

Crumbs – Good News for the Diaspora!

SUNDAY.

Go thy way; thy son liveth. The man believed the word.

– John 4:50.

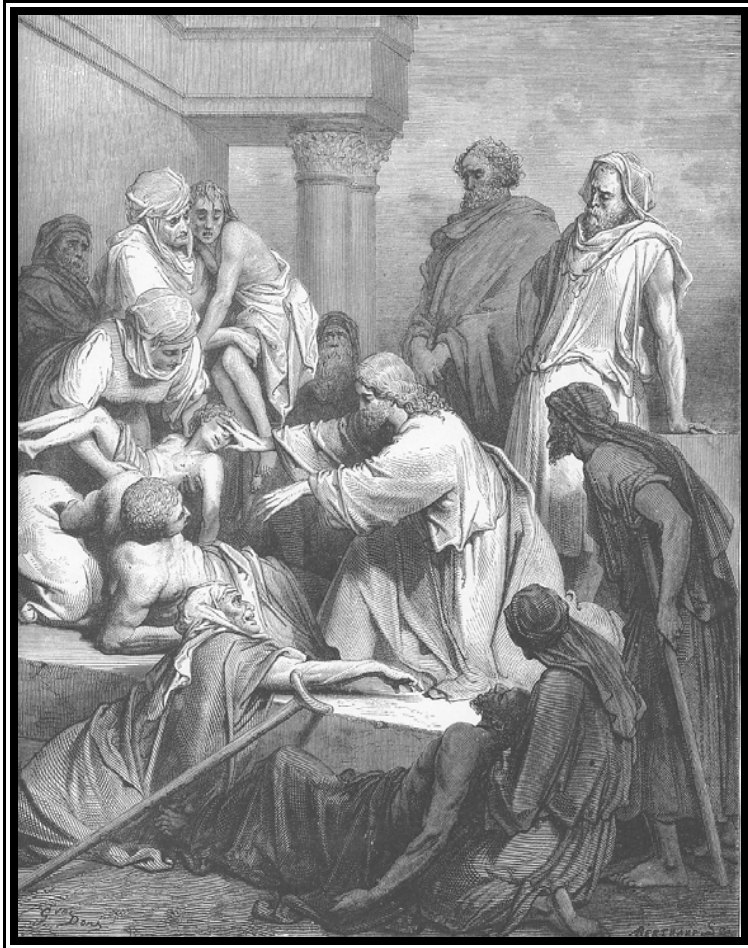


Illustration: Jesus Healing the Sick

A Devotional for the
Week of the First Sunday After Epiphany.

The time had now come that Jesus was to appear in public, and by preaching and working miracles was to manifest Himself as the Son of God and Savior of the world. He did this first in Judea, in Jerusalem and the country south of Jerusalem, for more than half a year. Then He went to Galilee, coming again to Cana where He had performed His first miracle. In Capernaum, about five or six hours' walk from Cana, there lived at this time a certain nobleman, a government official, whose son was at the point of death. When he heard that Jesus was at Cana, he went to Him and besought Him that He would come down to Capernaum and heal his son. Jesus said to him, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." But the man kept on entreating Him and said, "Sir, come down before my child dies." Jesus said to him, "Go thy way; thy son liveth." The man believed the word that Jesus had spoken to him, and went his way. The next day his servants met him, saying, "Thy son liveth." Then enquired he of them the hour when he began to mend. And they said: "Yesterday at the seventh hour (one o'clock in the afternoon) the fever left him." So the father knew that it was in the same hour in which Jesus had said to him, "Thy son liveth." And he himself believed, and his whole house. (John 4:46-54.)

Thus did Jesus manifest His divine glory – by a mere word spoken from a distance He healed the sick. And thus did the nobleman prove his faith – he relied on the word of Christ. Through His written Word, Jesus now gives you the forgiveness of sin, life, and salvation, for the sake of the redemption wherewith He has redeemed you. Believe this Word, go your way, and rely on this Word in life and death. Rest and depend on this Word, even though you feel or see nothing of its power. Jesus' Word will not deceive you.

PRAYER. – Almighty, eternal God – who through Your Son did promise us forgiveness of sin, righteousness, and everlasting life – I

pray You that, by the Holy Ghost, You would so rule and enliven my heart that in daily prayer and especially in all temptation, I may seek such help of Him, and, firmly believing His Word and promise, surely find and obtain it, and lastly be saved through Him. Amen.

