

**“Lessons from the Miracles of Christ”:
Healing of Peter’s Wife’s Mother**

in *The Youth’s Instructor*, Vol. XLIX, Nos. 36, 37
(Sept. 12, 1901; Sept. 19, 1901)

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**Sources for Healing of Peter’s Wife’s Mother,
in the order in which they first appear**

- (1) Wm. Arnold Stevens and Ernest DeWitt Burton, *A Harmony of the Gospels for Historical Study: An Analytical Synopsis of the Four Gospels in the Version of 1881* (Boston: Silver, Burdett and Company, 1893)

- (2) Charles Haddon Spurgeon, “Fever, and Its Cure” (1890)

Note: Spurgeon delivered this sermon in London on Sept. 11, 1890 and it was published in Vol. 36 of *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* (1891). I have been unable to access this volume, so have used *The Treasury of Spurgeon on the Life and Work of Our Lord, Vol. IV, The Miracles of Our Lord, 2*, published by Baker Book House in 1979. This source is coded **Spurgeon1.**

- (3) Charles Haddon Spurgeon, “First Healing and then Service” (1885)

Note: Spurgeon delivered this sermon in London on Apr. 19, 1885 and it was published in Vol. 31 of *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* (1886). This source is coded **Spurgeon2.**

- (4) Charles Haddon Spurgeon, “The Best House-Visitation” (1875)

Note: Spurgeon delivered this sermon in London on May 23, 1875 and it was published in Vol. 21 of *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* (1876). This source is coded **Spurgeon3.**

- (5) William M. **Taylor**, D.D., LL.D., *The Miracles of Our Saviour, Expounded and Illustrated* (New York: A.C. Armstrong & Son, 1891)

- (6) Charles Haddon Spurgeon, “The Ministry of Gratitude” (1872)

Note: Spurgeon delivered this sermon in London on Sept. 14, 1872 and it was published in Vol. 18 of *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* (1873). This source is coded **Spurgeon4**.

Key

- (a) **Green** indicates where a source author first appears, or where he/she reappears.
- (b) **Yellow** highlights most parallelisms.
- (c) **Tan** highlights parallelisms not occurring on the same row, or parallelisms separated by yellowed parallelisms.
- (d) An underlined word or words indicates where the source and the Sadlers pointedly differ from one another.
- (e) **Red** indicates an obvious mistake.
- (f) **Gold** pinpoints words and themes that will be treated in a later discussion.

HEALING OF PETER’S WIFE’S MOTHER

INTRODUCTORY

0.1 *Preceding Events*.—This miracle was performed during the afternoon immediately following the healing of the demoniac in the synagogue.

0.2 *Main Reference*.—Mark 1:29-31.

0.3 *Other References*.—Luke 4:38,39; Matt. 8:14,15.

0.4 *The Bible Story of the Miracle*.—

XII: CALL OF THE FOUR, AND THE FIRST PREACHING TOUR. (*A Harmony of the Gospels* 46)

§39. A DAY OF MIRACLES AT CAPERNAUM. Matt. 8:14-17. Mark 1:21-34. Luke 4:31-41.

Luke 4:[38] And he rose up from the synagogue,

Mark 1:[29] And straightway, when they were come out of the synagogue,

they came into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.

[30] Now Simon’s wife’s mother

Luke 4:[38] was holden with a great fever;

Mark 1:[30] lay sick of a fever;

and straightway they tell him of her:

Luke 4:[38] and they besought him for her.

Mark 1:[31] and he came

“And he rose up out of [Note: KJV] the synagogue;

and forthwith [KJV], when they were come out of the synagogue,

they entered [KJV] into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.

Now Simon’s wife’s mother

was holden with a great fever,

and lay sick,

and straightway [Note: ‘anon’ in KJV] they tell him of her,

and besought him for her,

and he came

SOURCE

“LESSONS FROM THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST”

[Luke 4:[39] And he stood over her,]

and stood over her,

and took her by the hand, and raised her up;

and took her by the hand, and raised her up;

[Luke 4:[39] and rebuked the fever;]

and rebuked the fever;

and the fever left her;

and the fever left her;

[Luke 4:[39] and immediately she rose up and ministered unto them.]

and immediately she rose up and ministered unto them.”

