**The Gospel of Jesus Christ**

Based on [Luke 7:11-17](https://biblia.com/books/esv/Lk7.11-17)

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The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the good news that he has come to repair and sustain our relationship with God in this life and to prepare us for an eternity in His presence in the life to come. A peaceful conscience and willing spirit in this life, deliverance from all sin, suffering, and death in the next.

However, there is a different gospel being proclaimed under the auspices of biblical Christianity—a different and therefore fraudulent “good news of Jesus Christ”--and someone preached it to me just this week. It is a gospel that says ***deliverance from all sin, suffering and death is not only for heaven, but Jesus died on the cross, shed his blood and made atonement so that you can overcome sickness and disease today***. “God wants to heal you”, they say. And this message is what the church is supposed to go out and preach to the sick, so that God will heal them and they will give Him glory.

This a different gospel than what we preach, especially insofar as *what the Christian can expect in this life*, before Christ comes again to make all things new. **We preach the promise of a peaceful conscience and willing spirit to do good works in this life; they promise these things also but *add to it a preaching of a present healing sickness and disease available to all who believe*.** And they do so by misinterpreting the Scriptures, especially passages like our Gospel today.

In today’s gospel, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and there he saw a funeral procession for a man who had died, the only son of a widow. This of course meant that this woman was now alone in the world…alone in the sense that she had no immediate male relatives to take care of her. Her husband was gone, and now her only son--upon whom the responsibility to care for her rested--was also gone. Now the Law strictly charged God’s people to look after widows, but that doesn’t mitigate her tragedy. She was miserable. But, in seeing her, Jesus had compassion on her and said, “**Do not weep”**. Then he touched the bier--the frame upon which her son was carried—and said, “**Young man, I say to you arise.**” And the dead son sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother.

A wonderful Gospel that shows Jesus’ compassion for the sick and suffering, and also his authority over all sickness and disease. **But to translate this message into a gospel that Jesus wants to heal all people in this life is adding to the Scriptures and changing them, against which there are strict warnings.**  When you take an example of something Jesus did for someone else, and assume that he desires and promises to do that for you, you are putting words in God’s mouth and being a false prophet.

In studying and hearing God’s word, we should be searching for God’s promises in the scriptures. **And if he clearly promises something to the church, you can be sure as a baptized believer, that he promises it to you.** And whatever that promise is, you can hold on to it, face any adversity with it, suffer and die for it and still have every assurance that it will come to pass, for the Lord is always faithful and he will do it.

But, when studying the scriptures, guard your heart…and discipline your mind so that you don’t make the mistake of foolishly finding a promise that is not there. A seasoned prospector knows the difference between fools gold and the real thing. It doesn’t pay to be foolish. **It would be a foolish thing to do to haul a load of fools gold to the bank or wherever, have them tell you it’s worthless and you walk away in shame.** What a waste of time and resources to mine, haul out and trust in worthless ore. Likewise, if you take a promise to God in prayer, you do not want to dedicate your life to something only find out on the last day that it wasn’t a promise God really made, a promise you placed your faith in, mined for a lifetime, for nothing.

Beware of false gospels, fools gold. There is nothing more dangerous than a false **gospel. It sounds good and right at first, but in the end is poison to faith. Faith, becomes what it consumes. When it consumes God’s word, and inwardly digests it, faith is strengthened and spiritual health is given.** However, when faith is placed in something other than God’s word, becomes what it consumes…empty, toxic, starved. An worldly gospel poisons faith. A false gospel exhausts faith. An empty gospel starves faith. Therefore, be on guard against those who promises the sick that God doesn’t approve of their suffering, and that he will heal them presently if only they believe.

If you or someone you know is diagnosed with a serious illness, do not encourage hope a false gospel that says God promises to heal them if only they believe. **There’s a lot of healing going on in the bible--by prophets and by the greatest prophet and Christ--but nowhere is there a promise neither to the church--those baptized and faithful congregation of saint, nor to the unwashed masses--for earthly healing in this life.** On the contrary, the church is promised persecution; and disciples of Christ are promised a cross for this life.

