

He Won't Go to the Doctor

By Jason Hilburn

How many times have you heard someone say, "He is sick, but he won't go to the doctor..."? There are some kinds of sicknesses that will go away on their own, but many illnesses will not go away without proper medical treatment. The spiritual sickness of sin is the most horrible of all diseases, and it will never go away on its own. We have to admit that we need help from God to rid ourselves of this disease - we have to be willing to go to the Great Doctor! Jesus compared Himself to a physician (Mark 2:17), and He is the greatest physician this world has ever known because He is the only one who can cure the "sickness" of sin. Please notice some observations along these lines:

We should be seeking the cure for sin - Being sick is no fun, but being sin-sick is much worse. Sin is the greatest problem man has ever known. Physical sicknesses can cause us to lose our lives, but sin will cause us to lose our souls! Sin is committed when we transgress God's law (1 John 3:4), and sin causes us to be separated from God: *"Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear"* (Isaiah 59:1, 2). If we are separated from God, we are lost and have no hope of being saved: *"That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world"* (Ephesians 2:12). If we do not find and apply the cure for sin before we die or before the Lord returns, we will suffer eternal torment because of our sins (Romans 6:23; Matthew 25:46).

The Great Physician is the only one who can cure the disease of sin! - Today people are trying everything they can imagine to remove the guilt they feel, instead of actually having their sins washed away by the blood of Christ. Many psychiatrists are telling their patients that they need to feel good about themselves, and that they should not be anxious about the things they have done wrong in the past. However, the Bible tells us just the opposite! We should feel guilty about the sins we have committed! It should break our hearts to know that the Son of God had to die on the cross for the sins we committed! That sorrow should lead us to repentance, and repentance should lead us to obedience and salvation: *"For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of..."* (2 Corinthians 7:10; Hebrews 5:9). People seeking happiness and a clear conscience without God are going to the wrong doctor! It can also be said that people who are seeking forgiveness of sins through religions other than pure Biblical Christianity are also going to the wrong doctor. We may be deceived into believing that there are other doctors who can make us well spiritually, but the truth is that if our sins have not been washed away with the blood of Christ, we are lost! There is no other way to Heaven but through Christ (John 14:6; Acts 4:12), and false doctrine will cause one to be lost (1 Timothy 4:16; Galatians 5:4). The Great Physician shed His blood so that our sins could be forgiven (Matthew 26:28; 2 Corinthians 5:21), and we contact that blood when we are baptized into His death: *"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into*

Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection" (Romans 6:3-5).

The Great Physician will not heal those who refuse to come to Him! - There are many sick people who openly state that they know they need to go to the doctor, yet they refuse to do so. There are also many who know they are spiritually sick, yet they refuse to go to the Great Physician. Jesus invites the whole world to come to Him to be healed (Matthew 11:28-30); however, a doctor cannot help someone who refuses his counsel, and neither will Christ help any who refuse to come to Him. There is a false doctrine called universalism which teaches that the Great Physician is going to heal everyone in the entire world - even those who refuse to come to Him; however, Jesus said that only a minority of people will be saved: *"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:13, 14).* He also said that those who will be saved are those who actually seek and follow the will of God: *"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).* Those who are old enough to be held accountable must go to the Great Physician or die spiritually!

The Great Physician will not heal those who refuse to follow His orders - How many sick people go to the doctor, but then refuse to do what the doctor says? One may wonder why the person even went to the doctor at all if he is not going to follow the doctor's directions! A doctor may prescribe things like proper exercise, diet, and perhaps medicine, but this counsel is given in vain to those who refuse to act upon it. The same is true for those who seek out the Great Physician, yet fail to do what He says. Many rejected the counsel of God during the days of John the Baptist by not being baptized: *"But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him" (Luke 7:30).* Even today those who refuse baptism in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins are rejecting the counsel of the Great Physician against their own best interest (Acts 2:38-41). Here is something else to ponder: When the Great Physician gives us a diet regimen to follow, do we follow it? *"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Peter 2:2).* When God says we should "exercise," do we do it? *"But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Hebrews 5:14).* When God tells us to stop our "bad habits," do we do it? *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:1, 2).*

The Great Physician prescribes medicine that may seem too strong to some - There are many who refuse to follow a doctor's directions because doing so will cause some type of discomfort - they may have to take medicine that tastes bad, receive an

injection, have surgery, physical therapy, or other procedures that may be unpleasant. Because of this unpleasantness, a person may refuse to do what the doctor says. Often the same could be said regarding spiritual matters. We must be willing to obey God and let go of anything in our lives that is separating us from God. Some consider this medicine of repentance too strong to take, and they refuse to follow the Lord. A person may have some type of addiction which he loves more than the Lord, a sinful relationship with a person he loves more than the Lord, or some other type of sin in which the person refuses to stop participating. It is sad that many love sin more than God, but God will only heal those who put Him first: *"...Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment"* (Matthew 22:35-38). Sometimes we have to do things we may not want to do in order to get better, and if we want to be spiritually well, we have to be willing to take the medicine God gives us through His Word. We are also commanded by God to sometimes give strong medicine to other brethren to help them get well. Withdrawal of fellowship is strong medicine that God prescribes for erring brethren who will not repent after other methods of restoration have been unsuccessful (Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5; 2 Thessalonians 3:6). This is done to obey God, to save erring brothers and sisters from eternal torment, and to keep the infection of sin from spreading (1 Corinthians 5:4-6). As faithful children of God, we must be willing to administer this medicine when the need arises.

The Great Physician continually heals only those who remain His faithful patients - There are many who came to the Great Physician for spiritual healing, but after they were initially healed they stopped following His counsel and became infected with sin once again: *"For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire"* (2 Peter 2:20-22). If children of God wish to remain spiritually healthy, we must take our God-given medicine - we must remain in contact with the blood of Christ. We do that by walking in the light of God's Word, following the Great Physician's orders: *"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin"* (1 John 1:7).

Have you been to the Great Physician to remove your sins? Are you taking the medicine He prescribes in His Word? Here is what the Great Physician said we must do to be spiritually well: Hear the Word of God (John 6:45); Believe that Jesus is the Son of God who died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (John 8:24); Repent of sins (Luke 13:3); Confess faith in Christ as the Son of God (Matthew 10:32); Be baptized in the name of Christ for the remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38); Be faithful unto death (Revelation 2:10). Are you following the Doctor's orders?

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