Hymn 311, 10.

By grace! May sin and Satan hearken!
I bear my flag of faith in hand,
And pass – for doubts my joy can't darken –
The Red Sea to the Promised Land.
I cling to what my Savior taught,
And trust it, whether felt or not.

MONDAY.

What manner of man is this that even the winds and the sea obey Him! – Matthew 8:27.

From Galilee, Jesus had returned to Jerusalem, for Passover, and in the temple, before a mighty concourse of people, He had preached a most powerful sermon regarding the divine majesty of His eternal Sonship; but the Jews had rejected Him and had threatened to kill Him. So now He went to Galilee, there to manifest Himself as the true Prophet foretold by Moses. John the Baptist's activity had now come to an end. Jesus chose for His home the city of Capernaum, situated on the Sea of Gennesaret. And of an evening, at the close of an extremely busy day, He entered a ship, to go to the eastern shore of the lake. His disciples followed Him. And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves; but Jesus was asleep. And His disciples came to Him, and awoke Him, saying, "Lord, save us: we perish!" Then said He to them, "Why are ye so fearful, O ye of little faith?" And He arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. But the men marveled, saying:

"What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him!" (Matthew 8:23-27.)

This tired man, whom, however, the winds and the sea obey, is the incarnate Word, the eternal Son of the Father who has become man. He is your Savior, who then was in the state of humiliation, but now is exalted to the right hand of God the Father. It is He who has all power in heaven and on earth, and most graciously is with you at all times. Why, then, do you fear so often? Fear not – neither in life nor in death – but trust His gracious omnipotence.

PRAYER. – O true Man and true God, Jesus Christ, whom winds and seas and all things obey, I acknowledge my infirmity and timidity – my inability to weather the tempests of this world without Your consolation. O help me, that I perish not! Keep the ship of Your Church against all the powerful enemies who threaten it, comfort all fearsome hearts, strengthen all such as are weak of faith. Be with us in our every need, our only, but almighty Helper, blessed forever Amen.

Hymn 523.

HELP, Helper, help in fear and need,
Have mercy, to my prayer give heed!
I know Thou lov'st me still as Thine,
Though 'gainst me world and hell combine.

My God and Lord, I trust in Thee;
What need I, if Thou art with me?
And Thou, Lord Jesus Christ, art mine;
My God and Savior, I am Thine.

Therefore my happiness is great,
I am content, for Thee I wait,
Trust wholly in Thy name, and then
I pray: Help, Helper, help! Amen.

TUESDAY.

Thy sins be forgiven thee. – Matthew 9:2.

When Jesus returned to His own city, Capernaum, and was in His dwelling, they brought a man to Him who was sick of the palsy and was lying on a bed. They had great difficulty in bringing him because of the crowd that blocked the street. Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the sick of the palsy: “Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.” The Searcher of Hearts saw that the sick man sought the grace of God and the forgiveness of sins above all things. But certain of the scribes who were present said within themselves: “This man blasphemeth. Who can forgive sins but God only?” Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said: “Wherefore think ye so evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, ‘Thy sins be forgiven thee;’ or to say, ‘Arise, and walk’? But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins (then said He to the sick of the palsy,) ‘Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.’” And he arose, and departed to his house. When the multitude saw it, they marveled, and glorified God, who had given such power unto men. (Matthew 9:1-8.)

PRAYER. – Lord God, grant me the forgiveness of all my sins, for the sake of Jesus Christ, my dear Savior. You have solemnly promised to do this. Fulfill the promise You have given me. Let me abide in Your grace. O my God, then nothing will have power to harm me – then I shall be able to comfort myself with You, almighty God, and rejoice in all need – yes, even in death. Through Your Holy Ghost, O God, grant to me the saving knowledge of true faith unto eternal life. Amen.

Hymn 122, 2. 3.

Jesus, Thy words alone impart
Eternal life; on these I live;
Here sweeter comforts cheer my heart
Than all the powers of nature give.

Here let my constant feet abide;
Thou art the true, the living Way;
Let Thy good Spirit be my guide
To the bright realms of endless day.

WEDNESDAY.

Talitha, cumi. – Mark 5:41.

