is. How could God really care about my migraine headaches, my arthritis, this knee surgery I’ve got coming up, this problem I’m having with my ear?” I mean...

Well, you know what—let me give you three passages really super quick. Let’s start in Luke 12—like, call them the bird passages. The three bird passages. We’re going to look at sparrows, ravens, and hens—real quick. You ready?

Look in chapter 12. I want to remind you how the Bible consistently says there is no problem too small, in terms of God’s concern for you as his child, that he doesn’t take a compassionate interest. Luke 12, verse 6—just in and out of these real quick—12:6: “Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies?” You could buy them because you’re going into the temple courts because you’re going to sacrifice—this is the cheapest sacrifice. I mean, it’s like, “I don’t really need five, but they’re two cents.” These are like throwaway animals. “Not one of them is forgotten before God.” Now, that’s a bizarre thought. You mean it’s not just a class of birds—you care about each individual? You have them on your radar—you think about them. Amazing. Now, let’s think about you. He says to his people, “Even the hairs of your head are all numbered.” I have such an interest—talking about not forgetting you—I have such a focus on you, I mean, I’ve got a whole catalog of the follicles on your head. An amazing statement. “Therefore fear not.” If I care about the birds, are you not of more value than many sparrows?

Verse 24—ravens: In a separate context here he’s teaching this: “Consider the ravens.” Look at those birds. “They neither sow nor reap; they have neither storehouse nor barn”—they don’t have a pantry or refrigerators—“and yet God feeds them.” Now it’s a very active verb. Think about that. He actively cares about the hunger pains of a raven. It’s ridiculous. You’re kidding me—God can’t have that kind of interest. He does. And you want to talk about you—now compared to the birds you don’t give a second thought to—“Of how much more value are you than the birds?”

One more. Look across the page, and I add this one in Luke 13 because sometimes when we’re ill, sometimes when we’re sick—whatever it was—“Well, I have this problem because I did this. I’m having these aches because I didn’t take care of myself. And I’m having this problem—maybe it’s more spiritual. Maybe it’s Hebrews 12: I’m sitting on this sickbed right now because of my life in rebellion against God over here; this is God’s discipline.” Whatever it is, you may say, “I can see where if I really felt like I was walking with God every day and innocent of this, that I can see where maybe God would care and feel for me if I’m ill. I want to go to the extreme.” And here’s the extreme, verse 34: even people—this is extreme—who hate God’s messengers, who kill them—murderers. Look at this text: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it.” Don’t read this next part wrong: “How often would I have gathered your children”—and do you



think that means the little kids? “Oh yeah, Jesus loved the little children.” That’s not what this is about. The city is considered—this is just a Hebrew idiom—the mother, if you will, and the people that live in it are the children of the city. He’s talking about the people in the city. Look at what he says: “How often would I have gathered the people of Jerusalem together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings.” Now there is a problem because of your rebellious heart—“you were not willing.” But that was my heart of compassion for you—like a mother hen cares for the chicks.

The bottom line here is: even in your situation—if you dug your own hole and fell into it—God looks at human suffering, God looks at the problems of your life, and he has a great deal of compassion. Is there another side to God? Sure there is—the justice of God, the frustration over sin—I get that. Is he happy with murderers? Of course he’s not. But he has compassion for people.

This is not a bird passage, it’s a plant passage, but let me throw one more in from the Old Testament. You don’t have to turn there, but you know the story of Jonah. In chapter 4 of Jonah, after all the interesting things that happen, he’s sitting there on a hillside looking at Nineveh. Nineveh is the capital of what empire? Assyria. Assyria is the enemy—the arch-enemy—here in the eighth century BC of Israel, and a great pain in the neck to Judah in the divided kingdom. These are the bad guys. And he’s sent there to preach, “You guys are sinful—you need to repent,” and he does, obediently (after a little detour—you know the story). But he sits there after he preaches saying, “Now let’s just see what happens. Maybe God will torch them after all. He has no compassion for those people. They’re the enemy of God’s people.” And the plant grows up over his head—shields him from the heat and the sun—and then a worm kills the plant. And then God turns up the, you know, the hairdryer—the scorching east wind comes and he’s hot—and he’s lamenting the death of the plant. I’m sure he’s putting water on it—“Let’s get it to come back.” He can’t get the plant. He’s grieving the loss of the plant. And here’s God’s word—the Hebrew Old Testament word for compassion. He says, “You had compassion”—translated “pity” in the ESV—“for a plant.” A plant that got attacked by a worm. “And you don’t care for the people in this city?” Here is the God of the universe looking at people who sinfully were just reaping what they’d sown, saying, “I care about them. I have compassion for them.”