(The foregoing is an interwoven story of the miracle, gathered from Mark 1:29-31, Luke 4:38,39, and Matt. 8:14,15, but told in the exact language of the Bible.)

0.5 *Place*.—Capernaum.

0.6 *Circumstances*.—This miracle was performed on Sabbath afternoon, sometime between the synagogue service during which Jesus cast the unclean spirit out of the demoniac, and the remarkable sunset scene mentioned in Mark 1:32. From the narrative we would rather suppose that Jesus went directly from the synagogue to the house of Simon and Andrew. James and John were with him, and on the way they undoubtedly told Jesus of the sick one at home. Upon coming to the house, without request and without word, Jesus took the hand of the fever-stricken patient, and instantly restored her to health.

0.7 *Great Lesson*.—The one great lesson to be learned from this remarkable miracle is that Christ is our harvest-sharer. He has taken our sicknesses upon himself; he has borne all our griefs and afflictions; he is the great healer of mind, soul, and body.

SOURCE

[16 When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with *his* word, and healed all that were sick:

17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses (Matt. 8:16-17).]

“LESSONS FROM THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST”

Matt. 8:17.

Every time a fever patient recovers, it is due to the fact that Jesus has worked a miracle. It requires the same power to raise up a fever patient in six weeks that it does to raise one up instantly. The element of time in no sense lessens the miracle. Peter’s mother-in-law, in her remarkable healing, passed through a great experience; but the ordinary process of recovery from fever may enable the patient to become familiar with great truths concerning diet, the use of water, and the care of the body in general, and so be to him a truly great experience.

STUDY OF THE MIRACLE

1.1 *Entered into the House of Simon and Andrew.*—

“FEVER, AND ITS CURE” (Spurgeon 197)

[contd] Peter was of Bethsaida;

but yet he had a house at Capernaum.

Is it not highly probable that he had moved there to be near our Lord’s headquarters,

to hear everything that he said, to see all his miracles, and to yield him constant attendance and service? (S1 97)

Peter lived at Bethsaida.

He was probably temporarily in Capernaum, owing to the fact that that city had become the headquarters of Christ.

SOURCE

“LESSONS FROM THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST”

In choosing our residence, we should have large respect to its relation to our soul’s work and welfare (S1 97).

“FIRST HEALING AND THEN SERVICE” (Spurgeon2 73)

I do not suppose it was a stately mansion, probably it was little better than a hut;

for Peter was only a fisherman:

but the Lord Jesus made it honourable enough by entering it (S2 74).

In this Peter gives us an example of

arranging his residence with a view to enjoying religious privileges and accomplishing the greatest amount of good.

Peter’s residence was probably a humble cottage;

for he was a poor man in this world’s goods.

Probably Andrew lived with him.

Jesus graced this humble dwelling with his presence and as the result of what he did while an honored guest in this household, the whole city was stirred. Ere the sun went down on this Sabbath day, multitudes had gathered about its doors, seeking for healing of soul and body; for it had gone forth that afternoon throughout the city that the Great Healer tarried at the home of Peter the fisherman.

“THE BEST HOME-VISITATION” (Spurgeon3 85)

Dear reader, what a blessing if the Master could work with such power in your home that throughout the whole neighborhood, village, or city, your house might be known as a place where God had wrought, and there might be gathered around the hearthstone scores of earnest souls seeking light and truth, and deliverance from physical and spiritual bondage. By a faithful practice and study of health principles,

We are often wishing that God would do some great thing in the world, [but] it might be quite as well if we asked the Lord to make use *of us*, and if we were believingly to hope that even our feeble instrumentality might produce great results by his power, and that *our abode* might become the central point from which streams of blessing should flow forth to refresh the neighbourhood (S3 85).

“FEVER, AND ITS CURE” (Spurgeon 197)

She dwelt in a low spot, where the air was full of malaria, and the fever pounced upon her (S1 102).

Stagnant water breeds miasma, and fever is sure to come (S1 102).

