

When Satan and Jesus Come to Visit You in Bed

Acts 5:12-20

The Second Sunday of Easter, April 11, 2010

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Broadlands

It is allergy season again. There are things growing in the ground that set people off. The flowers are beautiful, but boy do they set me off. I really hate it when Christy has a candle lit at home that makes the parsonage smell so good, but make my sinuses so miserable. Misery really is the word. It is allergy season again.

It is cold season again. It seems like in the spring and in the fall no one seems to know how to dress. I certainly do not. We dress too warmly or we assume that things are going to get warm and then don't. Then we are not well dressed enough. It is cold. We get sick.

Some of us are starting our hard work season. Some of us are winding down our hard work season. It seems like when the hard work is over that there is this let down feeling. Once the let down feeling takes place, sure as a world we get sick. Our bodies held it together long enough to get us through the busy season and then it is time to get sick. So we get sick. We are in bed for some time. Our bodies will hold it together for a while and then finally they say enough is enough. It is time for some rest. In order to make sure that you get some rest, I am declaring myself sick. Then our bodies give us a period of enforced rest.

Some of us get sick at school. Some of us get sick at work. At grocery stores there are bottles of disinfectant wipes to wipe off the shopping cart before you use it. We have become a nation of Monks. We bring our diseases home and we make everyone else sick.

The Centers for Disease Control monitor the spread of diseases throughout the world. The World Health Organization lets us know when a plague is occurring. People carry diseases from foreign countries onto airplanes. They make the people on the airplane sick. They bring the disease back to our country. The disease spreads in our population.

Hospitals and nursing homes are incubators for diseases. They breed new bugs that are resistant to antibiotics.

There are different kinds of diseases. Some are caused by viruses. Some are caused by bacteria. Some are genetic disorders. We were born with them or we were born with a genetic disposition toward them. Some are disorders of the brain. Some are disorders of the body. Some leave us wasting away. Some take us rather quickly into death.

Then there is the list of disabilities that plague us. Some people are paralyzed. Some are paralyzed in only a few places in their bodies and some folks have their entire body paralyzed. Some can move their head and some cannot. Some can move their arms and some cannot. Some can move their arms, but if their paralysis develops any further, they will not be moving their arms for long. Some folks are blind. Some are mildly blind. Some are completely blind. Some have become blind through macular degeneration and other problems. Some are deaf. Some are partially deaf. Sometimes hearing aids help and sometimes they do not. It seems like once the ear is damaged, there is nothing that can be done to repair it.

Some have limbs amputated for one reason or another. Some of them have a prosthesis and others do not. Some have a natural looking prosthesis and others do not. Some have simply an iron hook or something similar. Some don't have arms. Some don't have feet. Some don't have hands. It all depends on what the disorder is. Sometimes these things were done by land mines or other dangerous activity.

Some of these diseases lead to death and some do not.

Now when you are in bed and you are sick, let me tell you what you cannot see. Satan has come to visit you in bed.

Doctors will assign all kinds of medical reasons why you get sick, but they do not assign spiritual ones. I do not blame doctors for this. It is not their vocation to assign spiritual explanations to sicknesses. Their vocation is to assign medical explanations to diseases so that they can be treated. That is what doctors do. But unless you deal with the spiritual reality that causes diseases you will never be free of diseases. The spiritual reason why people get sick is because Satan has visited them. He comes to visit you in your bed.

Satan caused all of Job's problems. Oh I realize that God permitted Satan to do his dirty tricks, but it was Satan doing the action. And I realize that Job dealt with God when he started issuing his complaints. Job knew who was really in charge and with whom he was really dealing, nevertheless, Satan was the one who took Job's children. He was the one who took Job's livelihood. He was the one who made Job sick.

And so it is whenever Satan comes to visit you. He comes to make you sick. He comes to take away your joy. He comes to take away your family. He comes to take away your livelihood. He comes to take away your health. He comes to make you sick. Satan delights in cancer. He delights in pain and in suffering. He delights in accidents and amputations. He delights in the loss of life and of limb. He delights in people being blind and deaf. He finds joy and pleasure in people having Multiple Sclerosis or Muscular Dystrophy. Satan delights in people who are chronically ill or chronically in pain. He delights in back trouble. He delights in those things which make your medical bills increase. He delights in diabetes. He delights in the common cold. He delights in the allergies which keep us from enjoying the creation as God has given it.

Satan delights especially in mental disorders. It is interesting to me that psychologists of today diagnose the demon possessions of the New Testament with certain psychological disorders. Some psychologists claim that it proves that there are no demons, but rather what Jesus ran into was some people with mental disorders. I don't think that proves anything of the kind. I think it proves that Satan delights in mental disorder. He delights in Alzheimer's disease. He delights in Down's Syndrome. He delights in these things which bring us misery. He delights in epilepsy. He delights in those things which rip your mental faculty from you so that you cannot even take care of yourself.

So when you are lying sick in bed, remember this: Satan has come to visit you.

Satan will visit you in one of two ways. He will either visit you through nature or through people. Satan will either visit you through some kind of disease or circumstance in your life that takes away your health. Either that or Satan will use someone else to harm you. If you have served in the military and been shot or seen someone else shot, understand this: Satan has visited that person. He has visited that person through other people.

