

Subject: The Healing Power of Compassion

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Hymns: 315, 179, 356

The Bible

(The Message)

John 8:1-11

1 Jesus went across to Mount Olives,

2 but he was soon back in the Temple again. Swarms of people came to him. He sat down and taught them.

3 The religion scholars and Pharisees led in a woman who had been caught in an act of adultery. They stood her in plain sight of everyone

4 and said, "Teacher, this woman was caught red-handed in the act of adultery.

5 Moses, in the Law, gives orders to stone such persons. What do you say?"

6 They were trying to trap him into saying something incriminating so they could bring charges against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger in the dirt.

7 They kept at him, badgering him. He straightened up and said, "The sinless one among you, go first: Throw the stone."

8 Bending down again, he wrote some more in the dirt.

9 Hearing that, they walked away, one after another, beginning with the oldest. The woman was left alone.

10 Jesus stood up and spoke to her. "Woman, where are they? Does no one condemn you?"

11 "No one, Master." "Neither do I," said Jesus. "Go on your way. From now on, don't sin."

Luke 10:25-37

25 Just then a religion scholar stood up with a question to test Jesus.

"Teacher, what do I need to do to get eternal life?"

26 He answered, "What's written in God's Law? How do you interpret it?"

27 He said, "That you love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and muscle and intelligence—and that you love your neighbor as well as you do yourself."

28 "Good answer!" said Jesus. "Do it and you'll live."

29 Looking for a loophole, he asked, "And just how would you define 'neighbor'?"

30 Jesus answered by telling a story. "There was once a man traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho. On the way he was attacked by robbers. They took his clothes, beat him up, and went off leaving him half-dead.

31 Luckily, a priest was on his way down the same road, but when he saw him he angled across to the other side.

32 Then a Levite religious man showed up; he also avoided the injured man.

33 "A Samaritan traveling the road came on him. When he saw the man's condition, his heart went out to him.

34 He gave him first aid, disinfecting and bandaging his wounds. Then he lifted him onto his donkey, led him to an inn, and made him comfortable.

35 In the morning he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take good care of him. If it costs any more, put it on my bill—I'll pay you on my way back.'

36 "What do you think? Which of the three became a neighbor to the man attacked by robbers?"

37 "The one who treated him kindly," the religion scholar responded. Jesus said, "Go and do the same."

Luke 6:27-36

27 "To you who are ready for the truth, I say this: Love your enemies. Let them bring out the best in you, not the worst.

28 When someone gives you a hard time, respond with the energies of prayer for that person.

29 If someone slaps you in the face, stand there and take it. If someone grabs your shirt, giftwrap your best coat and make a present of it.

30 If someone takes unfair advantage of you, use the occasion to practice the servant life. No more tit-for-tat stuff. Live generously.

31 "Here is a simple rule of thumb for behavior: Ask yourself what you want people to do for you; then grab the initiative and do it for them!

32 If you only love the lovable, do you expect a pat on the back? Run-of-the-mill sinners do that.

33 If you only help those who help you, do you expect a medal? Garden-variety sinners do that.

34 If you only give for what you hope to get out of it, do you think that's charity? The stingiest of pawnbrokers does that.

35 "I tell you, love your enemies. Help and give without expecting a return. You'll never—I promise—regret it. Live out this God-created identity the way our Father lives toward us, generously and graciously, even when we're at our worst.

36 Our Father is kind; you be kind.

Science and Health

7:32

Hypocrisy is fatal to religion.

41:10

The pampered hypocrite may have a flowery pathway here, but he cannot forever break the Golden Rule and escape the penalty due.

241:17

The error of the ages is preaching without practice.

241:19

The substance of all devotion is the reflection and demonstration of divine Love, healing sickness and destroying sin. Our Master said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

362:1-364:28

It is related in the seventh chapter of Luke's Gospel that Jesus was once the honored guest of a certain Pharisee, by name Simon, though he was quite unlike Simon the disciple. While they were at meat, an unusual incident occurred, as if to interrupt the scene of Oriental festivity. A "strange woman" came in. Heedless of the fact that she was debarred from such a place and such society, especially under the stern rules of rabbinical law, as positively as if she were a Hindoo pariah intruding upon the household of a high-caste Brahman, this woman (Mary Magdalene, as she has since been called) approached Jesus. According to the custom of those days, he reclined on a couch with his head towards the table and his bare feet away from it. It was therefore easy for the Magdalen to come behind the couch and reach his feet. She bore an alabaster jar containing costly and fragrant oil, — sandal oil perhaps, which is in such common use in the East. Breaking the sealed jar, she perfumed Jesus' feet with the oil, wiping them with her long hair, which hung loosely about her shoulders, as was customary with women of her grade.

Did Jesus spurn the woman? Did he repel her adoration? No! He regarded her compassionately. Nor was this all. Knowing what those around him were saying in their hearts, especially his host, — that they were wondering why, being a prophet, the exalted guest did not at once detect the woman's immoral status and bid her depart, — knowing this, Jesus rebuked them with a short story or parable. He described two debtors, one for a large sum and one for a smaller, who were released from their obligations by their common creditor. "Which of them will love him most?" was the Master's question to Simon the Pharisee; and Simon replied, "He to whom he forgave most." Jesus approved the answer, and so brought home the lesson to all, following it with that remarkable declaration to the woman, "Thy sins are forgiven."

