

Prov. 18:14: A man's spirit will endure sickness, but a crushed spirit who can bear?

Intro: John Paton was a missionary to the area in the south pacific called the New Hebrides.

John Piper: 1) He had courage to overcome the criticism he received from respected elders for going to the New Hebrides.

2) The most common demand for courage was the almost constant threat to his life from the hostilities of the natives.

3) He had courage to risk his own sickness in a foreign land with no doctors & no escape.

4) He had courage to risk losing his loved ones and to press on when he did in fact lose them.

- He and his wife arrived on the island of Tanna November 5, 1858, & Mary was pregnant. The baby was born February 12, 1859. "Our island-exile thrilled with joy! But the greatest of sorrows was treading hard upon the heels of that great joy!" (p. 79). Mary had repeated attacks of ague & fever and pneumonia & diarrhea with delirium for two weeks.

- Then in a moment, altogether unexpectedly, she died on March third. To crown my sorrows, & complete my loneliness, the dear baby-boy, whom we had named after her father, Peter Robert Robson, was taken from me after one week's sickness, on the 20th of March. Let those who have ever passed through any similar darkness as of midnight feel for me; as for all others, it would be more than vain to try to paint my sorrows! (p. 79). He dug the two graves with his own hands & buried them by the house he had built.

- Stunned by that dreadful loss, in entering upon this field of labor to which the Lord had Himself so evidently led me, my reason seemed for a time almost to give way. The ever-merciful Lord sustained me . . . & that spot became my sacred & much-frequented shrine, during all the following months & years when I labored on for the salvation of the savage Islanders amidst difficulties, dangers, & deaths. . . . But for Jesus, & the fellowship he vouchsafed to me there, I must have gone mad & died beside the lonely grave! (p. 80).

- The courage to risk the loss was one thing. But the courage to experience the loss & press on alone was supernatural. "I felt her loss beyond all conception or description, in that dark land. It was very difficult to be resigned, left alone, & in sorrowful circumstances; but feeling immovably assured that my God & father was too wise & loving to err in anything that he does or permits, I looked up to the Lord for help, and struggled on in His work" (p. 85). Here we get a glimpse of the theology that we will see underneath this man's massive courage & toil. "I do not pretend to see through the mystery of such visitations – wherein God calls away the young, the promising, & those sorely needed for his service here; but this I do know & feel, that, in the light of such dispensations, it becomes us all to love & serve our blessed Lord Jesus so that we may be ready at his call for death & eternity" (p. 85).

Remember the character of God, know the love of God, & keep trusting, obeying, & serving God.

1. You Can Endure Sickness

Prov. 18:14: A man's spirit will endure sickness

Even in the midst of great pain, sickness, & physical suffering, if you have a hopeful, joyful spirit,

you will endure – you will survive – you will more than conquer!

Author: One of the key tenets of Viktor Frankl . . . as described in the bestselling book *Man's Search for Meaning*, is the importance of finding meaning and purpose in even the most dire of situations. A psychiatrist & a survivor of the Holocaust, Dr. Frankl observed that those who maintained their hope were often the ones who survived the prison camp in which he was interned. Dr. Frankl maintained his hope, as did others he observed, by finding purpose & meaning in day-to-day life. He focused on surviving the torturous conditions to publish & share his new theory. Even on his worst days, maintaining his hope helped him to persevere.

- **Rom. 15:4:** For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

John Kitchen: This proverb marks its point by means of an antithetical parallelism. The first line describes that which is unfortunate & unwanted, but endurable, the second line describes that which is catastrophic & unbearable. The first deals with concrete suffering, that is to say ailments that are experienced in the body. While physical sufferings certainly can affect one's inward attitude, they need not. A man "can endure" such suffering, as intense as it may be. The root of the verb describes containing something inside a vessel of some sort. At times, it is used, as here, metaphorically to describe the human inability to endure something. What can "contain" or make bearable even the afflictions of one's body? It is the "spirit of a man." As long as there is inward resolve, a survival instinct or will to live, a person can face overwhelming physical suffering or sickness. His "spirit" wraps itself around the trouble & contains, smothers & subdues it – not necessarily defeating it, but keeping it from overwhelming him.

Remember the character of God, know the love of God, & keep trusting, obeying, & serving God.

2. No One Can Bear A Crushed Spirit

Prov. 18:14: A man's spirit will endure sickness, but a crushed spirit who can bear?

If your spirit is crushed – if you have no hope, no joy, no will to live – who can bear that? No one! This crushed spirit is a kind of depression. **Depression (1828):** A sinking of the spirits; dejection; a state of sadness; want of courage or animation; as depression of the mind.

John Kitchen: The second line . . . wonders out loud what will become of the man who loses that inward resiliency of spirit. The truly overwhelming thing comes when a person's spirit is "broken." The phrase "broken spirit" is found again in the Old Testament only in Prov. 15:13 & 17:22. In both of these cases, the "broken spirit" is contrasted with "a joyful heart." It describes a man who has come to the end of himself. There are no mental, emotional or spiritual reserves to draw upon. The well is dry. Troubles overwhelm. Pain chokes. Trials bury him. When a man is cut adrift in a sea of pain, his spirit can hold him up. But, if the spirit loses its buoyancy, what becomes of him?

Remember the character of God, know the love of God, & keep trusting, obeying, & serving God.

