

Sin and Sickness - Redemption and Cure (Archimandrite Nikanor Karayannis)

[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)



‘Son, your sins are forgiven’. This phrase, as used by Christ to the paralytic at Capernaum, links sickness with sin and forgiveness with cure. This is why Christ first cures the centre and root of the sickness, that is to say sin, and then goes on to provide a cure for the body. This cure is proof that ‘the son of man has the authority on earth to forgive sins’. Unless there’s a relationship and connection between forgiveness and cure, Christ’s words are incomprehensible, hanging in the air, without any cohesion. Christ is declared the victor over sin. He lifts and shifts away the weight of it and cures the symptoms, one of which is sickness.

Christian teaching and science

But all of this sounds weird and is a challenge to the rationale of people today. It’s contrary to the scientific world image. You won’t find the relationship between sin and sickness in any medical book, nor a course of treatment that involves salvation. Yet no doctor can deny that sin, as an infringement of the laws of life and the bounds of nature, is a foreign body in our organism. It’s a burden that presses on the soul, eats away at our resilience, leads to spiritual and bodily sickness and, through that, to biological death. We may conclude, then, that physical ills come from moral ones, and this is the root of all the pain and sorrow in the world.



Holy Scripture doesn't examine the external cause of an illness. It's not concerned with the biological causes and the medical means of therapy, which science is called upon to research in order to improve our natural life. Faith isn't a substitute for science, nor does science abolish faith, which is why, in reality there's never any conflict between them. When both of them are working properly, they help us to rise from the fall. Science, as a capacity of the human intellect, is a gift of God and, of course, it has its limitations. But above and beyond those bounds begins the vast realm of faith. God's revelation takes us deep down into the root of pain of sickness and of death, which is nothing other than the disruption of the connection between us and God. This is where we find the answer to how evil came into the world and how it can be combatted ontologically.

Face to face with sickness and cure

Christ never speaks of the essence of sin, but in His sermons He acknowledges it as a terrible, everyday reality which hinders the victory of the kingdom of God. As long as today's world continues to exist, the human race will continue to suffer the consequences of sin, one of which is sickness. Sin is the harbinger of terrible consequences for all of us, without exception. We all know how our life is often disturbed because of stress, worry, fear, insecurity and inner fragmentation and estrangement. This is a spiritual and bodily state of sickness and corruption. It's only from this point of view that we can understand the inner relationship between sin and sickness, in accordance with the words of Christ and Saint Paul.

When Christ came to meet us, He experienced the wretchedness and the tragedy which evil causes in our life. Through His teaching and His miracles, He liberates us from sin and heals our sickness. He gives us the opportunity to overcome the evil which is rooted within us and imprinted on everything around us. Healing the sick and preaching the Gospel are both present in the work and mission of the Lord. The saving power of faith and the healing power of Christ infuse our life and transform it.

Beloved friends, sickness remains the state of the human race after the fall. This is why every cure, be it effected through the miracle-working Grace of God or through the achievements of science, is a victory for us over corruption. Another step to extend the miracle of life over death until the latter is finally annihilated at the general resurrection in eternity. Amen.

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