

Reading: Mark 5:21-43.

Subject: Doctor, doctor!

There are lots of adverts about to encourage us to get the flu jab if we need it and so have protection against the flu virus, but there a shortage of the vaccine! There are many important inoculations we can have against all sorts of serious diseases - meningitis, TB, hepatitis and they are all designed to minimise our chances of getting the disease. There are a whole range of such vaccines to prevent us getting all sorts of terrible diseases, when we went to teach in Kenya a number of years ago, we had to have many inoculations in various parts of our anatomy!

If we need such injections, we go to the doctor and then we're fairly well protected against such diseases. We are also told that we should protect our computers against "viruses" and computer infections and there are also a range of programmes to then 'cure' our computers should they become infected. Medical scientists are working on inoculations to prevent many serious diseases

For these physical inoculations we go to the doctors and they give us, we hope, the right treatment. I'd not go to a plumber to see about an infection, nor a garage mechanic, nor a computer expert! We would go to a doctor and if needed, in the process of time, they would refer us to a specialist.

We read the account of the woman with an incurable blood disorder and she was, at the start of it, a seemingly wealthy woman, but she spent all her money on doctors, whose treatments did not work and she was still suffering from it 12 years later. She may have tried any and everything, even quack remedies and she was in an unhealthy condition, had no money, was hopeless and was classed as unclean to the religious ways of the day.

We're so glad that we are not in such a state; at least we think we're not! Physically we may have or not have good health, but the Bible speaks of the 'disease' all of us are born with and it affects mainly our heart - not our physical heart, but our innermost being and what we are truly like but the poison of this disease affects every area of our lives. It is the disease of sin and this puts us at dis-ease with the great holy God of heaven. Note it is not 'sins' - these are but the symptoms of this disease, like spots for measles, but sin is there in everyone's lives and has many symptoms which shows themselves to a greater or lesser extent in people's lives. We may exhibit very few of the symptoms, but we still have the disease. We may show many of the symptoms, may even feel that we are a hopeless case. Everyone, all people of all races, social status, education and wealth has this disease of sin. Some try and ignore it; some try quacks to deal with the symptoms and some go to the only One who can heal us of it. All I want to do simply this morning is to consider some of the doctors' practices and some of the doctors people visit to try and have this disease of sin cured and then point us to the specialist who has a 100% success of curing this awful disease of sin in all who have gone to Him to do so.

### **1. Dr Pleasure's Practice.**

This surgery is a lovely place, and delightful place to visit. They prescribe enjoyment, especially eat, drink, be merry; they say have a whale of a time and that life is too short to be worried about things, especially right and wrong. They say there's no disease such as sin, just a psychological hang-up from past ages. They say if it feels good, just do it. All the doctors in this practice agree with Dr Pleasure the head of the practice.

His colleague Dr Indulgence says *“If a bit of what you fancy does you good, then a lot more will do you a lot more good, so indulge yourself in whatever you fancy.”*

Dr Immorality says that we're not to have hang-ups; we are to enter into the gratification of our sensual and sexual desires and fantasies. An extra marital fling won't hurt you; it'll spice up your marriage, this DVD, book, film, website is so enlightening and this lifestyle is OK. Go on, don't have any hang-ups, it is only our upbringing, social conventions and pressures that make us feel guilty, it really is OK to indulge in such.

Dr Possessions would encourage us to get all we can - money, possessions, even the biggest, the best and the newest, this is what we need to aim for at all times. It's not keeping up with the Joneses, but being way ahead of them!

Dr Pleasure and his colleagues' advice are followed by many. Yet many who follow it so often find their lives empty, have broken relationships, split homes, ruined lives, broken health and with it all, even if fully enjoyed, this disease of sin remains. Do we frequent this practice? Perhaps not openly, but secretly we'd like to... Maybe you'd rather the next practise:

## **2. Dr Useless Worry's Practice.**

He looks at the symptoms and says *"All people get these. It's not a disease, it's due to the way we were brought up - society, family, background and the ideas and standards foisted on us from our earliest days. We are the product of society etc and you are not accountable. So do not worry!"* His colleagues within this practice will say similar things:

Dr Agnostic says *"It only feelings. You can't prove you have this disease. You have to apply arbitrary standards. There is no concrete evidence of this disease. Don't worry about it!"*

Dr Atheist says the same thing, but in a more hardnosed way. *"Your condition is not real. It is an illusion, diagnosed by a physician who does not exist, or didn't write a book (although some claim a book that exists was written by Him, but He could not have written it, as He doesn't exist!) There really is no need to worry; neither the disease, nor the one who exposed it exists."*

Their views are complemented by Dr Ostrich *"Hide your thoughts away and they'll go and not worry you at all. Bury your thoughts in something else, something new, some new hobby or relationship (I could refer you to Dr Immorality for a course of treatment). Ignore such feelings and questions and they'll go away and you'll be fine."*

What a useless practice, but many like this practice as it means they can live as they want, no sense of right and wrong and certainly no idea of accountability. Perhaps you like and you're listening to their advice? Or maybe you are uneasy about their advice and so you try another practise:

### **3. Dr Apathy's Practice.**

Perhaps our symptoms are concerning us and we feel there could be something serious causing them. Yet in our heart of hearts, we don't want to really be told what it is. Then this is the practice to go to. Here our fears will be soothed, we'll be told its OK and we are fine now. Yes something may be causing such symptoms, but over a period of time they will eventually deal with the cause. We may be encouraged to get a second opinion from Dr Pleasure or Dr Useless Worry and their practices - that's assuming Dr Apathy

can be bothered to tell us that! He may refer you to colleagues in his practice:

One of his colleagues has got of rather posh and long name Dr Procrastinate - he changed his name by deed poll as it used to be Dr Delay or Put off. He'd say "*Wait a while. Consider it a bit longer. Review the situation. Comeback in a little, or even better, a long-time! Think about it when...*" He always has a reason why nothing should be done just yet!