3. Jesus Took All Our Sicknesses & Depression & Was Crushed

Matt. 8:16-17: That evening they brought to him many who were oppressed by demons, & he cast out the spirits with a word & healed all who were sick. This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: "He took our illnesses & bore our diseases."

a. Jesus is the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53: Isa. 53:3-11: He was despised & rejected by men; a man of sorrows, & acquainted with grief; & as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, & we esteemed him not. ⁴ Surely he has borne our griefs & carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, & afflicted. ⁵ But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, & with his stripes we are healed. ⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; & the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. ⁷ He was oppressed, & he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, & like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. ⁸ By oppression & judgment he was taken away; & as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? ⁹ & they made his grave with the wicked & with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, & there was no deceit in his mouth. ¹⁰ Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. ¹¹ Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see & be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, & he shall bear their iniquities.

b. Jesus came to take illnesses & diseases & depression by healing them: Jesus is a healer of physical diseases! Jesus is a miracle worker like no other miracle worker! **Daniel Doriani:** A miracle is a direct act of God in the external world, in which he works outside (not against) the common course of events to reveal Himself, authenticate His servants, & manifest His nature & redemptive purposes. By this definition, childbirth is not a miracle because it is not a direct act of God and it does follow the common course of events . . . amazing events are not, by themselves, miracles. Amazing events are miracles when they fulfill God's Word & accomplish His purposes.

Jesus heals with a word, shows He's God, loves the least, despised, & outcasts of society (leper, Gentile, women).

c. Jesus came to finally deal with the root of all illnesses & diseases & depression, which is sin: Sickness is in the world because of sin. Not that everyone who is sick is sick because of their own personal sin. But generally, sickness is here because of sin: **Rom. 8:20:** For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope

Daniel Doriani: Matthew wants us to see the concepts of grief and disease almost interchangeably. We may not think that way, but the Bible says grief and sickness are related, directly or indirectly, to sin. Sin, grief, and sickness are a complex; God would deliver us from all three. Some disease is directly related to sin. For example, alcoholics suffer cirrhosis of the liver. Yet most illness is indirectly caused by sin. Congenital diseases are ordinarily a result of the fall

and the curse; only in rare occasions do they directly result from the sins of the parents. If Adam and Eve had never sinned, there would be no disease or death. Likewise, some sorrows are directly caused by sin. Habitual liars find that no one believes them. When they say they repent of their lies, no one believes that either, even if they have truly repented. Liars bring that sorrow on themselves. But many sorrows are indirect results of sin—the sins of others. For example, the people of all totalitarian regimes suffer indirectly, due to the sins of their leaders. Sadly, almost everyone suffers grief this way. The sin of a teacher, a boss, a political leader, or a relative causes us sorrow. We suffer when a friend or even a spouse betrays or abandons us. The Bible stresses that Jesus bears our sins. It also says he bore our griefs and diseases because they are all connected. Sin is the root of all grief, disease, and brokenness. Therefore, when Jesus bore our sin, he granted us complete healing, in principle. The way Christ defeated death and disease was by taking them on Himself and carrying them with him to the grave. God's judgment on the sin that brought disease was endured by Jesus when He suffered and died.

d. Jesus will fully and finally take away all of our illnesses, diseases, & depression but not necessarily all of it now in this age: Jesus' death on the cross does guarantee our full and complete healing from all sicknesses, diseases, & depression! But not necessarily right now in this age. He can do that, but He may choose not to do that for His own good purposes. And we must trust Him about this and say: "Your will be done!"

D. A. Carson: It should be stated that this discussion cannot be used to justify healing on demand. This text and others clearly teach that there is healing in the Atonement; but similarly there is the promise of a resurrection body in the Atonement, even if believers do not inherit it until the Parousia [Jesus' second coming]. From the perspective of the NT writers, the Cross is the basis for all the benefits that accrue to believers, but this does not mean that all such benefits can be secured at the present time on demand, any more than we have the right and power to demand our resurrection bodies. The availability of any specific blessing can be determined only by appealing to the overall teaching of Scripture. Modern Christians should avoid the principal danger of Corinth, viz., an over-realized eschatology [study of the end of the age], which demands blessings that may not be ours till the end of the age.

Did Jesus fully defeat death at the cross & resurrection? Yes, but we still die!

Did Jesus fully defeat sin at the cross? Yes, but we still struggle with & fight sin!

Did Jesus fully defeat disease & depression at the cross? Yes, but we still get sick & depressed!

All these blessings will be fully realized in the age to come! & yet there can be great deliverance now

- **1 Pet. 2:24:** He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin & live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

- **Mk. 14:34:** My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. [He was crushed! Forsaken! He rose!]

2 Cor. 1:3-4: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies & God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

Christ Jesus Took Our Sick Disease
He Walked Upon And Calmed The Seas
God-Man Of Sorrows, Tears, And Pleas
Then On That Cross What No One Sees
Unrecognized As Man Appease
All God's Anger - Counted Sleaze
His Spirit's Crushed Beyond Degrees
All God's Wrath Would Strike And Squeeze
A Loneliness And Never Ease
Forsaken Christ Among The Trees
But Then He Rose And Took The Keys
Of Death And Hades Guarantees
To All Who Trust In His Decrees
By Faith Alone Your Just – No Seas
Of Wrath And Hell – Your Escapees
And Oh What Joy – Adoptees
You're No More Crushed – Your Father Please
Safe And Happy – Guarantees!

Remember the character of God, know the love of God, & keep trusting, obeying, & serving God.