

Sinister Symptoms

Getting Under the Surface of Sin

April 10, 2022

Today we're gonna let Jesus get under our sin.

But before we get to *that*, answer *this*: **If there was an intervention for you**, today, and you *agreed* to go to *rehab* for the next thirty days, **what would it be for?** And I mean, what *should* it be for? Discuss this with the Lord for a moment. Would your friends and family agree?



I've had a chance to think about it, and I'd want *my intervention* to be for self-centeredness; cuz I think **that condition would have the most impact on the most symptoms of my other bad habits**. And I want to get the *most bang* for my imaginary rehabilitation *buck!*



We mostly focus on one or two *symptoms* rather than the sinful condition the sinister symptom is hiding under the surface. But as believers, we gotta wanna get to its source, so we can give it to *the Source*. Cuz **our Savior ain't into relieving our symptoms**. With *Him* it's always *been* all or nothing.



Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, the new creation *has* come: the old has gone, [and] the new is here! [All or nothing!] – 2 Corinthians 5:17 NKJ



We're not here to fit Him into our life, but to cling to Him as our framework for life! Therefore, we got'a be *bold* and reject the *old*. Because **Jesus isn't gonna reduce a fever without getting His hands on the underlying infection**. Which is *exactly* what the Good Doctor did, right here in Capernaum, a little fishing village He called home. (Mt 9:1) Where He cast out a demon in a synagogue that sat on that very foundation.



How big do you picture Capernaum? The whole town was about the size of our parking lot. And one house – about as far from the synagogue as I am from the lobby – that's been revered as Peter's house, and Jesus' headquarters, since the time of the disciples.



Apparently a Catholic spaceship has landed on it; and it's siting right over where Peter's mother-in-law was laying while burning with fever. So let's follow Jesus from the synagogue to the lobby. And since weaving is believing, we'll read all three Gospel accounts as one Word.



As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon [Peter] and [His brother] Andrew. Simon's mother-in-law was in bed suffering from a high fever, and they told Jesus about her and they asked Jesus to help her.



Before modern medicine, fevers were far more alarming. So physicians in Jesus' day ranked the fever to gauge the severity. Paging Dr. Luke! Paging Dr. Luke! Because only "Luke, the beloved physician" (Col 4:14) notes that she had a *high fever*, indicating a serious *underlying* infection.



this poor woman, likely in her mid-thirties, is burning *up* and burning *out*; so they go to Jesus because, 1) they can't go to Walmart, and 2) they know they need something *far greater* than a pain *reliever*! They need the One who *deals* with the symptoms when He *heals* the underlying cause.

So Jesus left the synagogue and went to her, [and] When Jesus came into Peter's house, He saw Peter's mother-in-law lying in bed, so He bent over her and He touched her hand and rebuked the fever, and the fever left her, and [He] took her hand and helped her up. She got up at once and [she] began to wait on Him. ["I feel good! Da-na-na-na-na-na-na!"] And she began to wait on them. – Mt 8:14-15; Mk 1:29-31; Lk 4:38-39 NIV

Point is: she couldn't wait to wait! Because that's the *point*! Jesus doesn't just want us to get well; **He wants us to get up, get our eyes off ourselves, and get serving!** Otherwise, what's the *point* of being *restored*? **Jesus heals us to empower us to focus on others.** Anyone can relieve a few *symptoms*, but **only the Great Physician can rebuke and remove the underlying condition!**



He didn't just relieve her fever, **He restored her health, her energy, and her attitude!** Cuz with *Him* it's *always* been all or nothing. So what'll it be with *you* and *me*? We gotta be *bold* and reject the *old*! Cuz we *all* know we *over-focus* on our *symptoms* and *ourselves*. "Jesus, would you be a dear and pop over to Walmart and get me an Aspirin?" No. He's more the *Lion* type than a *deer*. He gave His *life* to rid the *world* of sin's *infection* at its *source*. And though we *mostly* ask for relief from surface issues, **He's not about to settle for simply reducing our fever.** He'll let it burn till we're good and ready to turn *everything* over to Him.

So, what part of your created purpose is currently bedridden, because of a feverish desire for something self-serving *and/or* self-destructive? Let's get our interventions going! Oh, and ...

When evening came, [and] the sun was setting, the people brought to Jesus *all the sick* who had *various* kinds of sickness, *and many who were demon-possessed, the whole town gathered at the door*, [So don't tell yourself it's too late; the *beginning* of their *hope* came at the *end* of their *day*] and He drove out the spirits with a word [With that Legion in the graveyard, the word was "Go." He's like, "I'll give you to the count of one."] and laying His hands on *each one*, He healed *all the sick*. [Notice that He touches them *before* healing them! He doesn't heal 'em and *then* say "Here's a hug," He *embraces* them as they *are*, and then says "Here's a *healing*." This is uniquely *Jesus*. Know why? It's *forbidden* in the *Bible*, and *yet*, as Matthew points out] This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: "He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases." – Mt 8:16-17; Mk 1:32-34; Lk 4:40 NIV

And that's also *why* it was *forbidden*. You'd pick up infirmities and carry diseases.



