

H E A L T H S A B B A T H

NOW  EVER

JULY 25, 2020



God's Plans for You

Sermon Script Prepared by
Dr. David R. Williams



HEALTH MINISTRIES

Seventh-day Adventist Church
NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION



Lk 10:25-37

Our Scripture reading is a familiar story. Jesus told the story of "A certain man who was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho. On this journey, the traveler had to pass through a part of the wilderness of Judea. The road led down a wild, rocky ravine, where gangs of robbers liked to hideout. This poor man, minding his own business, was brutally attacked, robbed of all that was valuable, beaten and left bloodied and half dead by the wayside. While he was lying in pain, a priest came by. He took one look at the suffering man and he kept on going. Next came a Levite. He paused to take a careful look, but he was busy and did not want to get too involved.

A certain Samaritan, on his journey, came where the sufferer was, and when he saw him, he had compassion on him. He did not question whether the stranger was a Jew or a Gentile. He took off his own garment with which to cover him. The oil and wine provided for his own journey he used to heal and refresh the wounded man. He lifted him on his own beast, and moved slowly along with even pace, so that the stranger might not be jarred, and made to suffer increased pain. He brought him to a motel, and cared for him through the night, watching him tenderly. In the morning, as the sick man had improved, the Samaritan left but he paid the man's bill and left a deposit for any additional expenses that he might incur.

In the story of the good Samaritan, Jesus gave a picture of Himself and His mission. And understanding God's plan for our lives, individually, as a congregation, as a denomination, must begin with a new appreciation of what Jesus has done for us. Men



and women on planet earth have been wounded, abused, deceived, bruised, robbed, and ruined by our enemy Satan. We had been left on the side of the highway to perish. Jesus found us ready to die, but He had compassion about our pain. He undertook our case. Our situation appeared hopeless, but Jesus cared about our helpless condition. He left the comforts of glory, to come and rescue us. We were wounded and bleeding, so Jesus came with healing. He did not pour in oil and wine, but He gave His own precious blood. He healed our wounds. He covered us with His robe of righteousness. He opened to us a refuge of safety, and He made complete provision for us at His own expense. And Jesus has placed all of the charges for our full recovery on his account. The good news from the Bible this morning is that God has not given up on you. God loved you 2,000 years ago. He loved you the day that you were born and He still loves you today. God sees value in you. He sees a beautiful future for you.

The good news, today, is that we have a Savior who came down to our house of pain and feels what we feel. Jesus knows how you are feeling right now. There are some here this morning who are burdened by all the stress and pressure of this week. There are some here today who are tired and exhausted. There are some who are grappling with deep emotional pain because of past experiences. There are some today who may feel trapped in a bad situation. But I come to you with good news. The Bible declares that Jesus is on the Jericho road today. Jesus knows what nobody else knows. He understands your struggles in a way that no one else does. Jesus Himself has weighed every burden that you carried this week. He has felt your pain, He has seen your tears. Regardless of the situation that you are in, Jesus knows how you feel. Whether you are dealing with the



stress of leadership or the disappointment of friends who let you down – You need to know today that no one understands like Jesus. Whether you have been falsely accused by your coworkers or struggling with family tension, Jesus understands what you are facing. The Bible declares that He bears our griefs and carries our sorrows. You may be feeling that nobody knows the trouble you see, But the truth is that “Nobody knows like Jesus. Jesus, the Master of heaven and earth and sky, is looking down at you with love, compassion, sympathy and tenderness. He sees you when you are weary. He knows when you are lonely. He sees you when you are discouraged. And Jesus is on your Jericho road this morning! He has stopped by to pick you up today and hold you close with the deepest, richest, and strongest bonds of love that you have ever experienced.

Not only does Jesus understand how we feel—He has made every provision to address all our needs. He comes with all of the power of the universe with Him. And He knows exactly what we need. He knows every circumstance of your life. He knows the power of the temptations and trials that you struggle with. He understands the situations that irritate you and the people that bother you. He knows where you are weak, and the steps and missteps that have led to your current predicament. And as Jesus meets you on the Jericho road today He declares that “My grace is sufficient for you...”.