Satan likes it this way. He would not have you enjoy one morsel of your daily bread in peace. He is happy when you suffer. He is happy when you are miserable. He is happy when you are sick. He is happiest when you die.

Jesus will also visit you in bed. Jesus will almost always visit you through some other person.

There are times when Jesus visits you sick in bed and He does not do it through people. We call these miracles. That is what happens when someone gets well and no one can explain it. There are people who had cancer and then did not have cancer and the doctors are baffled to explain how that happened.

There are people who had heart trouble and then did not have heart trouble and there is no medical explanation for why it happened. That is Jesus visiting you without using another person to get it done. Jesus sometimes does things that way, but He does not typically do things that way.

Usually when Jesus comes to see you in bed, you do not know that He has even been there. He likes to come in other people.

When the doctor comes to see you in bed and prescribes some kind of medication, you take the medication and it works, you get better, then Jesus has come to see you in bed. When the nurse comes in to take you vitals and give you your medication and you get better as a result of what he or she has done, then Jesus has come to see you in bed. It was the nurse that gave you the medication. And just like Cyrus in the book of Isaiah some of these people who represent Jesus sometimes do not realize that they are representing Jesus.

When a friend comes to see you when you are ill and because of their visit your spirits are lifted and you get better, then it just wasn't only your friend who came to see you in bed. Jesus also came to see you in bed.

When your parents give you some over-the-counter medication to help you to feel better, it wasn't just your parents who helped you out. Jesus gave you those parents and instructed you to honor them, so really Jesus gave you that medication. Jesus made you feel better.

Whenever someone helps someone else out of disaster or disease, Jesus has come to see them in the form of that other person. Jesus sends His people to Haiti and other places to help them rebuild their homes and their lives. That means that Jesus is rebuilding their homes and their lives. Jesus sends His people to help in all kinds of recovery efforts large and small. That means that Jesus helps them recover. He motivated those people to go in. He strengthened them to do what they did. When they got done, it was all Jesus all along.

That means that Jesus is still doing what Jesus has always done. Jesus healed the sick when He walked this earth. He is healing the sick now. Jesus restored sight to the blind then. He is doing it now. Jesus cured diseases then. He is curing them now. Jesus gave hearing back to the deaf. He is giving hearing to the deaf now.

In some ways He is similar to Satan in that Jesus does not always announce His presence when He arrives. He wants to know who you are going to thank when you get better. In other words whose praises are you going to sing when you get better? So Jesus does not announce Himself when He heals you. He wants to see if you believe. If you thank Him, then you do, because it means that you see things as they really are.

Jesus healed the sick. He commissioned His apostles to do the same thing. Jesus also promised that they would do greater things than He did. Jesus ascended into heaven. The apostles began doing greater things than Jesus did. Why even the shadow of Peter seems to bring healing to people if people want to be in his shadow so badly. The apostles carry on the work of Jesus in the name of Jesus and so Jesus is working through them.

You are the body of Christ. Everyone one of you is a member of it. Now today we have added a new member to it. If you are the body of Christ, you do what Christ does. Jesus healed others. You heal others.

You visit the sick and pray with them. This is why we have a parish nurse. She is not simply a nice thing for a congregation to do. She is an extension of the apostolic ministry of healing. She is the body of Christ in operation for the healing of others even as the body of Christ during His incarnation

was such. In plain language Jesus healed when He touched others. Through His body, the Church, Jesus continues to touch others and heal them.

That is why hospitals were invented by the Church. Sure there were physicians before Jesus came, but they were not organized into mass places of healing until the Church came along. It was the body of Christ doing what Jesus did that gave hope to many millions by bringing healing to them, and when healing did not come, by being with them to comfort and support them. As a result Christians developed immunities to many different kinds of diseases. As a result many hospitals are associated with churches. Many are Roman Catholic, Lutheran and Methodist or Presbyterian. In my frank opinion hospitals were better operated in terms of places of healing when they were in the hands of the Church and not in hands of municipalities or other governments. The government does not heal. The government brings order to society. The Church heals because the Church is the body of Christ.

And so congregations still send their pastors into the hospital when their members or others whom they love are sick. I pray with them. I will even anoint you with oil, just to keep you in mind that Jesus is the One who heals you. Jesus is the One who has come to see you in bed.

And when Jesus heals you, you have a small taste of the resurrection of the dead in advance. It is a life that the apostles proclaimed. It is a life that the apostles gave. It is a life that Jesus gives. He gives it in His words. Everyone is healed and then everyone listens. Having an apostle come to see you is like having a doctor and a pastor all in one come see you.

When your sight is given back you to or your mobility returns to you or you just plain old get to feeling better, you have experienced a small taste of the resurrection in advance. Oh sure, we will eventually die, but with so many recoveries in our life to recount and recall, the evidence is overwhelming that we will recover from death as well.

Have trouble believing that? Think that sickness is a little different from death? Well, then look into the tomb of Jesus and see if death is any different from getting sick. Look at the tomb of Jesus and tell me whether death is temporary or permanent. Look at the tomb of Jesus and see what is in store for you, what He has already given to you when He heals you, when He comes to visit you in bed.

In the Name of Jesus. Amen.