You may think God is too big, too occupied with world affairs (I don’t know), too busy actively meting out his just principles—that when you’re in pain, or your loved one is in pain, he can’t possibly have that high on his agenda. He does. That’s what the Bible teaches. God is a compassionate God. And if he’s compassionate, you should not be reluctant to ask him for help.

Is it always his will to help us in terms of relieving our pain? We’ve taught on that in the past. As a matter of fact, this is one of those sermons where, if this is the only sermon you’ve heard in Luke on healing, then you need to hear the other ones. That’s why on the back of your worksheet in the box,



where I'll always give you pertinent sermons from the past, I've stacked on some recent ones on the healing texts in Luke, and I'd love for you, if you're brand new, listen to those. They're all free online—just go online and find those, punch those numbers, and pull those up, because you need to understand there's more to this picture. Right? And we've dealt with a lot of these things—like Genesis 3 and a lot of issues about why it's not always God's will to heal. I get all of that.

But when it comes to today's text, I just want you to identify with the woman who has a hemorrhage and Jairus who has a daughter who's dying. And because they believe God is interested and compassionate to heal, they come and ask. That'd be a good place for us to start: always affirming in your own mind God's compassionate concern for people when they're hurting—especially you, if you are his child by repentance and faith in Christ.

Number two: they come here asking for help, and the woman who gets healed immediately in verse 44 is called out by Christ, as you see in verses 46 and 47. And then in verse 48, Jesus stops to commend her for her faith. He says, "Look at your trust—you came to the right God, you reached out to the right person," and God in his compassion healed you. You trusted in the God you should have trusted in. And in the middle of all that, the people from the house of Jairus come and say, "Your daughter has died. Don't worry the Teacher anymore." And Jesus turns and says, "Do not fear"—same Greek word here—"only trust—believe." It's not mere mental assent—this is, "Put your confidence in God, put your confidence in me—she'll be well."

In both cases, they're encouraged to have faith: in one, because the woman had faith in Christ—and in God in particular—Christ though is the avenue of her healing; and Jairus, the father of the sick girl, is encouraged to continue to have faith in Christ. Faith in Christ—because we can put our faith in the wrong place—but our trust and confidence that Christ can do something about it, certainly even in the face of death, is something that Jesus is trying to show: "I can fix the problem. I have power to do this." I mean, he even says it in verse 46—there's power that's gone out of me to fix this woman's problem. Power. Faith. Ability to resurrect. Trust me.

Let's put those together. Number two on our outline: Christ is all-powerful. That's what this triad of stories has been about. He's powerful over nature. He's powerful over the spiritual world. He's powerful over the cells in your body. He is all-powerful.

Jot these two references down while you write that down: Hebrews 1:3 and Colossians 1:15–17. I know I quote these a lot. Let me give you the highlights on these real quick, just to remind you specifically



about Jesus, the second person of the Godhead: He's the image of the invisible God. He is—just to abbreviate this text—before all things. All things were created by him and for him. Verse 17 ends this way: “And in him all things”—you know this—“hold together.” In Christ. To be more specific, Hebrews 1:3: Christ is “the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature,” and Christ “upholds the universe by the word of his power.”

I mean, the reason that the molecular structure of the atomic world does not fall apart—if you've read in your physics class on Heisenberg's theory of uncertainty or whatever you've studied in terms of physics—the idea that the very fabric of the universe is held together, the Bible says, by the word and authority—or, to put it another way, the will—of Christ. He doesn't have to say anything; when he wants it held together, it holds together. When he wants something to happen on a cellular level, or in terms of meteorology on the Sea of Galilee, whether it's the poodles on the leash (the spiritual enemies that he wants to toss into the abyss), he has the ability to do it all because he's omnipotent.

And when I recognize the omnipotence of God, I know it's no big deal for him—if I'm diagnosed with cancer tomorrow—it is no big deal for God, who holds sway over all things, to do something in my life to change that situation. Now, again, that brings up all the moral questions: Why does God not fix it every time then? And we've dealt with that—that's why those past sermons are very important. That book I just wrote, *Lifelines*, is all about the idea in the middle of the book of how come a good God and an all-knowing God, a powerful God, would allow all this. And that's not the topic of our sermon today. But be sure, if that's a nagging question, you address it with good material from the Bible. Today I just want us to dwell on this: He has absolute sway and authority over all things.

