

How Can I Get Better?

“My wounds fester and are loathsome... My back is filled with searing pain... My heart pounds...”

The author of Psalm 38, from which these words come, was in a bad place, and he was in no doubt why. He prayed to God: “O Lord, don’t rebuke me in your anger or discipline me in your wrath, for your arrows have pierced me... There is no health in my body; my bones have no soundness because of my sin. (verses 1-2).”

So does this mean that my bad health is the result of sin?

In this case, it seems to have been so. But the Bible is at pains to point out that often there is no connection between sin and suffering. The book of Job makes this very clear. Job, who lost everything, health included, was unlike anybody else – he was “blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil”, as God himself put it (Job 1:8). So, bad things happen to good people. Similarly, when Jesus was asked about why a certain man was blind from birth, he explained that it was not the result of sin, either the man’s parents’ sin or his own (John 9:1-3). We should not draw any conclusions from a person’s disability: it just is.

So when I fall ill, how can I approach God for help?

It’s wise to note the promises in the Bible. “If a man shuts his ears to the cry of the poor, he too will cry out and not be answered (Proverbs 21:13).” If we are stingy with those in need, God will be stingy with us when we are in need. Fair enough!

Jesus taught, “Give and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed out and running over, will be poured into your lap (Luke 6:38).” This is the way to live.

Therefore, when wanting to get well, we are wise to examine ourselves. If our attitude to others has been generous, then we can claim the promise in Psalm 41: “Blessed is he who has regard for the weak: the Lord delivers him in times of trouble. The Lord will protect him and preserve his life; he will bless him in the land and not surrender him to the desire of his foes. The Lord will sustain him on his sick-bed and restore him from his bed of illness (verses 1-3).”

But if we have been self centred and not cared for the weak, then we had better turn back three psalms and pray along the lines of Psalm 38, and have a read of Psalm 32 as well, making sure that we are forgiven, on the grounds of Jesus’ death on the cross for all of us, to deal with sin (Isaiah 53:5-6). Then the Lord will at least listen to our requests (Isaiah 59:1-2).

Whether he chooses to give us what we want is of course up to him. The important thing is to show love and kindness to others no matter what state we are in. So see how you go.

God bless you today!

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