

Theme: Pass me not, O Gentle Saviour

The theme for today's message derives from a famous hymn: Pass me not O Gentle Saviour. This hymn was written by Fanny Crosby a member of the United Methodist Church.

The inspiration for this hymn was the result of a visit to a prison by the poet during spring 1868. After she had spoken and some of her hymns had been sung, she heard one of the prisoners cry out in a pleading voice, 'Good Lord, do not pass me by'; and she wrote a hymn that evening incorporating the line, "Pass me not, O gentle Saviour."

Like blind beggar Bartimaeus' plea to Christ: "Son of David have mercy on me!" This is our plea to Christ for healing and restoration. We join in the plea as we cry in prayer for the world, nations, our families, and ourselves to be healed.

Psalm 147- the call to Praise the Lord for what He has done- rebuilding Jerusalem.

This is a description of God's deeds. We see God in action. Most of the verbs in the first stanza (gathers, heals, binds) are directed at people, while only one verb (build) is directed at the city itself.

The first stanza opens with a call to praise God, offering an internal reasoning which glorifies the act of praise (v. 1)

See what God has done:

- He gathers 'brought back the exiles' (v2)
- He heals the broken-hearted
- He binds up their wounds.

The process of redemption described in the psalm is a divine act that is initiated by God, by virtue of his infinite power. People are described as helpless (heartbroken, exiled), in contrast with the healing power of God. God is described as omnipotent: 'Great is our Lord and full of power' (v. 4). The LORD will sustain his people (v.6).

Mark: Healing is taking place, and we see the power of Jesus to heal. We also learn of Jesus' response to suffering. Jesus' concern for people guided His teaching and healing ministry, particularly for those who were trapped by life circumstances beyond their control.

When the disciples drew Jesus' attention to the sick woman. He went to her and clasped her hand. His touch dispelled the fever and she consequently proceeded to provide hospitality for her guests.

Mark records the incident as Jesus taking her by the hand and raising her up, modelling a close and personal intervention that typified His ministry, unlike the standoff attitudes demonstrated by many of the religious authorities of His day. While others kept their distance, Jesus modelled genuine spiritual, emotional and physical intimacy.

Jesus' healing ministry 2000 years ago in Galilee is an assurance of His continuous power to heal even in our own time. We see Him healing in the synagogue, in the homes as He heals individuals and groups of people. Our cry or plea is that may He touch our nations, communities and give us the gift of a miracle of healing. As we are living in our own troubled society- let us be assured that God is still at work- bringing the lost back home, healing the broken hearted and giving them comfort. So, we join with other saints in a cry of faith as we intercede for the world, nations, our families, and ourselves. We cannot bear the burdens of this world alone, with Covid wrecking lives- we put our hope in God for a miracle of healing. As a people of faith, let us embrace the late Captain Sir Tom Moore's words of hope and encouragement, "The sun will shine again, things will get better. Let us be optimistic". We will cry out to the Living God, and our plea should be : 'Pass me not O Gentle saviour'. Jehovah (*rapha*) is our Healer and I pray to Him for the healing of our world, nations families and ourselves- spiritual, emotionally, and physically. In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Revd Adam Nyawo