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Sabbath of Hope

THE GOSPELS record some thirty-five miracles Jesus did during His public ministry. Of those miracles, twenty were miraculous healings, and seven took place on the Sabbath day. Therefore, out of some twenty specific cases of healing recorded in the gospels, a third of them correspond to miracles done on the Sabbath.¹

On those miraculous Sabbaths, Jesus took the hope of life and salvation for those who were healed. These Sabbaths were unforgettable for those people because on them they recovered both their physical and spiritual health. They were Sabbaths full of “delight, the holy day of the Lord,” as the prophet Isaiah says².

Let’s briefly go over Jesus’s seven miraculous healings on the Sabbath day:

1. Let’s first think of the paralyzed man at the Pool of Bethesda, who had spent thirty-eight years prostrate, without any real and positive hope of recovering his health. How must have Jesus’s words sounded to his ears, “‘Rise, take up your bed and walk.’ And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath” (John 5:1–18).

The spirit of prophecy says, “Hope came to his heart . . . Jesus does not ask this sufferer to exercise faith in Him. He simply says, ‘Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.’ But the man’s faith takes hold upon that word. Every nerve and muscle thrills with new life, and healthful action comes to his crippled limbs. Without question he sets his will to obey the command of Christ, and all his muscles

respond to his will. Springing to his feet, he finds himself an active man.”³

2. Let’s meditate on the healing of a demon-possessed man in the synagogue at Capernaum, on a Sabbath day (Mark 1:21–28). Christ didn’t only preach with authority, but He also acted with authority (Matthew 7:29; Mark 1:22).

Ellen G. White says, “The mind of this wretched sufferer had been darkened by Satan, but in the Saviour’s presence a ray of light had pierced the gloom. . . . The man praised God for his deliverance. The eye that had so lately glared with the fire of insanity, now beamed with intelligence, and overflowed with grateful tears.”⁴

3. Christ also healed Peter’s mother-in-law at her home on a Sabbath (Mark 1:29–31). The text says that Christ “took her by the hand.” This action was a personal touch of kind sympathy commonly used by Jesus. The woman was healed by the contact with divine power, through faith. Even today, the soul that is sick with sin or physically ill needs to feel the touch of a hand that expresses warm sympathy and love.

4. In answer to the question “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?” Jesus answered with a question: “‘What man is there among you who has one sheep and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out? . . . Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.’ Then He said to the man, ‘Stretch out your hand.’ And he stretched it out, and it was restored as whole as the other”

OPENING HYMN:
Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal,
no. 229

SCRIPTURE READING:
Isaiah 58:3, 14

CLOSING HYMN:
Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal,
no. 388

SERMON

(Matthew 12:9–14). “Jesus asked the man to do what he had so far been unable to do, and he did it. Thus he demonstrated his faith in the power of Jesus. He obeyed the command of He who had also decreed the keeping of the Sabbath, and he was physically healed. The cooperation of human effort with divine power is essential for humans, whether physically or spiritually. If that cooperation does not exist, there can be no physical or spiritual health.”⁵

5. Also on a Sabbath, Jesus gave back sight to a blind man at the pool of Siloam (John 9:1–14). Upon seeing the blind man, the disciples asked Jesus who had sinned, whether it was the man or his parents. But Jesus replied in a way that was unexpected by all: “Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.” The spirit of prophecy says, “It is true that all suffering results from the transgression of God’s law, but this truth had become perverted. Satan, the author of sin and all its results, had led men to look upon disease and death as proceeding from God, as punishment arbitrarily inflicted on account of sin. . . . The history of Job had shown that suffering is inflicted by Satan, and is overruled by God for purposes of mercy.”⁶
6. One Sabbath day, Jesus healed a woman who had been sick for eighteen years, bent over and completely unable to raise herself up (Luke 13:10–17). How heartening and full of love and sympathy were the words of Jesus to that woman on that Sabbath. The passage says that He “saw her, He called her to

Him and said to her, ‘Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity.’” Jesus wants to do the same for you today, and He can. Go to Him, and you will have health.

7. Lastly, I will mention the healing on Sabbath of a man with dropsy, which means he had an excessive accumulation of fluid in his body tissues (Luke 14:1–6). This is the only example recorded that such a case would draw Jesus’ attention. But evidently the man showed up at the meal without being invited, with the hope of being healed by Jesus. Christ did not disappoint him and healed him of the rare disease. He is willing to do the same today for you and for me.

As we saw, in these seven miraculous Sabbaths, Jesus took the hope of life and salvation to those who were healed. Those Sabbaths were unforgettable for those people because in them they recovered both their physical and spiritual health. They were a Sabbath of “delight, the holy day of the Lord.” God wants us to have the same experience today as our brethren from yesteryear. May each Sabbath be a Sabbath of hope, and prepare us for the heavenly rest.

References

1. *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, pp. 200–203, 727
2. Isaiah 58:13, 14
3. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 202
4. *Ibid*, pp. 220,221
5. *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 728
6. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 436

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