And the story of the Good Samaritan provides a key to living God’s amazing dream for your life. In the story, the injured man accepts everything that the Good Samaritan offers. He follows his every direction. He obeys His every command. He was convinced that here was someone who loved him, who cared for him, who was looking out for his best and he resigned himself to stop worrying, to stop fretting, and just depend on the leading



and direction from the Good Samaritan. We can learn something from the wounded man today. The wounded man in our story did not resist being carried. He did not reject the companionship of the journey. He just accepted everything that the Good Samaritan offered. Why? Because the injured man was incapable of helping himself. He could not rescue himself. He could not heal himself. He could not save himself. The same is true of salvation. We are saved by God's grace. God's strength is made perfect in weakness. Our great danger is self-sufficiency. Our Achilles heel is feeling that we can handle things ourselves. MH: "nothing is apparently more helpless.... I invite you this morning to learn to lean on Jesus. If we are going to start living God's plans for our lives, we need to learn to lean on Jesus. Learning to lean, Yes, learning to lean, we need to learn to lean on Jesus. You will find more power than you will ever need when you learn to lean on Jesus

Jesus has wonderful plans for each of us. He wants to take us on the journey of life. We don't know where to go, but He does. He will not give us directions of where we need to go and send us on our journey. He will take us with Him. He will accompany us. He will personally direct us. We have the assurance of His presence with us. We also have His promise that he will never leave us or forsake us. We have His iron-clad guarantee—Lo, I am with you always—even unto the end of the age.

This story provides us with God's model for health ministry. The most important thing in health ministry is developing loving relationships with people in need. Health ministry is similar to courtship. When you are in love with someone, you show them you care. Many people in our world feel hurt. When they are in pain or discouraged, just a little



kindness, just a little caring, a little understanding and sympathy, can be like a refreshing cup of water in the harsh desert of discouragement.

God is calling us to make His love real: 7T 50 “Words of kindness, looks of sympathy, expressions of appreciation, would to many a struggling, lonely one be as a cup of cold water to a thirsty soul” **PPT SLIDE**

MH 143 lays out how we are to follow the example of Jesus in a ministry of loving others. **PPT SLIDE.** It lays out that “Christ’s methods *alone* will give true success in reaching the people:

1. The Savior mingled with others
2. as one who desired their good
3. He showed His sympathy
4. ministered to their needs, and
5. won their confidence.
6. *Then* He bade them, ‘Follow Me.’”

In the story of the good Samaritan, Jesus clearly indicates what it means to be a Christian. The test of true Christianity is not the doctrines that you believe, although understanding the truth of the Scripture is important. The acid test of being a follower of Jesus is NOT demonstrated in your tithing behavior, your dietary behavior, your devotional behavior, your frequency of church attendance, as important as all of these things are. **PPT SLIDE** (the Test of True Christianity) Jesus said, Jn 13:35: “By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another.” Two contemporary paraphrases:

“Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.” Living



"This is how everyone will recognize that you are my disciples—when they see the love you have for each other." Message

We live in a world of large disparities or inequities in health. The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted these inequities in health. There are large racial differences in Covid-19 mortality. **PPT SLIDE** (Deaths of Covid 19). Blacks or African Americans (I used the terms interchangeably), were 2.3 times more likely than whites to die from the Coronavirus. In fact, **PPT SLIDE** (Covid-19 Deaths by Race) If all racial/ethnic groups had died at the same rate as that of white Americans, 15,000 Black Americans would still be alive and 1,500 Latinos Americans, and 250 Native Americans who died would not have died.

Why Race Matters? **PPT SLIDE**

Income and Education strongest predictors of group differences in health. Around the world, persons with higher levels of income and education, have better health than those with lower levels

There are large racial differences in household income in the US. The slide shows income data for 2018 **PPT SLIDE** (Median Household Income and Race, 2018)

Let's explain this data simply. **PPT SLIDE** (Median Household Income and Race, 2018)

For every dollar of household income, white households have, Asian Households have \$1.23. (70% of Asians in the US are immigrants, who come to the US with high levels of education, and who have more persons contributing to household income than other groups). For the historically disadvantaged groups, we see that Hispanic households earn



73 cents and Black and American households earn 59cents for every dollar of income white households have. What is stunning about the 59 cents figure for blacks, is that is identical to the racial gap in income in 1978. That is, the black-white income gap today is identical to the gap 40 years ago. Most people think that there has been much more progress than that.