Now, I need a sidebar at this point to help us get all these pieces to come together in why we ought to trust him and how we ought to trust him and what we ought to trust him for—by talking about this one word: sovereignty. Let's talk about that for just a second. Sovereignty—the sovereignty of God. Sometimes when people look at passages on healing, they forget all about the sovereignty of God—moderns that like to quote these passages on healing and then create a certain expectation in the minds of people do so often without any thought of the sovereignty of God.

By sovereignty I don't mean that he has this bird's-eye view over everything and just kind of knows it—that's not passive perception (although you could say—though it's not entirely true—that a definition of omniscience is, you know, really, in essence, a passive understanding and perception of all things, and he has that). But more than that, sovereignty is the idea of an active administration over all things. That he is a planner. And the biblical words we often use are: he has decreed all things. In light of Ephesians 1, he is working everything out in human history according to his plan. He's working it all out after the counsel—the consultation—of his own will.



In light of that, here's the question: When you look at the life of a 12-year-old girl who is the daughter of the administrator in the synagogue in Capernaum, is it any surprise to Almighty God that she's lying on her deathbed this day? None. Not only—even if we just think in terms of omniscience, in terms of his knowledge of it—but in terms of his plan: Is it any surprise that this woman has now been, for 12 years, suffering from this hemorrhage? Is that any surprise to God at all? No. Not only in terms of God's knowledge of it, but in terms of his active administration of it—it was decreed for her. To put it in simple, poetic terms in Psalm 139, here's how it's put in that verse about God forming us (you remember all that): it says this—our days were written in his book before there were yet one of them. Therefore, does he know from beginning to end—not only know—but does he plan out our life including—let's just talk about the trajectory of our health? Absolutely.

Now, some people speak of God stepping in to fix problems as though he kind of got himself into a jam or looked the other way for a while and now he's got to fix it—like he was surprised by your leukemia, or he really didn't know about that tumor in your brain, and when you found out he kind of found out, and good thing you prayed because he wasn't paying attention. No. God is so compassionate—he's got the follicles on the top of your head all cataloged—and all those cells that were running rebellious in your body that now have come to the surface and erupted in some kind of symptom that make you sick—did he know about all that? Not only did he know about it; it was part of the providential plan for your health—the chart of your health from beginning to end—all of it planned.

Let's take it a step further now. Let's consider that chart—that there's a line here on the chart, and let's call that "good health"—relative good health—good health where you're not in pain, you're not struggling, you're not suffering, just in terms of your biological health. Now, let's think about it. There are deviations and departures from that line of good health where you don't feel sick and bad and awful and you're not going to have bad symptoms. Many of them you'd say, "Well, these are normal and expected." You spend any time with parents of little kids—"What's wrong?" "They're teething." Okay, well clearly there's pain involved in that. And post-fall (post-Genesis 3) we know there's a time where there's going to be that pain. And then there's all kinds of other things that happen where we know you'll catch a cold, then there's going to be a flu—all these natural deviations from feeling good.

And some of them are part and parcel of life. You know, wives, you want to be a mom—well, there's going to be a deviation from feeling good for nine months, and especially at the end—really bad. And then we expect that all to come back. And then you come through labor, and you're back to feeling okay, and it's going to take time and recovery. Those are natural deviations. Now let's just think of that for a second. Those are all planned by God—departures from feeling healthy and being healthy and feeling good.



Some of them don't seem normal: "This is bizarre," or "You caught this thing," or "You've got this tumor," or "You've got this chronic illness," and the departure—maybe like a 12-year-old, who should expect to be happy and bouncing around and all fine—now is on her deathbed. Here is a detour, right? Let's call it a detour that's going to snap back to health. It's going to get so bad she's going to die—snap back to health by the word of Christ in this text. A hemorrhage—12-year departure from feeling good, and the anemia involved, and the weakness involved, and all the problems involved—and so she's going to be down here feeling bad (here would be feeling good), she's going to feel bad for years; and then, with touching the edge of his garment—bam—back up to feeling right.