If you climb the mountains of confidence in God, and dwell near to God, and rest your souls upon him,

the fever will soon vanish;

but if you continue in the hollows of unbelief, and the damp places of worldliness, you will grow more and more anxious and restless, and will thirst for evil things (S1 102).

your home might become extensively known as a center for obtaining healing truth for soul and body.

Perhaps Peter's house was near the seashore;

the land may have been low,

and it may have been due to the breathing of the poisonous miasma there found that Peter's wife's mother was suffering with a fever.

There is at least a spiritual lesson in this thought.

We should seek to dwell on the moral uplands,

to take up our residence as far as possible from the lowlands of sin,

that the health of the soul be not imperiled by its miasma.

W. S. SADLER.
(*Concluded next week.*)

HEALING OF PETER’S WIFE’S MOTHER (*Concluded*)

2.1 *Simon’s Wife’s Mother Lay Sick.*—Even the household of the apostle Peter was invaded by sickness. In this we are reminded of the message Martha and Mary sent to Jesus: “Him whom thou lovest is sick.” Ofttimes must the message be carried to the divine ear that some loved one down here below is sick. Being the recipient of divine love does not in itself insure immunity from suffering and sickness.

[*Note:* Wasn’t the mass healing on the evening that followed the cure of Peter’s mother-in-law, and which prompted the quote in Matt. 8:17, even more remarkable?]

This is one of the most remarkable miracles that Jesus wrought. It is the one miracle which stands out clearly to show Christ as our sickness-bearer.

“THE BEST HOUSE-VISITATION”
(Spurgeon³ 85)

Very likely this good woman, Peter’s wife’s mother, was herself a believer in Christ ... (S3 91).

2.2 Peter’s mother-in-law was probably a Christian.

V: THE HEALING OF SIMON
PETER’S MOTHER-IN-LAW (Taylor
86)

Let me ... proceed ... to unfold the spiritual significance of this mighty work ... (T 87).

I. Notice then, in the first place, that the people of God have no exemption from physical disease any more than others (T 87).

We may learn from this that the people of God are not exempt from sickness.

SOURCE

“LESSONS FROM THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST”

Job, the man who “feared God with all his heart, and eschewed evil,”

Job was a man who feared God with all his heart, and eschewed evil,

was afflicted in the most sudden, severe and protracted manner (T 88).

and yet he was afflicted in a most sudden and serious manner.

The good works of Dorcas did not purchase for her immunity from sickness, and the tears of those whose wants she had relieved could not prevail to prevent her death.

Dorcas, with all her good works, did not secure immunity from sickness.

We remember, too, how Paul, in a certain place, speaks of “our troubles which came unto him in Asia,

And even Paul, in speaking of the troubles that came upon him in Asia,

that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life” (T 88).

said that he despaired even of life.

As a rule, in all our afflictions, the disposition to obey or disobey determines the rapidity with which we may receive and experience the blessing of divine healing.

2.3 *They Tell Him of Her.*—

“FIRST HEALING AND THEN SERVICE” (Spurgeon² 73)

Mark says, “Anon they *tell him of her.*”

“Anon they tell him of her,” says Mark.

I would earnestly persuade you to do the same.

This is an example of what we should do in all cases of sickness,—

Tell the case to Jesus just as you would mention a physical case to a doctor (S2 77).

simply tell Jesus about it; lay the case before him.

They made no specific request; they simply told Jesus about the case.

Luke tell us “they besought him for her” (S2 78).

Luke says, “They besought him for her.”

SOURCE

We find also that when they had thus told Jesus of her, and had besought him, then they *brought him into the chamber ...* (S2 78).

[Prayer rather for the sick, like the rational treatment of disease, should be directed toward the removing and healing of the cause; toward the removal of the disposition to do those things that have made it necessary for God to speak to us in the *language of disease*....

“If there be a messenger with him, *an interpreter*,

one among a thousand, to shew unto man His uprightness: [what is right for him, R. V.] then He is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom.” (Job 33:23,24) (W. S. *Sadler*, “What Is Divine Healing?”, in *The Life Boat* [Aug. 1900, p. 134])

“FEVER, AND ITS CURE” (*Spurgeon* 197)

First, *spiritual fevers* are common ... (S1 99).