Poverty data tell a similar story. **PPT SLIDE** (Poverty and Race, 2018): 1 in every 4 American Indians, 1 in every 5 blacks and Hispanics and about one in every 10 whites and Asians were living in poverty in the U.S. in 2018.

When we look at the number of people in Poverty **PPT SLIDE** (Poverty and Race, 2018, in Millions): we see that, in 2018, there were 16 million poor whites, almost 11 million poor Hispanics, 9 million poor blacks, 2 million poor Asians, and 700,000 poor American Indians.

And income data understates the degree of economic inequality. Income is our salary and wages, the flow of money into the household. In contrast, wealth is our economic reserves (savings, investments, home equity, etc.) In the US, **PPT SLIDE** (Median Wealth and Race), for every dollar of wealth that white households have, black households have 10 pennies and Hispanic households 12 pennies.

PPT SLIDE Low economic status means that even though we may all be in the same storm, we are in different boats and some boats are better equipped to survive the storm than others. We see this very clearly in the Covid-19 pandemic. Not everyone can work from home to lower their risk of getting the virus. For low-wage, non-salaried workers with unpredictable and unstable hours, working from home is a luxury. In poor neighborhoods,



with overcrowded housing, social distancing is not a viable option. And low income and minority workers are overrepresented among essential workers – our drivers, building maintenance staff and grocery store employees. People who struggle financially, often struggle to live a healthy life.

And in this world, God has placed us. What I am saying this morning is that in our communities, there are people with great need, and Jesus has given us the health ministry to touch their lives with His love

Jesus wants us to follow His example. **PPT SLIDE.** John 1:14 (Message) says, “The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son, generous inside and out, true from start to finish”

So how do we Walk in the Footsteps of Jesus? **PPT SLIDE:** The book Desire of Ages, page 640 declares that “in order to walk in the steps of Jesus, we shall find His footprints beside the sickbed, in the hovels of poverty, in the crowded alleys of the great city, and in every place where there are human hearts in need of consolation. In doing as Jesus did when on earth, we shall walk in His steps.”

According to the Spirit of Prophecy, Isaiah chapter 58 provides the blueprint for this comprehensive health ministry that God has given His church. Verses 6 and 7 clearly spell out Our Marching Orders **PPT SLIDE.** It says, 6 Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? 7 Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou



bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

This Comprehensive Health Ministry **PPT SLIDE** includes:

- Instruction in Principles of Health
- Instruction in Nutrition
- Cooking Schools and Demonstrations
- Instructions in Simple Treatments
- Childcare (training, homes, adoptions)
- Ministering in church health clinics/centers
- Health combined with Public Evangelism
- Health Conditioning Centers (Sanitariums)
- Comforting the afflicted
- Caring and providing for people and their problems

And when we do this work, God makes some special promises to us. In Isa 58:

10-11 (NASB) **PPT SLIDE**, God declares "... And if you give yourself to the hungry, And satisfy the desire of the afflicted, Then your light will rise in darkness, And your gloom will become like midday. And the LORD will continually guide you, And satisfy your desire in scorched places, and give strength to your bones; And you will be like a watered garden, And like a spring of water whose waters do not fail."

What a privilege we have! What powerful promises God has given! And Jesus is also very clear that following these plans that He has for us is not just a good idea. It is not optional. In Matthew 25:34 - 36 NASB, **PPT SLIDE**, Jesus says 34 "Then the King will say



to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 35 For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; 36 naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.'" Jesus says that the great judgment will not be about or knowledge of Biblical truths. It will not be about our theological insights. No, it will be about how we have treated Him in the person of the poor, the immigrant (stranger), and the incarcerated.

And just in case, we missed this point, *Desire of Ages*, 637, makes it crystal clear that our eternal destiny is linked to doing this work, **PPT SLIDE**, "Thus Christ ... pictured to His disciples the scene of the **great judgment day**. And He represented its decision as **turning upon one point**...there will be but two classes, and their eternal destiny will be determined by what they have done or have neglected to do for Him in the person of the poor and the suffering."

