

Messenger of Truth

"Holding forth the Word of Life" (Phil. 2:16)

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Illness

"For a sick man the world begins at his pillow and ends at the foot of his bed." – Honore de Balzac

"Illness knocks a lot of nonsense out of us; it induces humility, cuts us down to size . . . When we are a bit scared the salutary effect of sickness is particularly marked. For only when the . . . gate grows narrow do some people discover their soul, their God, their life work." – Dr. Louis E. Bisch

"Sickness begets chaos, which, through hard work and a touch of grace, leads to growth and resurrection." – Scott Peck

"Don't defy the diagnosis, try to defy the verdict." – Norman Cousins

"Illness tells us what we are." – Italian Proverb

No one enjoys contemplating illness, save those who are hypochondriacs. It is a great truth, we are "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psa. 139:14). But that does not prevent us from ever getting sick.

Aside from the normal ailments of life, some encounter extreme illnesses; losing their lives due to cancer, heart disease, or some other terminal sickness. For those fortunate enough to enter into remission, being spared the terminal outcome that some have faced, it can indeed be quite a humbling experience.

Today, be in large, we are fortunate to be spared some of the more serious diseases with the devastating effects that people faced in the first century, such as leprosy. It is hard to envision a life of isolation due to such a ravaging disease. The Mosaic Law had much to say about leprosy and how it was to be treated (cf. Lev. 13).

Sometimes illness struck the righteous in Scripture. Elisha became ill and consequently died (2 Kings 13:14,20). The Lord's friend, Lazarus, was sick with an illness that caused him to die (John 11:1ff). Thankfully in that story we know that the Lord raised him from the dead (John 11:43-44).

Even with our modern medical advancements, man cannot prevent the inevitable. "And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27).

So how do we face illness? The best course of action would have to be with humility and trust in God. If our souls are right with God, it matters not if the illness causes us to lose our life. We know that such things cannot harm us after death (Rev. 21:4).

Perhaps our greatest danger is in allowing our illness to turn us from God. We may indeed face difficulty, but if we would remain faithful (Rev. 2:10), the reward outweighs any heartache we experience in this life.