

# "HEAR YE HIM"

## A Devotional Series For Radio

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The Sermon: LAY HANDS ON THE SICK

Scripture: Doctrine and Covenants 42: portions of Par. 12 and 13

And whosoever among you are sick, and have not faith to be healed, but believe, shall be nourished with all tenderness with herbs and mild food, and that not by the hand of an enemy. And the elders of the church, two or more, shall be called, and shall pray for, and lay their hands upon them in my name; and if they die, they shall die unto me, and if they live, they shall live unto me. Thou shalt live together in love, insomuch that thou shalt weep for the loss of them that die, and more especially for those that have not hope of a glorious resurrection. And it shall come to pass that those that die in me shall not taste of death, for it shall be sweet unto them; and they that die not in me, woe unto them, for their death is bitter. And again, it shall come to pass, that he that has faith in me to be healed, and is not appointed unto death, shall be healed .....

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Lay your hands upon the sick, and they shall recover.

In the early days of the Christian Church there was no quarrel or division, no conflict between the physician and the priest. Spiritual healing and physical therapeutics went hand in hand. Paul had faith to heal, and did heal many times by the laying on of hands. Yet in one of his journeys he took Luke, the beloved physician, with him. On the island of Melita, Paul laid hands on the father of Publius and healed him. (See Acts 28:8) The next verse tells how others who were sick also came, and were "healed" but in this verse the Greek verb is different, meaning "to receive medical attention," "to cure," rather than to heal. The strong supposition is that Paul "healed" by the laying on of hands; while Luke practiced his profession and "cured" by giving the sick medical attention and treatment.

Jesus himself set gifts of healing in the church. Of the thirty-three miracles which Jesus performed, twenty-four were for healing the sick in mind and body. Jesus' attitude towards illness was that it was the work of Satan; he said of the woman with the spirit of infirmity that Satan had bound her for eighteen years. "Sickness was of the kingdom of the devil, "but if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you." Sickness is not necessarily punishment for sin, Jesus said. When asked who had sinned that a man had been born blind he replied, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents." Sickness is oftentimes

the consequence of sin, sometimes in the one afflicted, and sometimes in someone else; but sickness is of the devil's kingdom, and Jesus came to redeem us from physical illness as well as from death and from all other works of Satan.

When Jesus sent out the twelve apostles, they were commissioned to heal the sick by the laying on of hands after anointing with oil. (See Mark 6:7-13 and parallel passages.) This rite or ordinance of healing was not reserved exclusively for the apostles, however. Luke 10:9 commissions the seventy to "heal the sick that are therein." The book of Acts records instances of healing by Stephen, Philip, Ananias, and Barnabas, none of whom were apostles. Jesus said: "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do ....."(John 14:12) Likewise in Mark 16:18 the commission is further extended: "These signs shall follow them that believe ... they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." James 5:14,15 shows that the ordinance of laying on of hands for healing was known and practiced in the early church; "Is any sick among you? 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 shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him."

Not many centuries had passed, however, before this rite intended for the

healing of the sick had been completely changed. In 529 A.D. Justinian closed the medical schools of Athens and Alexandria, indicating the changed attitude towards medicine. The anointing of oil mentioned by James for spiritual healing of physical ills was said to be an anointing of unction, not of grace. In 800 A.D. came the manifesto of Bishop Theodulph of Orleans which decreed that unction was to be administered only to those sick unto death, as a preparation for death. In 1151 A.D. unction was made one of the sacraments of the church. In 1215 Pope Innocent condemned surgery and all the priests who practiced it. In 1248 dissection and study of human anatomy were declared to be impious, and were forbidden. The idea of healing the sick in the name of Jesus was replaced by the idea that suffering is a means of grace to perfection; therefore it was more saintly to suffer than to look for or expect a cure.

There is still a place in Christ's church for this ordinance of healing, instituted by Jesus, practiced by the apostles, by the seventies, and by other ministers of the early Christian church. There are still many diseases that doctors, with all their skill and wisdom and modern scientific knowledge, do not understand and cannot heal. Even when the physician understands the treatment which will bring about a cure, it is the power of God, the Creator, which heals. The humble physician recognizes always that he is only God's minister, his helper in the healing of the sick.

It is also true that many diseases which seem to be completely physical in their origin and nature, are caused by the mind, the spirit, the emotions-- by such things as remorse, guilt, worry, anger, frustration, and resentment. In the last few years psychosomatic medicine has opened up a completely new concept of the relationship of mind and spirit to the sickness and disease of the body. Doctors today are telling us that from fifty to ninety per cent of our physical ills are the result of mental or spiritual upheaval, rather than physical causes. One of the faults of modern medicine is that it too often treats the body as a mechanism, but neglects the mind and spirit which causes the body to be sick in the first place. On the other hand,

the fault of many of the professional "faith healers" of today is that they forbid their patients to receive proper medical attention as a necessary and desirable part of the total healing process.

The whole man needs healing. To heal the body and leave the spirit corrupt may leave the last state of that man worse than the first, for the corrupt spirit will inevitably bring more and worse sickness upon the body. Healing the whole man involves healing spirit as well as body. This means a forsaking of guilt, remorse, worry, anger, frustration, and resentment. It involves repentance and forgiveness by God's grace. In this field the minister, when properly commissioned and skilled, is preeminent. He brings God's grace and power. He brings counsel, comfort, advice, hope, and cheer. He brings God's forgiveness, without which mind and spirit cannot be at peace -- without which the body will continue to invent new illnesses which defy the skill of the physician.

The laying on of hands for the gift of healing is not a guaranteed means of cure, any more than medical attention guarantees cure. "It is appointed unto men once to die." The death rate of the human race is still 100 per cent. But the promise given to us in modern revelation is that "if they die, they shall die unto me," and "those that die in me shall not taste of death, for it shall be sweet unto them." The other side of the promise is "If they live, they shall live unto me." Healing, like forgiveness is not given in order that we may go back to our sinning without further trouble or obligation, but that we may live unto Him.

The church restored by Joseph Smith in 1830 brought again to the Christian world the ancient concept of cooperation and alliance between medicine and religion. The ordinance of anointing with oil and laying on hands in prayer for the sick was again brought into use. Thomas B. Marsh was appointed Church Physician. Today, as in days of old, the church uses the services of doctors, surgeons, nurses, and others trained and skilled in the sciences and arts of healing, who exercise their gifts of healing together with the minister, and with God, who is the source of all healing.