So let's call it this—because we're thinking in terms of something that is planned—it was a planned health detour. A detour that goes off the norm—not teething, not your normal issues of labor pains. This is a departure that goes like this. Oh, by the way, we often quote this, but let me say there is a departure from good health that is—depending, you know, it could happen at any age—but it's going to end in death. You know that, right? Some of us are going to depart from feeling good and it's going to be a slow decline—months and maybe years—and then that one's going to end in our own demise. So we know that's the promise of Genesis 3, and that's going to happen. Maybe some of you it'll be car accidents; some of you (maybe me, some of us), right—all of a sudden we'll be healthy and then maybe, you know, we'll hit a tree and then—bam—biologically bad health—you just died. So there's going to be a departure from the line. That one, according to Psalm 139, is planned. Every single day was planned out—your health chart, planned—before yet there was even one of them. That's God's sovereign plan.

Now, these two people: the daughter of Jairus took a dive—got so bad because he was delayed talking with this woman who had the hemorrhage—and then she's going to snap back to good health in a moment, just with one word in verse 54—two words: "Child, rise." And then this hemorrhaging woman—after 12 years she's going to snap back—"immediately" (that word is used twice: immediately, verse 44; immediately, verse 47). She's going to snap back. These are called, as we say around here, GT-1s.

Let's think this through now. Their health detour—that was a planned health detour because God had planned it out from the beginning—is now going to snap back to good health because of a miraculous GT-1. We call it GT: a "God Thing." Clearly God is doing this, clearly God is involved in this, and it has a "1" next to it because it's of the first category—the first class. And a first-class miracle—you've got to divide miracles into two classes. The first-class miracle is when God suspends natural law. And that means at the cellular level there, God does something through his sovereign will in this situation to immediately change the composition of the cells in that body—to immediately snap that body back to good health and feeling good. So much so she's hungry (verse 55): "Give her a sandwich—she's been



dead half a day.” Give her something to eat. So she’s going to have an appetite—not like she’s there kind of getting off a ventilator. She’s like, “I’ll take a sandwich.” That is a snap-back GT-1—immediate, cellular-level creation—something out of nothing.

Now, on the health detours of people that cross Jesus’s path, we have this sovereignly planned because God is going to glorify himself in one of two things in the New Testament—either establishing and verifying to people the credentials of the Messiah (think the blind man in John 9; disciples are having a debate: “Was it the parents that sinned? Was it he that sinned that he was born blind?” He’s been blind his whole life), and Jesus says the reason he has a health detour—off the deviation from good eyeballs; he’s got eyeballs that don’t see from birth—is because that was established and planned by God to snap him back to seeing—instantly healed—GT-1. It was going to happen so that God would be glorified. And it happened with some people that were sick on a health detour—snap back to the line of good health—because they were, as we read this morning in our Daily Bible Reading in 2 Corinthians 12:12, the signs of the apostles. They were the things that established their authority—as Hebrews 2:1–4 says—to establish that they were speaking for Christ with the authority of Christ. Those are GT-1s—even so much so you could be dead—that’s how sick you can be—and you could snap back. And we have that in Acts, and we have that in the Gospels.

If you have a health detour—maybe you’re in one now—and it’s one that’s not going to lead to death (because that’s not a detour; you go to death), but let’s say this is a detour and you’re going to come back—you’re going to come back to good health. If you come back to good health and this is a God thing, this is what we call a God thing of the second class. It is God doing this, not suspending natural law—but we should not expect the GT-1. That’s why I don’t start funerals with a prayer for resurrection. Have you noticed that at my funerals that I lead? I don’t start that way: “Oh, we’re about to start. I’ve just been reading—in Luke 8—and I know Jesus has all power and he’s compassionate and you’re grieving and he cares about your pain, and he has all power and he can heal with a word. So we’re just going to start here—let’s open up the casket lid so we can watch it all happen. Maybe he’ll do it. Let’s pray and have this person pop from the dead.” Why don’t pastors start funerals that way? Because GT-1s had a specific purpose and a specific time in biblical history. I understand that. And I know that.

But I do expect God, from time to time—when it is his will—when you depart from good health in a health detour, to bring you back to good health through the intervention of God because you have trusted in him and you’ve relied on his compassion and you’ve called out for help and he’s responded. That, rightly, is an expectation that I have. I can’t command it, I can’t bark at God to do it, I can’t name it and claim it. But I can go to God in the order of—here’s a word, maybe sticking around—in the order of the pomegranate cave. “Pomegranate cave?” Yes.