So what can we do? If we take a brief walk down memory lane, we can see what a comprehensive health ministry could really look like. In 1893, the General Conference set up a Medical Missionary and Benevolent Association to operate a special outreach in Chicago, with Dr. John Harvey Kellogg in charge. Based on his reading of the Spirit of Prophecy counsel what did he do? The Chicago Medical Mission begins in 1893 and its programs included:

- A free medical dispensary
- A clothing distribution program



- A homeless shelter (400/per night)
- Soup Kitchen (500 to 1,500 per day)
- Work at shelter: rug, carpet weaving, or broom making
- Lifeboat Rescue Home (halfway house for prostitutes)
- Maternity Home (for unwed mothers)
- Farm outside of the city: drug rehab & homeless
- a visiting nurse service
- a school for Chinese (Chinese were a stigmatized group at that time, given that the US government had banned all migration from China in 1882).

Dr. Kellogg also started a medical school in Chicago and the programs it offered

included, **PPT SLIDE,**

- a kindergarten,
- a day nursery for working mothers,
- a free laundry for women,
- Classes in first aid, hygiene, diet, child training, dress,
- Operated a free employment agency
- A placement service for orphans
- A placement service for men and women who had been reclaimed from skid row.

And this comprehensive health outreach that met people in the area of need came from the guidelines given to all us in the book, Ministry of Healing. Three examples will suffice: all from page 194, she says that job creation is a part of health ministry: **PPT SLIDE,**



"Attention should be given to the establishment of various industries so that poor families can find employment. Carpenters, blacksmiths, and indeed everyone who understands some line of useful labor should feel a real responsibility to teach and help the ignorant and the unemployed." She articulates the importance of job training: **PPT SLIDE**, "By instruction in practical lines, we can often help the poor most effectively." Similarly, she emphasized the importance of practical skills. She said, **PPT SLIDE**, ""Let the members of poor households be taught how to cook, how to make and mend their own clothing, how to nurse the sick, how to care properly for the home. Let the boys and girls be thoroughly taught some useful trade or occupation."

So what can each of us can do to reduce social disparities in health?

What SDA Hospitals Can Do? **PPT SLIDE**

- Give Emphasis to prevention in the delivery of care.
- Develop incentives & interventions to reduce (normally occurring) implicit biases that lead to inequities in care.
- Provide care that addresses whole-person needs of clients (e.g. address barriers in client's environment; link to the non-medical resources that can assist clients.

What SDA Churches Can Do? **PPT SLIDE**

- Develop programs that enhance members' and the community's knowledge of food, fitness and sleep, and encourage healthy choices



- Offer programs & outreach services to low income persons to ensure that they have a marketable trade or skill to earn adequate income to support good health

What SDA Church Members Can Do? **PPT SLIDE**

- Volunteer with church or community programs that provide services and support advocacy for “the least of these”
- Spend more time with people in distress (e.g. volunteer for a crisis hotline; mentor children at risk of academic failure)
- Become informed about social needs in your community and ask God’s guidance in making the love of Jesus real to people in need.

God’s call to each of us is to follow the example of Jesus and make His love real. His

love comes through so powerfully in the *Ministry of Healing*: **PPT SLIDE**

- “He was always patient and *cheerful*” p. 19
- “none who came to Him went away unhelped.” p. 17
- “The Saviour’s work was not restricted to any time or place. His compassion knew no limit.” p.17
- “it was heaven to be in His presence.”p.18
- “With *tender, courteous grace* He ministered to the sin-sick soul, bringing healing and strength.”p. 23

God has called us to preach the gospel to the world. But what the world is waiting for is not so much the receipt of the facts of the gospel, as important as these are. What the world needs now is to see the transforming love of Jesus embodied in our lives in a



ministry of healing that is making God's love real to suffering humanity. God wants our lives to declare that we are the neighbor of every child of humanity. And when we do this, He will come: **PPT SLIDE** "Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own. It is the privilege of every Christian not only to look for but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel. Quickly the last great harvest would be ripened, and Christ would come to gather the precious grain." Christ Object Lessons, 69.

Closing prayer