

IN THE LORD'S CARE!

Arguments are being made, stands are being taken. If things do not change our country is about to enter a new era, the era of government-controlled health care as per *Patient Protection and the Affordable Care Act*, aka, *ObamaCare*, a bill signed into law to reform the health care industry. Anyway you look at it, the average American is affected. The thought of *ObamaCare* is a comfort to some who have no coverage and a discomfort to many who will now lose the good coverage they have.

I believe we as American citizens should exercise our freedom and let it be known where we stand. As a Christian, I wish to lift your spirits with some encouragement because we are under the Lord's care. *"Casting all your care upon Him (the Lord); for He (the Lord) careth for you"* (I Peter 5:7). This means we have:

1. Health Care

As pastor, when possible, I pray with our people before they go into surgery or visit with them in the hospital if admitted. This morning I had the privilege to visit with Alfreda Gray just before she entered into her procedure. She is already a miracle. I am not familiar with every kind of cancer, but I am familiar with her cancer. She has been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. The reason for my familiarity is because this is what my dad had. From the time of his diagnoses until his passing was six months. The life expectancy from this diagnoses is anywhere from six months to two years. Alfreda was diagnosed eight years ago! Usually when I pray with someone in the hospital, they are in bed or sitting comfortably and after prayer I make my way to the elevator and on to the parking garage. This morning after praying with Alfreda, she walked me to the elevator! I was thinking how strong she was and that every step and every breath she was breathing was nothing short of miraculous. I have often said this, God takes care of His people; the Devil does not provide health care. Satan comes to kill, steal and destroy; Christ gives life more abundantly (John 10:10). The beloved apostle John said, *"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth"* (III John, verse 2.) As a rule, I believe it is God's will to give His people good health while they are sojourning here on earth, their home away from home ("home" being heaven). Otherwise, He would not encourage us to follow the command of James 5:14, 15a: *"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..."* What a promise!

What about God's people who die? If Jesus doesn't return in the next one hundred years, most anyone reading these words will have passed. There is another promise that is sure: *"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment"* (Hebrews 9:27). For the Christian, this is not a failure on God's part to heal us, for in fact, advancement to Heaven is the ultimate healing. Resurrection is the

promise we have to look forward to: *“So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?”* 1Cor. 15:54, 55). On our way to the ultimate healing, how do we handle the pain of our sickness that takes us to the place where no sickness may harm us? The Bible promises, *“My (God’s) grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me”* (II Corinthians 12:9). There is a mighty threefold blessing promised to God’s children: 1. As a rule God heals us. 2. If He chooses to allow sickness to run its course, He provides grace. 3. If we are taken to heaven, the ultimate healing has taken place. This is win, win, win for the Christian!

2. Financial Protection

Many are worried today about their finances. Some exasperatingly say, “I cannot afford to get sick.” Here are some promises that are as viable today as the day God wrote them, *“I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread”*(Psalm 37:25). *“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus”* (Philippians 4:19).

Financial protection is assured to those who pray: *“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?”* (Matthew 7:11). Jesus taught us to pray: *“Give us day by day our daily bread”* (Luke 11:3). Financial protection is activated by work: *“...I will render to the man according to his work. I went by the field of the slothful...And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down”* (Proverbs 24: 29b-30a, 31). *“For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat”* (II Thessalonians 3:10). *“The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour”* (Proverbs 21:25). *“For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee”* (Psalm 128:2). *“The labour of the righteous tendeth to life...”* (Proverbs 10:16a). *“Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labour shall increase”* (Proverbs 13:11). Financial protection is allocated to those who give. *“Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine”* (Proverbs 3:9,10). *“Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again”* (Luke 6:38).

3. Retirement Benefits

The temptation to worry about our livelihood as we get older is not unusual; listen to the cry of the Psalmist, *“Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth.”*(Psalm 71:9). *“Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy*

power to every one that is to come” (Psalm 71:18). Again, we turn to the blessed promise of Psalm 37:25, “I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.”

If we take the Word of God seriously, then the Lord has put a generational accountability in the Scriptures: *“Honour widows that are widows indeed. But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God. Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day”* (I Timothy 5:3-5). The Lord is saying that if a widow has no living relatives to watch out for her, then the church is to look out for her. Our retirement in this life and beyond this life is quite literally “out of this world,” for Jesus said, *“In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also”* (John 14:2,3).

Brothers and sisters in Christ, we need not worry, for we are in the Lord’s care from cradle to grave. God loves you and is looking out for you! *“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus”* (Philippians 4:6).

-Pastor Pope-