At one time, when a great multitude crowded about our Lord at the sea shore of Capernaum, one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name, sought Him. And when he saw Him, he fell down at His feet, and besought Him greatly, saying: “My little daughter is at the point of death: I pray Thee, come and lay Thy hands upon her, that she may be healed and live.” And Jesus went with him. And a great multitude followed Him. Now when they approached the house of Jairus, some of his people said to him: “Thy daughter is dead; why troublest thou the Master any further?” But Jesus heard it and said to Jairus: “Fear not, only believe.” And He allowed no man to follow further, except Peter and James and his brother John. And He cometh to the house, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly, and the minstrels that played in a mournful strain. And He confronted them, saying: “Why make ye this ado, and weep? The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.” And they laughed Him to scorn, knowing that she was dead. And Jesus put them all out, and He taketh the father and the mother of the damsel and the three disciples, and entereth in where the damsel was lying. And He took the damsel by the hand and said unto her: “Talitha, cumi,” which, in English, is “Damsel, I say unto thee, ‘Arise.’” And straightway the damsel arose and walked. She was twelve years old and an only daughter. And they were astonished with a great astonishment. And Jesus charged them straitly that they should tell no man. And He commanded to give her to eat. (Mark 5:21-43.)

In the sight of the Lord Jesus, death is a mere sleep, even your death and that of your loved ones. Right easily can He awaken all His own from death to eternal life, and He certainly will do it. Let your

dead who died in the Lord be at rest, and rejoice that they are sleeping peacefully. Jesus will waken them to eternal life when He will come again. And do you, yourself, remain with Jesus, and when death approaches you, then say: “You are but a sleep from which my Savior shall awaken me.”

PRAYER. – Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior, who with Your blood did cancel all our sins, and turned bitter death into a peaceful sleep, grant that the tumult of carnal reason and of the scoffers of this world may not prevent me from believing nor confound me, but rather, that I may lay hold on You in Your Word, and keep You securely in faith, and through You be saved forever, for Your name’s sake. Amen.

Hymn 528, 5.

And so I stretch mine arms to Thee,
And gladly hence betake me:
Peaceful and calm my sleep shall be,
No human voice can wake me.
But Christ is with me through the strife,
And He will bear me into life,
And open heaven before me.

THURSDAY.

Verily, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. – Matthew 8:10.

After a long sermon tour through Galilee, Jesus one day returned to His own city, Capernaum. And the centurion, a hearth, commanding the Roman garrison there, sent the elders of the Jews to Him, beseeching Him and saying through them: “Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.” And Jesus saith: “I will come and heal him,” and went toward the centurion’s house. But the

centurion sent friends to Him, saying: “Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst come under my roof; but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, ‘Go,’ and he goeth; and to another, ‘Come,’ and he cometh; and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he doeth it.” As if to say: As my servants obey my word, so all things must obey Your word. When Jesus heard this, He marveled, and said to them that followed: “Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

And I say unto you, that many shall come from the East and the West, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” And Jesus sent word to the centurion: “Go thy way; as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee.” And his servant was healed in the self-same hour. (Matthew 8:5-13.)

The heathen centurion, with eyes wide open in faith, saw the Savior’s divine glory hidden under the form of a servant, and with great confidence, though in deep humility, he comforted himself therewith. God be praised that a great number of all ages and nations have had such true and simple faith. But is such faith found often in Christendom today? Ah, no! And do you think that all who, from their childhood have been brought into the kingdom of God, and still are looked upon as children of the kingdom, will actually be saved? Ah, no! Only through the faith which knows Jesus and truly lays hold on Him do we become righteous before God and shall we be saved. And in no other way.

PRAYER. – Almighty Lord, Jesus Christ, before whom all must humble themselves, and to whose word and command all must yield, grant me grace to come to a true knowledge both of my unworthiness and Your kindness and mercy, in firm faith to hold fast to You, to remain in Your kingdom, to comfort myself with the assistance You have promised me in all need, and finally to be saved: O You, who are the Lord and Helper of all mankind, blessed forever. Amen.

Hymn 260, 1. 4.

NOW do we pray God the Holy Ghost
For the true faith which we need the most,
And that He defend us, when life is ending,
And from exile home we shall be wending.
Lord, have mercy!

Thou highest Comfort in every need!
Grant that neither shame nor death we heed.
The e'en then our courage may never fail us,
What at last th' Accuser shall assail us.
Lord, have mercy!