Let me give you a scene from the pomegranate cave. If that sounds like Harry Potter, I'm not quoting the wizards—this is Old Testament. This is 1 Samuel 14—don't need to turn there; I'll tell the story real quick. This is a GT-2, where we have a deviation from peace in Israel—and use the war analogy. The Philistines are attacking; their garrisons have all assembled to attack Israel. Jonathan, the son of Saul the king, the friend of David, goes out with a small band of warriors. He's got a little cohort of warriors. The Philistines have mounted their troops here, and he is in Migron—this little place—by the pomegranate. He is there with his men, and he's saying, "We're in trouble. We've got to fight these guys." And the odds are like 20-to-1—there's just no way it seems like we can do this.

Here's what he says, Jonathan: "It may be that the LORD will work for us, for nothing can hinder the LORD from saving by many or by few." So let's go to war. And they go to war. And the odds are 10-to-1, 15-to-1, 20-to-1, and they win. And at the end of that narrative (verse 23) it says, "So the LORD saved Israel that day." What happened? In odds that didn't look good—a departure from peace in Israel, the Philistines attacking—Jonathan and his cohort go out and they fight, and God gives them victory. And yet, it wasn't GT-1—supernatural angel of the Lord whacking them down. They actually have blood on their swords. Jonathan and his men have to clean their swords—the blood of the Philistines is on it. Why? Because they went out and fought. But it was an amazing victory. It was so crazy, at one point—here's how the text describes it—even the Philistines started fighting against each other and killing each other. Amazing. And yet every Philistine that died, died with a sword. That's a GT-2. And they said at the beginning, "It may be that the LORD will do this—let's go fight." And at the end: "God did it—let's praise him—he did it. The LORD saved us."

When you depart on a health detour, all I'm saying is that you need to trust in the all-powerful Christ, and you need to call out to him. That's the right thing to do. Trusting that he can—against insurmountable odds; I don't care if the doctor says, "This is terminal; I can't imagine that you're going to live"—you take what you can take and you go to war. And you ask God for his provision, and it may be that you will win. Maybe that won't be his will for you to win. But we fight.

And that's not just theory pieced together from Old Testament principles. One passage on this before we run out of time: James 5. This is not just assumption; this is command in the Bible. James 5—New Testament. We're not talking here about calling for some kind of GT-1 through the hands of the apostles. We're not talking about people in the day of Christ coming and finding the miracle worker and having him lay his hands on us and miraculously and instantaneously heal us. Let's read this text and give you a template for what to do next time you or someone in your family is sick.

James 5:13: "Is anyone among you suffering?" Did you find it? So important that you look at this text. "Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful?" Everything's going great—"Sing



praises.” That’s terrific. “Is anyone among you sick?” Now, note this verse: “Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.” “And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up.” “And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.”

That’s a big statement, and let’s untangle it. “Call for the elders of the church.” A couple things you need to know about the book of James: He’s writing to the scattered, persecuted Jewish Christians. They’re all over the place, and they’re in little tribes and little pockets all around Asia Minor and near the Holy Land, as we call it. And they’re out there in these groups, and they’re overseen by their pastors—that’s the word elders, pastors, overseers. And as in most small communities of Christians (you can see this on the mission field now), it’s those pastors that usually are the ones that are like the leaders of the band. And if there’s a problem—even a physical problem—you go to them. That’s just normal. They’re the ones that would have what it takes—at least the know-how—to try and see if we can fix your problem. We don’t have the professional league of doctors; there’s no hospital or your medical group over here on the corner.

Now, if you’re suffering and if you’re sick, you need to pray, and then you need to get your leaders (who can help you) to pray. But that’s really not what they’re there for—just to pray. They’re there to anoint you with oil. Now, I know where your mind is going because we’ve been taught this all of our life—this is some kind of ceremony, and you’ve got to get some olive oil (I guess from the Garden of Gethsemane or something) and get it shipped over here and you have somebody do some thing and quote some incantation. That’s not what we’re talking about here.

The word anoint, unfortunately, is a word that brings up all these things in our minds, when in reality there are two words in the New Testament for anoint. And the one that is not being used here is “chriō.” Chriō. Chriō is the word we get the word “Christ” from. The one who’s been chriō-ed is the “christos.” And the christos is one who’s had the anointing oil in this ceremony poured over his head and designated and set apart as a prophet, a priest, or a king. That’s the christos who’s been chriō-ed—the Anointed One, the Messiah (that’s what it means in Hebrew)—who has been anointed. That’s not the word we’ve got here. There is no ceremony of anointing in the New Testament—there’s no designation of prophet, priest, and king for people in the New Testament; we don’t have that. That’s an Old Testament ceremony. And when that word is used in the New Testament, it’s looking back to that in the Old Testament or symbolically of Christ, who is the christos—the Anointed One—the Prophet, Priest, and King.

