

In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Their needs were earthly. They were physical. Their infirmities were temporal. They flocked to the Apostles to have their needs met, to have their afflictions cured. The Scripture doesn't say that they came to hear the Apostles' doctrine, or to hear their preaching.

The multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits. They were driven not by spiritual, but by fleshly frailties.

On the one hand, we can hardly fault them. Their motives weren't pure, they weren't driven by a longing to know the true God. They weren't drawn to the Apostles because of the Promises of the Gospel. They hurt. They were dying. And no one else could help them. But in that, they are not so different from you.

Consider the things that have troubled you, the things for which you have prayed – healing for a family member, deliverance from tribulation at work, concerns over finances or mounting bills, protection for children or friends, relief from chronic illness, anxiety over what the future holds, a sense that you have no control. They are all temporal fleshly things.

So you have been like those who gathered around the Apostles. You have come here today with earthly concerns that weigh on your heart, physical or financial or relational difficulties that you yourself can't heal. It is all part of the fallenness of this creation, the sinfulness of all men.

God knows your heart. He knows your fears and your troubles. And God does heal. Every day He works to bring healing and relief, at times even miraculous healings. The Apostles were given that power. The Scripture says of the suffering multitudes that thronged the Disciples of Christ "they were all healed."

The lame beggar laying at the Temple gate sought alms from those who passed by. Peter said to him "Silver and gold I have not, but what I have I give to you: in the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!" And the man lame from birth arose and walked. God can do that. He could do it then, He can do it now.

But while Apostolic healing was a God-given gift, it is not the Gift of Pentecost. The Gift of Pentecost is the eternal healing that comes through the preaching of the Word of Christ. The devout many from many nations gathered did not say "look, fire is touching them", nor did they say "listen, a great rushing wind."

They said "...we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God." So the Acts of the Apostles records "...believers were increasingly added to the Lord."

The healing miracles were signs that the Apostolic preaching was true. The Apostles would work a miracle, something no man could do. All present knew that only God could do such a thing. And then they would preach. They would preach Christ. They would preach the Gospel.

And the hearers could be sure that it was the Word of God, the miracles attesting to the Divine authority. Hearing the Gospel

brings a healing that is eternal. It avails in this life, but more, it gives to suffering, dying men a life that cannot be taken away. It brings healing of soul.

God knows what you suffer. And faith brings those afflictions, those worries, those tribulations and temptations to God to beg His relief, His healing. That is what God wants you to do. Come to Him. The Christian faith is an incarnational faith. Your Lord took on Flesh, the Flesh of man. He endured trial, temptation and affliction. He knows what you suffer. And He hears your prayers.

He wants you to bring your troubles to Him, for He alone can heal. He alone can provide. He alone can give comfort, strength and hope. But more than temporal blessings, the Good and Gracious Giver of all things gives you eternal blessings. He forgives your sins. He declares you righteous. He opens heaven to you. He makes you the heirs of His Promises, the recipients of His spiritual Gifts.

And that He does by filling you with His Spirit. He dwells in you. He makes your body His Temple. Although your flesh may be frail or hurting, the Third Person of the Holy Trinity comes to, that the Trinity make His home with you.

And that indwelling comes to you not by spiritual means only, but by tangible, visible, earthly means, means you can hear and see, Water and Word. Where that Water and Word are, according to the Institution of the Lord, you can trust that forgiveness, rebirth, holiness and righteousness are.

So too His Gifts of preaching and absolution. Christ's suffering and death won the forgiveness of all your sins.

Believing in Him, hearing His Word and trusting in His Promises, that forgiveness is yours. It is proclaimed to you in Holy Absolution. And faith, the faith God gives, the faith worked by the Holy Spirit, receives the forgiveness God offers. It is to you as you believe – you believe that Christ died for you, and your sins are forgiven.

And for earthly, fleshly, temporal men declared holy, for dying men given life that cannot be taken away, the same Christ places His Body with Bread you can see and touch and eat. He places His Blood with Wine that you see and drink.

And the physical signs testify to the spiritual benefits, the seen bearing witness to the unseen, the perishable a visible promise of the eternal. You eat and drink Christ, and you receive the healing, the provision, the hope, the comfort, and the sure confidence of your eternal wellbeing, of your salvation.

So bring your aches and pains, your worries and fears, your troubles and temptations. Pray. Ask. Seek. Knock. Bring them all to God. According to His will, He is the God Who Heals. He heals body and soul. He provides, He protects. He fills you with His Spirit. He gives you His Word. He forgives you and restores you. He gives you comfort and hope.

By His grace, by the Spirit He poured out on Pentecost, you hear, believe, eat and drink, and your prayers are answered. Heavenly wonders are manifest here below. And like the multitudes that thronged the Apostles, heavenly wonders are done among you – for in Christ you are all healed.

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Acts 5:12-16  
Ember Wednesday of Pentecost, 2017 A. ✕ D.