



JOURNEY with JESUS

The Disease and the Cure

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I remember very clearly the early stages of my career as a medical doctor and being on call at the hospital. It was during these night calls that the unexpected would occur and that sometimes meant fighting at death's doorstep. There was one night in particular in which a middle-aged gentleman suffered a cardiac arrest. I was paged to the Emergency Room and participated with a skilled and determined medical team to use all of our efforts, all of our training, every tool and medicine provided through modern science, to restart this man's heart. His family waited, some whimpering, some paralyzed with fear, some pleading with God. In the end, we had to call it: "Time of Death, 1:33am." It was the first time I witnessed a death in a medical setting. We did all that we could, but we could not stop this moment in time in which death claimed this man's earthly life.

When Jesus walked this earth, he fully participated in the human experience and tasted, first-hand, the pain associated with the death of a loved one. John 11 describes one instance of this.

In this passage, Jesus's friend Lazarus was very ill and, as it is "appointed for all men," he died from the effects of this illness. We don't know what exactly the illness was but, in modern times, we know and understand a condition called Sepsis. Sepsis is a disease in which a local infection spreads to the rest of the body through the bloodstream. Its effects are devastating and can cause organ dysfunction, organ death, and, if not halted, cessation of life through death of the entire body. As a physician, I've spent countless hours learning how to recognize the signs of sepsis, treat it rapidly, administer hospital and ICU protocols. Then, in a final effort to prevent death from taking a human life, the medical community provides emergency CPR, just as we performed on that night when I was on call at my hospital in the beginning of my career. Sometimes we are successful. Sometimes, despite all these measures, death takes human life.

However, this is not the end.

Just like Lazarus, we are all sick, not just because our body is a temporary vessel. We are ill from the infection of sin. The outcome of this ravaging sepsis of sin is a spiritual death, a forever separation from our God. Our spiritual sickness, however, will not end in death.

Our loving savior Jesus allowed the Jewish community in this passage to witness how death can be overcome. Thank God for this passage because it gives us hope too! Jesus boldly defeated death both physically in this passage and provided the foreshadowing of his defeat of spiritual death as well.

Closing

When our family and friends struggle with illness, disease, and debility, it can leave us feeling sadness and despair. And at the end of life's journey, we may weep and mourn for those we love who have died. But what a joy it is to know that Jesus is the cure to death! When human efforts fail, he is the ultimate in rectifying the ravages of sickness and sin! Following Jesus and allowing him to lead us through life is the way and the path for peace, purpose, and hope. Death does not have the last say.

Questions

- A doctor will at times prescribe daily medications to prevent the effects of illness or disease. What measures are you taking to take your “daily dose of Jesus” to prevent or treat the effects of sin?
- How does our viewpoint of our daily life change when we know that Jesus is the cure?