This is the other word that is used in passages like when the Good Samaritan comes along the Jewish man who’s there beaten up and bruised, with wounds on his body, and he comes up and he “anoints”



him with oil—sometimes the word is translated “to apply,” “to put on”—the medicinal medicine of the day. Like in the olden days, if you were sick you took an aspirin; in the first century, if you were sick (you can read Josephus on this or Galen on this, the Roman physician), the oil was the main thing. It was a part of every medicinal solution, just about. So you get that medicinal application of what you need—the salve, the oil on your body (whatever it might be), which is usually included in every first-century medicinal solution. And you have that done by the people who usually are the ones that are in the know to do that. They happen to be the leaders of your little tribe—this little persecuted tribe of Christians that you’re a part of—this pocket somewhere in the ancient Near East. And as you pray, and as they pray, they put this medicine on you—in the name of the Lord.

Now note what that’s saying here. I have a deviation from good health. I’m sick. I call out to God trusting in his compassion. I know he’s got power over my body. I know he can snap this back—not with the GT-1—but turn this thing around in a GT-2. There will be blood on the sword, if you will—there will be things in medicine to take. But when I take that medicine, I take it in the name of the Lord.

Remember when David went out to fight Goliath? Goliath had all this armor on and all these offensive weapons. David goes to suit up in Saul’s tent to get all his tools and weapons and swords—and it was too much for him, too big; he’s a small kid; he can’t do it; he’s not trained. And so he says, “Forget it. I’ve killed bears, I’ve killed lions, and this slingshot right here—I’ve done a lot of damage with it. I’m going to go out and fight him with the tool and the weapon I’m comfortable with.” Now it looks silly because Goliath’s got a giant sword. All he’s got is a slingshot—which, by the way, is not this (Y-shaped), it’s this one (the ancient sling). So he’s got one of these. Now he goes and selects his rocks, so he’s got ammo on his belt, and he’s got his weapon. It’s not a bazooka, not an AK-47—it’s a little pistol. But “I’ve done a lot of damage with this pistol, and I’m good with it. So off I go.” So in a 2-to-1 battle—akin to his good friend Jonathan, where it doesn’t look very hopeful—he runs to the battle, you remember, and approaches Goliath. And he says, “I come to you in the name of my slingshot.” Remember that line? Is that what he says? “I come to you in the name of the LORD.” That is—did he stand there and just say, “God, call fire from heaven and just evaporate this guy”? No. He didn’t expect the GT-1; he expected the GT-2. He was hoping—saying what his friend Jonathan said—“It may be that the LORD will deliver.” “I’m going to go after this guy.” And he was even more confident than Jonathan: “God will deliver you into my hands today.” And he goes toward the battle.

When you’re taking the chemotherapy, when you’re having the hip replacement, when you’re taking the injectable for your terrible migraine headache—when you put these things into action, you do it, as this text says, in the name of the Lord. Now, your oncologist may not be a Christian—he may not be putting this into your IV “in the name of the Lord”—but you need to be, because your trust needs to be clearly in the God who has power over every cell in your body. That’s the approach to what I’m wanting—praying for—when I get sick.



And then, when God responds—let's just look at what we've got here. Now this is a GT-1; a little different arc on our graph here—but these gals get snapped right back to the line with a GT-1 to good health. This is interesting what happens: Jesus, in verse 45—look at our text, Luke 8—he wants to know who this gal is and call her out, which is what happens in verse 47. She has to come out of the crowd and say, “Well, yeah, it was me.” Matter of fact, underline these words in verse 47: “declared in the presence of all.” Back in Luke 8, look at verse 47: “When the woman saw that she was not hidden”—she was going to be discovered—“she came trembling, and falling down before him declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him and how she had been healed.” Here's our last point: when God is gracious to you, you need to thank him. Put that down—number three. When God is gracious—and of course he is; Christ is gracious—when his grace is displayed to you, you need to celebrate that. You need to praise him. You need to glorify him. You need to thank him.

Remember, Jesus healed the 10 lepers, and nine of them went on their merry way, and one came back and thanked him—fell at his feet, thanking him. Remember what he said to the one leper? “Where are the nine?” Why? Because he expects this. Psalm 50:15—here's the paradigm—and he expects all three components. Here's how the text reads: “Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.” You catch that? You're in trouble—you call out for help. When I respond graciously to you—glorify me.