You could always see Dr Inactivity - who studied under Dr Doolittle and he says "*Really nothing can be done. It has to be lived with. It may be distressing, but it's just our temperament. Perhaps cosmetic surgery should be done, but that's in the realm of the next practice along. You have to accept things as they are.*"

Dr Neglect says a similar thing. "*Don't worry about it. Don't fret. Stop being concerned and it will go away. It's all in the mind you know. Leave it for now and you'll be ok. If it bothers you, then come back much later in your life.*"

Many people like this practice, do you? Yet you feel you don't want to make a fuss over nothing, but still the symptoms bother you, so you go and visit the next practice that Dr Inactivity advised you.

#### **4. Dr Morality's Practice.**

Here's a nip and tuck practice; they specialise in making things look good. The practise looks impressive and sumptuous, but the furniture is only wood veneered and the secretary is only as beautiful as her thick make-up. This practice will advise on how to cover up the symptoms and no one will ever know or suspect that we could ever have the disease of sin and do it so well that we

may even be able to delude ourselves that we don't have it either! To the entire world around we will appear to be a pillar of society, an upright and a nice person; we may be accepted by the nicest of people in the nicest places. The ones in this practice have different techniques and approaches to cover up the symptoms.

Dr Niceness advocates being nice to everyone - be kind and helpful; always support every charity; give to TV appeals. Always be seen to be involved in the right things and in the right places. Go out of your way to help, be kind and nice and let people see it. People will see these things first and foremost and not see our little blemishes and even our big faults may be overlooked because we are so nice.

Dr Dogood will give us a similar advice. Do good to all, especially be seen to do it. People will want you on their side and cause; respect you for being so good to give of your time, help, money and abilities. Such things will help cover up our symptoms - besides which we will be so busy, we will not have time to notice the symptoms ourselves!

Dr Religion says "Yes!" to all those, but says we need to add further things to complete the cover up - add religion. Go to a church etc., or do religious things, get this religious rite or ritual done to you, get on in religious things, even invite the vicar or minister to tea, give to the work and support it regularly.

Dr Morality's practice is really full of conmen - they do an outside, external cosmetic job, but do not deal with the disease itself and it is as useless as having a facelift to deal with a broken leg or appendicitis; or having a manicure to cure AIDS or cancer.

All these practices are a waste of time if you're serious about getting rid of your disease of sin. There is only one place to go:

### **5. Dr Completecure's Practice.**

Here is the one to go to, the One who recognised and diagnosed the disease of sin in the first place. He not only diagnosed it, but He is the only one who has provided the only remedy and cure for it. We have to go to God as our only hope. He has excellent credentials and 100% of **all** those who have gone to Him to be cured of their sin have been cured!

The practices I mentioned earlier all try to deal with the symptoms alone, but God deals with the source and eradicates it. He's a heart specialist. This needs to be so, because the heart of man's problem is the problem of man's heart i.e. our innermost being, the true us! The work of God brings about a cure and that cure affects every area of our lives for time and eternity.

Many medicines and cures are very expensive to formulate and produce. It is the same with the cure for the disease of sin and it cost God dearly. I remember reading an article in a paper some years ago of a Russian mother, her son and daughter-in-law, who were going to sell her 10-year-old grandson for transplant parts! What a horrible thing to do. The disease of sin is so much more horrible, that God knew He had to give His one and only Son to die in our place on the cross of Calvary. To heal us of sin and its consequences, Jesus willingly came at great cost to Himself and became the cure, the remedy for our sin - by taking our sin and sins upon Him and taking in our place the punishment they deserved. The Bible makes much of the death of the Lord Jesus because that is where our hope is centred. There on the cross was the place where our disease of sin was dealt with once and for all,

so that the remedy, the cure is freely offered to whosoever will receive it.

Just like that woman in Mark's gospel who went to Jesus and touched His cloak, so we need to go and "*touch Him*" - by believing, trusting in Him and Him alone to deal with our disease of sin. The Bible uses different pictures of what happens - it's as if we have a new heart transplanted, have new life given to us and have a complete blood transfusion (new life in His blood).

We need to be like that woman and go to the Lord Jesus in faith and trust only Him and realise we have nothing to offer, to plead, to bargain with, but she went and she was healed of her disease. We can be healed from our disease of sin only if we go to the Lord Jesus as our Saviour. There will be no delay in being seen or treated; we will not be delayed or put off by any secretary; there's no time when He is not available and the cure God has provided in and through the Lord Jesus is 100% effective and immediate! We do not have to go to bargain and trade with Him for this cure – it is freely offered to those who cannot pay or do anything – it is all of God's grace – free generosity - and we get that which we do not deserve at all. This effective remedy for sin will begin to show itself in our life more and more day by day as we go on in life and then one day God will take us home to heaven and we will be there in absolute perfection with no sin in us at all.

All other practices and all other remedies are quack remedies and practices. There is only one place to go to be rid of this disease of sin forever. We in this church recommend the Lord Jesus Christ as the Great Physician as the only one who can deal with our sin sick and sin diseased souls – we know that He can do this, because He has cured us and we are delighted to recommend Him. ☺