

... And You Visited Me

Sickness stalks the earth.



It marks the faces of men and scars the very earth on which we live. Sickness touches more than the bodies and spirit of people. It reaches into the world itself and tears it into pieces – into East and West, into North and south. Life is broken. Who will make it whole? Who will bring healing? Like Ezekiel of long ago, we look out over the earth and see the broken bones.

If we are part of the Church, however, we see more. We see not only brokenness, we see Him who makes us whole. We see not only sickness, we see Him who is the Great Physician. We see the vision of a new heaven and a new earth and now live with the hope that nothing can separate us from the love of God.

But Christ will not let us stand by and simply dream our dreams. He who has seen the new world must strive to refashion the old. He who knows the Healer must himself heal. He who would be near the Physician must go among the sick.

This is the Church’s task and you are asked to pledge yourself and your money that the work of healing might continue. Through you and by you the Gospel of healing is brought to those whose bodies are ravaged by disease and those whose spirits and minds are frayed and twisted.

Sickness stalks the earth. Nevertheless, we will life up our hearts for Christ is here, too.

“And when was it that we saw you sick...” Matthew 25:39a (NRSV)

– Selected:

“Christian stewardship is the *practice* of the Christian religion. It is neither a department of life nor a sphere of activity. It is the Christian conception of life as a whole, manifested in attitudes and actions.” W. H. Greever (1937)

– Giving is both a duty and a delight, something we ought to do and something we are pleased to do (Romans 15:25-26).

– Giving is to be regular and systematic, according to a plan (1 Corinthians 16:2).

– Giving is a demonstration of God’s grace (2 Corinthians 8:1; 9:14).

– Giving need not be hampered by difficult circumstances, for even those who suffer affliction and experience poverty may exhibit generosity (2 Corinthians 8:2).

– Giving is to be voluntary, not under compulsion (2 Corinthians 8:3; 9:5, 7).

– Giving should be proportionate to one’s income and circumstances, as each is expected to contribute according to his or her means (2 Corinthians 8:3, 11-13).

– Giving can also be undertaken as a sacrifice, as some will feel inspired to give “beyond their means” (2 Corinthians 8:3).

-Giving is a privilege, something we appreciate being able to do as a result of God’s grace (2 Corinthians 8:4).

– Giving involves more than financial contributions – we first commit *ourselves* to the Lord and to the church at large (2 Corinthians 8:5).

– Giving is a witness to the gospel, demonstrating the genuineness of the church’s love (2 Corinthians 8:8, 24).

– Giving may involve making a pledge that the giver is committed to fulfilling over time (2 Corinthians 8:10-11).

– Giving is to represent a personal commitment – each person is to make up his or her own mind how much to give (2 Corinthians 9:7).

– Giving is not to be undertaken reluctantly but cheerfully (2 Corinthians 9:7).

– Giving is conducted in faith that God will provide for those who give (2 Corinthians 9:8-11).

– Giving brings glory to God and leads people to give thanks to God (2 Corinthians 9:11-13).