I'm thinking, “You've got—this is a code-three, sirens-on—people should be pulling over; you're going to Jairus's house; there's no time to waste, and you stop to call this woman out of the crowd. Can't you just let her have her healing and go on her way? So power left out of you—so you don't know... If you really don't know—there's debate on that—but let's just say, in your humanity (incarnation), it's like—what does it matter?” And Peter's going, “Come on—that's a dumb question anyway; everyone's bumping into you. Why do we have to stop and waste time right now? She got her healing—move on.” Well, she didn't finish the cycle here. She was going to declare in the presence of all—and then Christ was going to declare in the presence of all, “You trusted in the right person—go your way. Go in peace.”

If we don't thank God, it's not extra credit when we do. We are ingrates if we don't. We should—as Psalm 103 says—“Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name.” Verse 2: “Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.” Remember them all—name them one by one (that's a song, not the verse—but you know how that goes). And the next line says this—let's get specific: “who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases.” And when he heals your diseases, you need to bless (the Hebrew word—to bow down, to give him glory).



Psalm 50:15—it's a great one: "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me." Now, when I'm sitting there watching this conversation go down and I happen to be Jairus, I'm going, "We are wasting time right here. My daughter is sick." And then his worst fears are realized, verse 49: While he was speaking, someone from the ruler's house came and said, "Your daughter's dead. Don't bother the Teacher anymore." Think about that. "I wanted your help—I called for your help—you started to come and help me, but then all of a sudden you got delayed and you didn't help me." Now you may say, "Well, it doesn't seem like much of a delay, because it only takes you two minutes to read it." I don't know how long this discussion lasted. It lasted more time than an anxious parent wants to waste. Go to CHOC, go to City of Hope—talk to parents in the ICU where these kids are hurting—and the doctor wants to stop and have a conversation with another patient down the hall who's perfectly fine, and your kid's dying—are you cool with that delay? I'm not. "Get down here and let's deal with my kid. Why are you dealing with her—she's fine."

See, here's the thing about Jairus's daughter: she got a lot worse before she got better. The delay of the restoration of her life teaches us a valuable lesson—even if it's just an hour or so. It teaches us that sometimes we call out to God, and God does not solve the problem—as it says twice in this text of the woman with the hemorrhage—"immediately." It's not immediate. God doesn't answer right now. And it's delayed. Then I guess we have nothing to praise him for?

One last passage—then we'll be done: 2 Corinthians 12. If you're doing your Daily Bible Reading, as we ask that you would, you'd be reading this text today—or you just read it this morning: the thorn in the flesh. And Paul—remember this text. (It's a good thing for you to read our DBR with us, by the way. If you haven't caught up with us, it's a good day to start because we just started with the Song of Solomon. Never read the Bible? It'd be a good place for you to start. Get your interest—that should keep your interest, I would think. We just read three chapters this morning. It gets worse—it actually gets better. We'll read chapters 4, 5, and 6 tomorrow of Song of Solomon.) Anyway, we also read this text this morning (or you're going to read it today), 2 Corinthians 12:8—you know he gets this thorn in the flesh, and we already see (he kind of telegraphs) the reason that he's got it—God's going to work good in his life because this illness is there. It's a thorn in the flesh—so we know it's a physical ailment. Verse 8: he prays three times—underline the word "pleaded." Because guess what? It's the exact same word translated "implored" in verse 41 of Luke 8. It's the same word—very intense—used of Jairus the father saying, "Oh God, I need your help." In this case Christ—"I need your help;" in this case God—"please take this thorn away." "I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me." But he said to me—now, we talked about the graciousness of God in him delivering us—but he says, as the delay takes place, "My grace is sufficient for you."

Now think this through. Here is Paul with a physical problem, asking for God to take it away. Does God take away his physical pain? You can answer that. "Okay, that's only because you're thinking in terms of time." Question: does Paul have the thorn in the flesh now? No. I know he's in a disembodied



state—he doesn’t have a body. But when he gets his body back, is he going to have those same physical pains that he had when he wrote this text? Of course not. So did God answer the prayer? What did he plead? “I pleaded with the Lord that it should leave.” Did it leave? Well, yes—but come on, you’re making... I mean, it didn’t leave then.

When Jairus comes to Jesus—“My daughter is dying. Would you help me?”—did he help him? Eventually we say yes, because it’s just a matter of verses and just a matter of hours. But it got worse before it got better, and he didn’t respond and didn’t get there. And, matter of fact, it seems like from Jairus’s perspective he’s fiddling around with another person who’s already well. What’s that about? You’re delaying.