Why did he thus summarize her debt to divine Love? Had she repented and reformed, and did his insight detect this unspoken moral uprising? She bathed his feet with her tears before she anointed them with the oil. In the absence of other proofs, was her grief sufficient evidence to warrant the expectation of her repentance, reformation, and growth in wisdom? Certainly there was encouragement in the mere fact that she was showing her affection for a man of undoubted goodness and purity, who has since been rightfully regarded as the best man that ever trod this planet. Her reverence was unfeigned, and it was manifested towards one who was soon, though they knew it not, to lay down his mortal existence in behalf of all sinners, that through his word and works they might be redeemed from sensuality and sin.

Which was the higher tribute to such ineffable affection, the hospitality of the Pharisee or the contrition of the Magdalen? This query Jesus answered by rebuking self-righteousness and declaring the absolution of the penitent. He even said that this poor woman had done what his rich entertainer had neglected to do, — wash and anoint his guest's feet, a special sign of Oriental courtesy.

Here is suggested a solemn question, a question indicated by one of the needs of this age. Do Christian Scientists seek Truth as Simon sought the Saviour, through material conservatism and for personal homage? Jesus told Simon that such seekers as he gave small reward in return for the spiritual purgation which came through the Messiah. If Christian Scientists are like Simon, then it must be said of them also that they love little.

On the other hand, do they show their regard for Truth, or Christ, by their genuine repentance, by their broken hearts, expressed by meekness and human affection, as did this woman?

8:28-30

We should examine ourselves and learn what is the affection and purpose of the heart, for in this way only can we learn what we honestly are.

462:20-1

Anatomy, when conceived of spiritually, is mental self-knowledge, and consists in the dissection of thoughts to discover their quality, quantity, and origin. Are thoughts divine or human? That is the important question. This branch of study is indispensable to the excision of error. The anatomy of Christian Science teaches when and how to probe the self-inflicted wounds of selfishness, malice, envy, and hate. It teaches the control of mad ambition. It unfolds the hallowed influences of unselfishness, philanthropy, spiritual love. It urges the government of the body both in health and in sickness. The Christian Scientist, through understanding mental anatomy, discerns and deals with the real cause of disease.

9:5

The test of all prayer lies in the answer to these questions: Do we love our neighbor better because of this asking? Do we pursue the old selfishness, satisfied with having prayed for something better, though we give no evidence of the sincerity of our requests by living consistently with our prayer? If selfishness has given place to kindness, we shall regard our neighbor unselfishly, and bless them that curse us; but we shall never meet this great duty simply by asking that it may be done. There is a cross to be taken up before we can enjoy the fruition of our hope and faith.

55:16

My weary hope tries to realize that happy day, when man shall recognize the Science of Christ and love his neighbor as himself, — when he shall realize

God's omnipotence and the healing power of the divine Love in what it has done and is doing for mankind. The promises will be fulfilled. The time for the reappearing of the divine healing is throughout all time; and whosoever layeth his earthly all on the altar of divine Science, drinketh of Christ's cup now, and is endued with the spirit and power of Christian healing.

365:25-21

If hypocrisy, stolidity, inhumanity, or vice finds its way into the chambers of disease through the would-be healer, it would, if it were possible, convert into a den of thieves the temple of the Holy Ghost, — the patient's spiritual power to resuscitate himself. The unchristian practitioner is not giving to mind or body the joy and strength of Truth. The poor suffering heart needs its rightful nutriment, such as peace, patience in tribulation, and a priceless sense of the dear Father's loving-kindness.

In order to cure his patient, the metaphysician must first cast moral evils out of himself and thus attain the spiritual freedom which will enable him to cast physical evils out of his patient; but heal he cannot, while his own spiritual barrenness debars him from giving drink to the thirsty and hinders him from reaching his patient's thought, — yea, while mental penury chills his faith and understanding.

The physician who lacks sympathy for his fellow-being is deficient in human affection, and we have the apostolic warrant for asking: "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" Not having this spiritual affection, the physician lacks faith in the divine Mind and has not that recognition of infinite Love which alone confers the healing power. Such so-called Scientists will strain out gnats, while they swallow the camels of bigoted pedantry.

366:30-16

If we would open their prison doors for the sick, we must first learn to bind up the broken-hearted. If we would heal by the Spirit, we must not hide the talent of spiritual healing under the napkin of its form, nor bury the morale of Christian Science in the grave-clothes of its letter. The tender word and Christian encouragement of an invalid, pitiful patience with his fears and the removal of them, are better than hecatombs of gushing theories, stereotyped borrowed speeches, and the doling of arguments, which are but so many parodies on legitimate Christian Science, aflame with divine Love.

This is what is meant by seeking Truth, Christ, not "for the loaves and fishes," nor, like the Pharisee, with the arrogance of rank and display of scholarship, but like Mary Magdalene, from the summit of devout consecration, with the oil of gladness and the perfume of gratitude, with tears of repentance and with those hairs all numbered by the Father.

367:17-20

A Christian Scientist occupies the place at this period of which Jesus spoke to his disciples, when he said: "Ye are the salt of the earth." "Ye are the light of the world.

340:23

One infinite God, good, unifies men and nations; constitutes the brotherhood of man; ends wars; fulfils the Scripture, "Love thy neighbor as thyself;" annihilates pagan and Christian idolatry, — whatever is wrong in social, civil, criminal, political, and religious codes; equalizes the sexes; annuls the curse on man, and leaves nothing that can sin, suffer, be punished or destroyed.