Paul says in today’s epistle, “**So I ask you not to lose heart over *what I am suffering* for you, which is your glory**.” Why is Paul suffering, if God wants to heal everybody? Surely he has sufficient faith. And yet elsewhere we hear a clear word from God that gives true comfort in a world of sickness and disease. Paul says to the church in Corinth, “**So to keep me from becoming conceited…a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me…Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that is should leave me. But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakenss.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.**” (2 Cor. 12:7-10).

If the logic does not follow that because Jesus healed disease, he wants to heal everyone’s disease. Rather the Gospel is this: Jesus has the authority to heal your disease, and you may ask him to do so in prayer, and the elders of the church may pray over you and you can have confidence in Christ, that he is attending to you and gracious to you. **He has the authority to heal, but he also has the authority to decide that this disease, though it is a result of sin and death, is to the greater glory of God, and that in his comforting you and sustaining your faith in the midst of it, God will be glorified every bit as much as if he miraculously healed you.** Pray for healing yes, and pray also for contentment and faith to endure weaknesses--as many days as you are afflicted--through the hope of the crown of eternal life that is yours in Christ Jesus. This is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

So if Jesus’ raising the widows son is not meant for us to believe that Jesus wants to heal our diseases, what does it mean?

Well first, Jesus does want to heal our diseases and rescue us from death. The fools gold, however, is to think that the only thing stopping him from doing so now is your lack of faith. Rather, he heals in his own time and according to the timetable of his father. He may not heal you now because god is glorified in your suffering.

If a mother or a father sacrifices sleepless nights for their baby we commend their sacrifice and give glory to God for it. God called them to the sacrificial life of parenthood and we don’t find that cruel. **Why would anyone find it cruel to think that God calls some to suffer physical ailments or disease for his glory?** “*Because, that doesn’t serve any purpose*”—you say. Who are you, O man, to talk back to God? His judgments are unsearchable and his ways inscrutable. How do you know suffering through a terminal disease can serve no purpose? God effects all things for the good of those who love him;…to say that he cannot use disease in that way is to take God to school.

No, let God be wise in his own eyes, while you believe upon him who loved you and gave his life for you. **He will heal your disease, it’s only that you may have to die first—but rest assured it will end.** On the last day he will raise all the dead, and give those who believe new spiritual bodies, to inhabit a new creation carrying a weight of glory that is beyond all comparison. This is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The second teaching of this text is that Jesus has authority over all sickness and death. The church has always maintained, and we must maintain to the end, that Jesus’ miracles of healing were not meant for us to put our faith in temporal healing—but to be signs of his power and authority to heal and to save. Jesus might not want to heal you now, he has the authority to decide the time, and place and manner of healing. But what we know from the scriptures is that he has been given the authority to do so by the Father. He’s not just talk, but power and this is Good News.

And that’s exactly the result of his public healings. They manifest his authority to the people who saw it, and to us who hear about it today. The direct result of his raising of the widows son is this: “**Fear seized them all and they glorified God saying, “A great prophet has arisen among us!’ and ‘God has visited his people!’ And this report about him spread through the whole of Judea and all the surrounding country.”** This report being spread is the gospel. It’s not that Jesus will heal all who believe, but that this man has authority to heal all diseases and even to raise the dead and that in Him God has visited his people…in the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ. This is the gospel of Christ.

The Gospel today, though simply an account of Jesus’ deed, does teach us three things. It teaches us that Jesus has the authority to raise the dead. It teaches that he has compassion upon widows and, by extension all who are weak, destitute and robbed of all hope in this world. It teaches, that when Jesus visits his people, God is with them, just as he is with us as we gather in his name, and receive the bread of his word, and his body and blood for forgiveness today, and for eternal life in the world to come. This is the Gospel of Jesus Christ.