“LESSONS FROM THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST”

After telling Jesus about the fever-stricken woman,

they brought Jesus into the chamber.

As the *Christian worker* visits the sick and stands by the bedside of the afflicted, he should feel his responsibility of bringing Jesus with him into the sick chamber, there to heal, comfort, and cheer. This he can best do by bringing in principles that will make clear the cause and object of sickness and suffering.

It is the privilege of every Christian to be

an interpreter of the *language of disease*;¹

or, as Job says, “*one among a thousand, to show unto man his uprightness* [“what is right for him,” R. V.]”

2.4 *He Took Her by the Hand, and Immediately the Fever Left Her.*—

Many are stricken with *spiritual fever*,—

afflicted with moral emaciation, suffering from mental disquietude.

SOURCE

“LESSONS FROM THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST”

To heal these it requires the same all-powerful touch that it took to heal Peter’s mother-in-law of the fever that had stricken her down.

V: THE HEALING OF SIMON PETER’S MOTHER-IN-LAW (Taylor 86)

This was a great miracle,—the instantaneous healing of fever,—but there are even greater miracles.

The true believer ... looks for the answer to his prayer through the ordinary channels of that providence whereof Isaac Taylor has so truly said,

As one has said:

“This is in fact the great miracle of Providence, that

“The greatest miracle of Providence is that

no miracles are needed to accomplish its purposes” (T 94-95).

no miracles are needed to accomplish its purposes.”

Notice the use this woman made of her strength when it was regained. It was instantaneously restored, and she immediately began to minister to others. God restores strength, and heals, for service and ministry,—not to save us the trouble of taking treatment.

2.5 She Ministered unto Them.—

“THE MINISTRY OF GRATITUDE” (Spurgeon 109)

I. Now, the fact that this restored woman began at once to minister to Christ and to his disciples proves, first, THE CERTAINTY OF HER CURE; and there are no better ways of proving the thoroughness of our conversion than by conduct similar to hers (S4 111).

True-hearted service is the great evidence of conversion or healing.

The woman, when healed, did nothing unusual or demonstrative. She went at once about the necessary work of preparing food to satisfy the hunger of the Master and his colaborers, who had been engaged all day in taxing work.

Many persons who profess to be converted aspire at once to preaching; a pulpit for them is the main thing, and a large congregation is their ambition.... But this woman did not think of preaching;

She did not seek a large audience before whom publicly to announce her recovery.

She did not go in excitement to her neighbors, and proclaim the wonder that had been wrought in her case.

women are always best when they don't; but she thought of washing Christ's feet and preparing him necessary food, which was her proper business (S4 113).

She restricted her serving to works of necessity,

and manifested her gratitude by ministering to the One who had ministered to her.

He who healed her of the fever did not need her to minister to him; he who had power to heal diseases had certainly power to subsist without human ministry (S4 119).

Christ could have miraculously provided food with which to satisfy the hunger of himself and his disciples with the same ease with which he raised the afflicted woman from her bed of suffering,

but this he did not do.

Here we learn that Heaven expects man to do his best, and that which man can not do, God will perform. The healing of the woman was beyond human power, and the work of restoration Christ willingly performed;

but the preparation of food was a task in every way suited for human hands to perform, so it was reserved for the woman, so recently healed, to manifest her gratitude by this labor of loving service. It is not possible for those who have been healed to-day to minister to Jesus as did this woman; but it is possible to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and otherwise minister to needy and suffering human beings, in every one of whom Christ dwells.

W. S. SADLER.

1. In 1902 Sadler also mentioned interpreting “the language of disease”:

Those who understand the true relation between sin and suffering, who understand that sickness is an effect and disobedience the cause,—those who are able to interpret the language of disease and the significance of pain and the meaning of affliction, are evidently scarce; for Inspiration represents them as but “one among a thousand” (“Repentance and Reformation Essential to Healing. No. V: Sickness and Suffering God’s Last Call to Repentance,” in *Pacific Union Recorder*, Dec. 4, 1902, p. 10).