FRIDAY.

He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces. – Isaiah 25:8.

On the day after the event of yesterday's lesson, Jesus went into the city of Nain, seven or eight hours' walk from Capernaum. And many of His disciples went with Him, and a great multitude. Now when He came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and many people of the city were with her. And when the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said unto her: "Weep not." And He came nigh and touched the bier; and the bearers stood still. And He said: "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise." And he that was dead sat up and began to speak. And He gave him unto his mother. (Luke 7:11-15.)

This is a picture of now and hereafter. Now death reigns, the wages of sin. It swallows up young and old. How much misery and grief does it cause! But the Lord, whose glory you behold in this story, our Savior, who conquered sin and death, shall one day come again

and oppose Death; and He will touch this old earth, which once was Nain, "The Beautiful," "The Lovely," but now has become a huge burying-ground, and will awaken His own therefrom to eternal life, and will swallow up death in victory, and will wipe away tears from off all faces, He, the Lord God; and He will restore us to one another; and He will create a new Nain, where there shall be fullness of joy, and at His right hand rivers of pleasure forevermore. So must you view death, Christian, and so behold your Savior. Let this be your sure and joyful hope in faith.

PRAYER. – Omnipotent Lord, Jesus Christ, You Conqueror of Death, who has compassion on all who mourn because of death, comfort all the sorrowing by the knowledge of You – keep all the dying in true faith, and give me, too, Your Holy Spirit that I may commend my soul in Your hands, and at all times know and acknowledge You to be the Lord God who will forever abolish death, and on the last day give to me and all the elect, eternal life with endless joy and glory, wherein You, Lord, now live and reign, world without end. Amen.

Hymn 216, 5. 6.

To me the tomb | Shall be a room
Where I lie down on roses
Who by faith hath conquered death,
Sweetly there reposes.

The body dies – | Naught else – and lies
In dust, until victorious
From the grave it shall arise
Beautiful and glorious.

SATURDAY.

Give us this day our daily bread. – Matthew 6:11.

A year before His death, about the time of the Passover, Jesus crossed the Sea of Galilee with His disciples, seeking a little recreation on the eastern shore after much hard work. But a great multitude followed Him, because they saw the miracles which He did on those who were diseased. And so He could find no rest. Toward evening He went up into a mountain, and there He sat with His disciples. And when He saw the great multitude, He said to Philip: “Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?” This He said to test him; for He Himself knew what He would do. Philip answered: “Two hundred pennyworth (*denarii*, about 30 dollars’ worth) of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.” One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, saith unto Him: “There is a lad here who hath five barley loaves and two fishes; but what are these among so many?” Jesus said: “Make the people sit down.” Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves; and when He had given thanks, He distributed to His disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would. When they were filled, He said to His disciples: “Gather up the fragments, that nothing be lost.” Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over unto them that had eaten. (John 6:1-13.)

All four evangelists tell this story. Two of them were eye-witnesses. It was an exceedingly great divine miracle. It shows us Christ’s divine glory. It also reveals His compassionate heart. He wants to give daily bread to those who follow Him. You see that He is able to do it. He even says the we should pray: “Give us this day our daily bread.” Why, then, do we worry or fret? When He tells us so to pray, will He not hear us?

PRAYER. – Lord Jesus, almighty God, give us, we beg You, our daily bread and grant us Your Holy Spirit, that we may cheerfully rely on You, and nevermore offend against Your Gospel, Your glory, and our conscience for the sake of our bread and body. Give Your grace also to me – so weak in faith – that at all times in faith I may look upon

Your bountiful hand, there finding hope and cheer, and, above all, seeking the imperishable good with You, who lives forever and forever and yes, will be our great Benefactor. Amen.

Hymn 22, 4. 5.

My life, my soul – defend them!
 My wife, child, goods, and home, –
 To Thy hand I commend them,
 From Thee these blessings come;
 Thy bounteous hand bestows
 My household and my treasures,
 My parents, friends, and pleasures;
 My cup with good o’erflows.

Let not Thine angel leave me,
 While here on earth I stay,
 Lest Satan’s arts deceive me,
 And lead my soul astray!
 Then keep Thine angel near
 At night and each new morrow,
 Lest soul and body sorrow,
 And faltering cost me dear.

These devotions are adapted from *Crumbs* by C. M. Zorn (1914).

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