

## 3 Sunday after Pentecost The Church shares in Christ's authority to heal sickness and sin

**Zephaniah 3.14-19**

**Psalm 6.1-9**

**James 5.13-20**

**Mark 2.1-12**

Good morning, beloved congregation. As we gather here on this 3rd Sunday after Pentecost, we are reminded of the power and presence of the Holy Spirit among us. Today, we will explore the profound theme: "The Church Shares in Christ's Authority to Heal Sickness and Sin." Our journey will take us through the scriptures from Zephaniah, Psalms, James, and the Gospel of Mark, reflecting on how we, as the body of Christ, are called to participate in His mission of healing and restoration.

### Understanding Sickness and Sin

Before delving into the scriptures, it is essential to understand the biblical concepts of sickness and sin. Sickness in the Bible often refers to physical ailments that afflict the body, causing pain, suffering, and sometimes death. However, it can also symbolize spiritual malaise—a condition of the soul that distances us from God. Sin, on the other hand, is a transgression against God's will and commandments. It is the moral sickness that affects our relationship with God and others. Sin leads to spiritual death, separating us from the source of all life and goodness. Understanding these concepts helps us grasp the full extent of Christ's healing ministry, which encompasses both physical and spiritual restoration.

### The Promise of Restoration (Zephaniah 3:14–19)

Zephaniah 3:14–19 offers a prophetic vision of restoration and healing. The passage begins with a call to rejoice: "Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem!" (Zephaniah 3:14). This joy is rooted in the promise that God will remove the judgments against His people and turn away their enemies. The passage continues, "The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing" (Zephaniah 3:17). Here, we see God's commitment to heal and restore. His presence among His people brings salvation, joy, and peace. The theological reflection here is profound: God Himself is our healer. He not only forgives our sins but also heals our wounds, both physical and spiritual. As the Church, we are called to embody this promise of restoration, offering hope and healing to a broken world.

### A Cry for Mercy (Psalm 6:1–9)

Psalm 6:1–9 is a poignant expression of human suffering and a cry for divine mercy. The psalmist begins with a plea, "O LORD, rebuke me not in your anger, nor discipline me in your wrath. Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am languishing; heal me, O LORD, for my bones are troubled" (Psalm 6:1–2). This heartfelt cry reflects the deep anguish of one who is physically and spiritually afflicted. The psalmist acknowledges his need for God's healing touch, recognizing that only God can bring true restoration. The repeated plea, "Heal me, O LORD," underscores the belief in God's power to heal. As the Church, we are reminded of our role to intercede for others, to bring their cries for mercy before God. We are also called to be agents of God's healing, extending His grace and compassion to those who suffer.

## The Power of Prayer and Confession (James 5:13-20)

In James 5:13-20, we find a clear directive on the power of prayer and confession in the context of healing. James writes, "Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord" (James 5:13-14). This passage highlights the communal aspect of healing. The Church is called to pray for the sick, to anoint them, and to offer support through the power of collective faith. Moreover, James emphasizes the importance of confession: "Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed" (James 5:16). The theological reflection here is significant. Healing is not only a physical act but also a spiritual one. Confession and prayer are means through which we experience God's grace and forgiveness. As a community, the Church must foster an environment where confession and prayer are integral to our life together, promoting both spiritual and physical healing.

## Christ's Authority to Forgive and Heal (Mark 2:1-12)

The Gospel of Mark 2:1-12 presents a powerful narrative of Christ's authority to heal both sickness and sin. The story of the paralytic brought to Jesus through the roof is well-known. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven" (Mark 2:5). This statement caused a stir among the scribes, who questioned Jesus' authority to forgive sins. Jesus, knowing their thoughts, responded, "Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your bed and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—He said to the paralytic—"I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home" (Mark 2:9-11). Here, Jesus demonstrates His divine authority to forgive sins and heal sickness. This dual authority is crucial for understanding the full scope of Christ's ministry. As His followers, we are entrusted with this authority to continue His work of healing and forgiveness. The Church, empowered by the Holy Spirit, shares in Christ's authority. We are called to proclaim forgiveness and offer healing, embodying the love and compassion of Christ to a hurting world.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, as we reflect on the theme of the Church sharing in Christ's authority to heal sickness and sin, we are reminded of our divine mandate. Through the promises of restoration in Zephaniah, the heartfelt cries in Psalms, the power of prayer and confession in James, and the authority of Christ in Mark, we see a comprehensive picture of healing. As the body of Christ, we are called to be agents of His healing power, bringing hope and restoration to those around us. Let us embrace this calling with faith and courage, trusting in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

## Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank You for the gift of Your Son, Jesus Christ, who has the authority to heal both our bodies and our souls. We are grateful for the Holy Spirit, who empowers us to share in this ministry of healing and reconciliation.

Lord, we lift up those among us who are suffering from sickness and sin. We pray for Your healing touch upon their lives. May they experience Your grace and mercy, and may their hearts be filled with hope and joy. As a Church, help us to be faithful in our calling. May we be instruments of Your peace, offering prayers, support, and love to those in need. Strengthen our faith and deepen our compassion, so that we may reflect Your light in the world.

In the name of Jesus Christ, our healer and redeemer, we pray. Amen.

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