When the delay comes, God doesn’t leave his children high and dry. He gives them, according to this text, grace: “My grace is sufficient for you.” When you have chronic illness and you deviate from the line of good health—and maybe it’s a 12-year problem like this woman—all I’m saying is all those years, all that concern, is not without God’s compassion, and certainly not without God’s grace. And the grace here is this: in the end—much like in John 9 with the blind man—it’s going to be for God’s glory; or in the words of Romans 8:28, it will be for good. But right now, it’s going to mean a little protracted physical pain. But know this: “My grace will be there, and that grace will be sufficient for you, and my power—even in your illness, Paul—is going to be made perfect in weakness.” And Paul said, “If that’s the case, I’m going to boast all the more gladly about my weakness.” So I have chronic this or chronic that—I’m going to do that because I know the power of Christ that’s been promised to me—the grace of Christ—is going to rest upon me, and God will provide. I’ll be able to endure it. “For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, calamities—for when I am weak, then I am strong.”

If it’s physical or something else—insults, hardships, persecutions—I’m able to endure because God is actively dispensing grace. And if he dispenses grace, then we have something to thank God for—even if your illness does not go away. Because—will it go away? Every single Christian in the room that’s ever prayed for an illness to go away will have that answered positively. When? Well, eventually—even if not in this life. If you’re not returned to the line of good health, you’re going to be returned to the line of good health, according to Philippians 3, because your citizenship is in heaven. You’re waiting there for a Savior, who will one day take your lowly body, it says, and transform it to be like his glorious body—his resurrected body—and he’s able to do this (I love the verse; let me read it for you): he’s able to do it “by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.” Nature, storms, world politics, demons, the cells of your body. He may wait in exercising that healing of your body, but he will restore your health. In the meantime, he’ll always provide grace. And that is something you should be thankful for—as he said, it’s a big word, verse 9: “I’ll boast in that. I’ll boast in that.” And I’ll be grateful, because his grace is sufficient.



I'm currently reading a book right now that itemizes over 100 martyrs from the Ottoman period, where Christians—mostly in the Eastern Orthodox Church—were slaughtered and crucified and beheaded and put on skewers and had their limbs torn apart. Here they are—God did not answer their prayers for physical comfort. But just like this text, God's grace was sufficient—he provided for them in the midst. If God heals your diseases, as Psalm 103 says, bless him. If he delays that, as he did in Jairus's case—even though it was only for an afternoon, and it gets worse before it gets better—praise him. Because even if it's death and your child dies—even though it may not be the afternoon that she dies that she's resurrected—here's the thing: our hope in Christ is that "when the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality," then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." And then you can say, "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"

Let's pray.

God, help us when we think through our health issues. We've got them. They're represented in this room, I'm sure, in such detail and large measure—because even things we pray for on our caring team and our pastoral team is just a small fraction, I'm sure, of what people have disclosed about the pains and the physical ailments of their family members. And so we know this is a regular challenge.

And the great news is that many of these things—even when they look bleak—you, by your grace, your miraculous grace (those GT-2s), you bring us back to health; you restore health even when the doctor said, "I don't think this is going to work; I don't think there's much hope here." You've done great things. We've witnessed those; we've attested to the way that you have providentially brought back people from sickness to health. And when you heal those diseases, as Psalm 103 says, let us be much more careful—unlike the nine lepers—let us be careful to come and praise you for what you do. That doesn't have to be publicly in a church service, but certainly in our hearts let our hearts be filled with singing and thanksgiving.

And God, when that restoration to health is delayed, give us the perspective of the Apostle Paul—knowing it's not that your grace has been withdrawn; it's just that your grace comes in a different package, a kind of package that will give us perseverance and perspective and joy. And even as I'm reading right now—martyrs going to their death with a good and godly attitude: not despairing, not afraid, not freaked out—God, help us, please, to trust in you, knowing that even if we're hurting, you're compassionate; even when we're struggling, you have all power over every cell in our body. And we thank you that one day—with lots of forecasts through great periods of restoration in our



temporal hope—one day our health completely will be restored when you exercise that power that you have to subject wind and waves and kingdoms and kings and demons and principalities under your authority. You're going to do that for our bodies—transforming their lowly state into one that's like the resurrected body of Christ.

So with that hope, God, we finish out our preaching this morning. We want to sing a song of thanksgiving now for your goodness and affirm your greatness and your power. In Jesus' name, Amen.