So when you touched something “unclean” you’d quarantine outside the camp. But not Jesus. He just kept touching ‘em, not matter how unclean. Then He’d touch the children to bless ‘em, which was *too* much even for His *disciples*. (Lk 18:15) So **why don’t the rules apply to Him?** That’s debated to this *day*, by those who *still* judge Jesus *by* the law rather than *as* the Law. But you don’t fit *Him* into a *framework*. **He is the framework into which everything else must fit.**



As Isaiah prophetically declared, 750 years *before* the coming Messiah: **He’s exempt because He’s sent to wear our burdens and bear our sin, literally, figuratively, and spiritually; and ultimately to carry it all to the cross to eradicate it!** So, **He takes it on to take it out!** As Jesus himself once said, and I paraphrase, “God’s not *content* just cleaning the *outside* of the *cup*.” (Mt 23:25)



And at some point, maybe *that* day, Matthew said, “Hey! We’re doing Isaiah 53!” You see, it’s *after* he pictures sin as *raw wounds* and *leprous sores* that He proclaims about the Christ, that:

He had no *beauty* or *majesty* to attract *us* to *Him*, [only His touching, willing, healing touch; but] nothing in His *appearance* that we should *desire* Him. [Unlike the *beauty* and *majesty* of the pretentious robes of the religious rulers (Mt 23:5)] He was *despised* and *rejected* by [self-righteous] men, [He was] a man of *sorrows*, and *familiar* with *suffering*. *Like one from whom men hide their faces* [for fear they’ll *catch* what *he’s got*; that’s *how*] He was *despised*, [“and rejected”] and we esteemed Him *not*. [Because] Surely He *took up* our *infirmities* and *carried* our *sorrows*, yet [being ignorant of His exemption from the law, and the profound reason] we considered *Him stricken* – Isaiah 53:2-4 NIV

And yet, the **only repulsive thing about Jesus was our sin ... on Him!**

So how do you picture *Him* touching *them*? With an extended, apprehensive finger? “Eww.” According to Isaiah, He *came* to *cover* himself in our *filth* and *sorrow* and *shame*. Oh my!



I picture Jesus’ cloak looking like a field surgeon in the Civil War after a long day. Isaiah’s prophecy right there for everyone to see. And His ongoing health a confirmation of His holiness. The *rules* don’t *apply* because *He’s* exempt, because only *He* can *take* it, and *carry* it, and *spread* only *healing* and *wholeness* instead!



When I was 18, a lovable mangy ol’ cat rubbed against my ankles, and gave me scabies. The itching and oozing and sores, *oh my!* To remove my socks, I had to soak my feet in warm water and peel ‘em off. And I can’t imagine *anyone* willingly touching my ankles without gloves! Even *I* didn’t want to. *But ...*

Those with *diseases* [we’re talkin’ small pox, big pox, leprosy, open sores, abscesses, lesions, and any number of assorted rashes] were pushing forward to *touch Him*. – Mark 3:10 NIV

Jesus once said, “the lepers are *cleansed* ... and blessed is he who is not *offended* because of Me.” (Mt 11:5-6) But then, when He went back to Nazareth:

They took offense at Him. [despised and rejected, just like Isaiah said. *Therefore*] He could not do any miracles there, except *lay His hands on a few sick people* and heal *them*. And He was amazed at their *lack of faith*. [that He’s Isaiah 53] – Mark 6:5-6 NIV

His *power* and His *holiness* and His *willingness* weren’t limited. Their *reception* was. So don’t shy away from *His way*, hoping for nothing more than a reduced fever and a nice surface cleaning.

We get it all so turned around: **we sow our wild oats and then pray for a crop failure!**

But when asked why He eats with sinners, our “Great Physician” said, and I paraphrase, that those who won’t admit a need for treatment, don’t need a doctor; the Doctor is here for the self-aware who know they’re sick with sin, and ready to receive their new life. (Mt 9:12) Thus making the case that **when we disregard a disorder we’re disqualified from a cure.**

I’m sorry, but the Gospel of Christ isn’t simply good advice. It’s the way, by way of truth, to a whole *new life* ... *in Christ*. But for *that*, we gotta go below the *symptoms*; and **we gotta really invite Him deep down in, and then let Him get His hands on the very source of our sin.** He’s not always the Savior we *want*. But He’s sure *always* the Savior we *need*.



So, **is Jesus your framework for life itself?** So many try to *fit faith* into their way of life the way we do a career, or a friend, or a hobby. And others try to hold onto Jesus with one hand and their subsurface sin with the other. But *we come here* to encourage one another to focus on following Christ.



We’re not interested in squeezing Jesus into a busy life. We’re here to make Jesus Christ the central hub around which every spoke of our life revolves. Because, if His *claims* are *true*, it’s the only *realistic* option. Everything else is just a seductive deception that we don’t need the Good Shepherd to guide our *every* step.

But deep down we all know that most of that stuff that’s hiding deep down under those sinister symptoms, not only requires a depth of humility to override our suicidal pride, but the love and support of the Lord and those He’s placed around us, to help us overpower that which we just can’t conquer on our own.

So what do you say we all own up, and open up, so we can get up and get going!

Cuz, if you haven’t noticed, that sun is setting.

But, the lobby’s *right there!*

So what would you like your intervention to be?

Father God, thank You for loving me in spite of my sin; forgive me and cleanse me by the sacrifice of Your Son, my Savior; and free me and lead me by Your Spirit and Word, as I seek to trust and follow Jesus Christ, as the Lord of my life. Amen.