The 3rd Sunday after the Epiphany
January 26, 1975
Rolling Meadows, Illinois

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IN NOMINE JESU

St. Matthew 4: 23: AND HE WENT ABOUT ALL GALILEE, TEACHING IN THEIR SYNAGOGUES AND PREACHING THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM AND HEALING EVERY DISEASE AND EVERY INFIRMITY AMONG THE PEOPLE.

WHY do people become ILL? WHY are some CRIPPLED or AFFLICTED by DISEASE? WHY are children BORN with PHYSICAL DEFECTS?

Some Christians use a very STRANGE EXPLANATION to ACCOUNT for the SUFFERING in this WORLD. "It is GOD'S WILL," they say. If a CHILD is BORN BLIND, it is GOD'S WILL. If someone contracts CANCER, or RHEUMATIC FEVER, or MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS --- it is GOD'S WILL. If someone is CRIPPLED in WAR or through a ACCIDENT, it is GOD'S WILL. ALL SUFFERING IS GOD'S WILL.

Those who make such STATEMENTS do NOT stop to THINK ABOUT what they are saying about GOD. WHAT KIND of a God WILLS that PEOPLE be BORN HANDICAPPED -- or that HUMAN BEINGS should contract CRIPPLING DISEASES in LIFE? Is THIS the CORRECT PICTURE OF GOD?

Jesus certainly did NOT think so. When people came to Him for HELP, He HEALED THEM.

Indeed, this was one of His CHIEF ACTIVITIES while He was on this earth: "HEALING EVERY DISEASE AND EVERY INFIRMITY AMONG THE PEOPLE." Jesus NEVER SAID: "No, I CAN'T HEAL you. It is God's WILL that you continue to SUFFER." He NEVER said anything like that. There were, of course, times when our Lord found it DIFFICULT to HELP some people because of their UNBELIEF - - but He did NOT REFUSE His HEALING POWER to ANYONE.

But WHY all this HEALING MINISTRY? Was it ONLY SYMPATHY or CONCERN for people? - - - - NOT AT ALL! It is OBVIOUS that Jesus KNEW that there was something WRONG with the WORLD in which WE LIVE. He saw VERY CLEARLY that this is NOT the WORLD of GENESIS ONE - - a WORLD that God looked upon and said, "IT IS VERY GOOD!" ..... A FLAW had developed in the EARTH - - a FLAW that had come about through MAN'S REBELLION - - a FLAW that dogmaticians and theologians call, "ORGINAL SIN" or "NATURAL DEPRAVITY." Life in our world is NOT like God INTENDED it to be. Rather it is like the ANCIENT LEGION of PANDORA'S BOX. You remember, Pandora opened the box - - and thereby let out all of the TROUBLES and the EVIL and the SICKNESS which we EXPERIENCE on EARTH.

So the HEALING MINISTRY of JESUS was a WITNESS to ALL MEN that SOMEONE has COME to set God's WORLD RIGHT AGAIN. The WORLD of SICKNESS and DISEASE is NOT what God had INTENDED FOR US. It was NOT in HARMONY with His WILL! ....So every HEALING of Jesus is a WITNESS to a CHANGE that is COMING -- that in fact, has ARRIVED in Him: "BEHOLD, I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW," He says.

Just as the 1st robin says that SPRING has COME or is CLOSE at hand -- so Jesus speaks of the KINGDOM of GOD being CLOSE at hand. The GOSPEL -- the GOOD NEWS -- that He talks about ---- is a NEW WORLD, a NEW LIFE, a NEW EXISTENCE from the CRIPPLING EFFECTS of EVIL. His MINISTRY is like a CRACK in the SHADE -- where the SUN SHINES THROUGH. Or it is like when the DRAPES are DRAWN just a little bit -- and the BRILLIANCE comes FLOODING THROUGH. Or it is like when the SKIES are DARK and DREARY -- and then, suddenly, there is a BREAK in the CLOUDS -- and you see this BRILLIANT LIGHT FLOODING DOWN FROM ABOVE.

Jesus' HEALING of PEOPLE'S BODIES symbolizes the HEALING of their SOULS TOO. There is FORGIVENESS for EVERYONE. He is the GREAT PHYSICIAN ~~-- the One who has come~~ -- the ONE who has COME who ~~can~~ could OPEN the EYES of the BLIND, OPEN the EARS of the

DEAF, and even RAISE THE DEAD. He is the GREAT HEALER! He gives PROMISE and HOPE to EVERYONE! He offers FORGIVENESS of SINS, LIFE, and SALVATION to EVERYONE.

So, you ask, "WHY are there SO MANY SICK PEOPLE in the world -- people SICK in BODY and in SOUL? WAS JESUS MISSION A FAILURE?" Certainly He HEALED MANY PEOPLE and made them WHOLE again -- but all of them EVENTUALLY DIED. And many of them -- HEALED of 1 DISEASE probably contracted ANOTHER later in life. Even Lazarus, called BACK from the GRAVE, had to later face DEATH AGAIN. The same thing is true of those who were HEALED in their SOULS. Like US, they may have RECEIVED FORGIVENESS of SINS -- but, no doubt, they FELL INTO SIN AGAIN --- just like WE DO.

We must NOT FORGET that Jesus' KINGDOM did NOT come in its COMPLETE POWER or FORM when He was HERE WITH US on EARTH. His HEALINGS only symbolize a FUTURE KINDGOM -- a KINGDOM in which God's WILL is SO POWERFUL that SICKNESS and DEATH will finally be BANISHED FOREVER. This is the KINGDOM that we PRAY for in the Lord's Prayer: "THY KINGDOM COME." This is the KING DOM that St. John writes about in the Book of REVELATION: "THEY SHALL HUNGER NO MORE, NEITHER THIRST

~~NO~~ ANY MORE; THE SUN SHALL NOT SMITE THEM NOR ANY SCORCHING HEAT.....

AND GOD SHALL WIPE AWAY EVERY TEAR FROM THEIR EYES."

The HEALINGS of JESUS are just a LITTLE TASTE - - a BREAK in the CLOUDS of SUNLIGHT - - of that kind of WORLD. For a FEW MOMENTS people caught a glimpse of what THAT LIFE will be like - - finally, when God takes COMPLETE CHARGE of our EARTH. It is the PROMISE that the FLAWS in our HUMAN SOCIETY can and will be MENDED - - and that OUR GOD, in CHRIST, will ultimately be TRIUMPHANT.

So, while we may have to SUFFER SICKNESS and PAIN on THIS EARTH - - JESUS PROMISES US that it will NOT be FOREVER. And He tells us that God is NOT the AUTHOR of SICKNESS or DEATH. Rather, in His WISDOM - - God may USE even our SUFFERING to BRING US CLOSER to HIM. But He does NOT want US to SUFFER or be CRIPPLED or BLIND or DEAF. God wants this world to be the way it was MEANT to be - - the way He MADE it. "AND GOD SAW EVERYTHING THAT HE HAD MADE, AND BEHOLD, IT WAS VERY GOOD

Amen!!!