

# Sunday School Lesson

Continued From 9A

al Sabbath dinner. There was illness in Peter's house when the party arrived. Malarial fevers are not uncommon in the marshy areas around the Sea of Galilee; and Luke notes a dangerously high temperature in the patient, Simon's mother-in-law. Peter and others requested Jesus' help for the sick lady.

It becomes immediately evident that Jesus was not limited to any one procedure in healing sick folk. Here we read that He stood over, or "bent over" (New International Version) the patient. Matthew 8:15 says He "touched her hand." Mark 1:31 says He "took her by the hand, and lifted her up." He did all these, but Luke emphasizes the spoken word: He "rebuked the fever," and that was the end of it. Healing was immediate and complete. The patient was restored at once to her customary usefulness in waiting on the family.

After that morning in the synagogue, and the noonday healing in the home of a prominent citizen, Capernaum surely buzzed with news of Jesus on that Sabbath afternoon. Would He not heal many others if they were brought to Him? It would violate Sabbath law, though, to carry a sick friend to the place of healing before the holy day was over at sun-

down. In the synagogue that morning Jesus had relieved a man of demon possession, and then at Simon's house He had relieved a patient of high fever. Naturally, then, He would be sought to relieve folk who were suffering either kind--or both kinds--of affliction.

The Lord had been busy on this Sabbath and past its conclusion into the evening. The next morning, "rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." So Jesus sought rest in God's presence on this first day of the week. But even that was not to last long. Peter knew where to look for Him, and others followed Peter to the place. So a sizable committee of citizens urged Jesus to make himself continually available in Capernaum as resident physician.

Jesus was polite in declining their invitation. He knew God's purpose for sending

Him into the world, and that would not be fulfilled by continuing a healing ministry indefinitely in one place. The kingdom--or reign--of God was larger than this in several dimensions. It must be eternal, beginning now and continuing forever. It must be spiritual, including but not limited to care for physical needs.

Individual Christians have not always seen their own twofold Christian ministry quite so clearly. They are not inclined to practice medicine without a license, and they are reluctant to accept responsibility for spiritual counseling. The service they can render, though, is doubly helpful because they are amateurs, motivated by genuine compassion, untainted by professional pride or ambition. The convincing force of a kindly word, whether of encouragement or concern, is as effective for good as negative "peer pressure" is for evil. Someone is hurting; let's help him!

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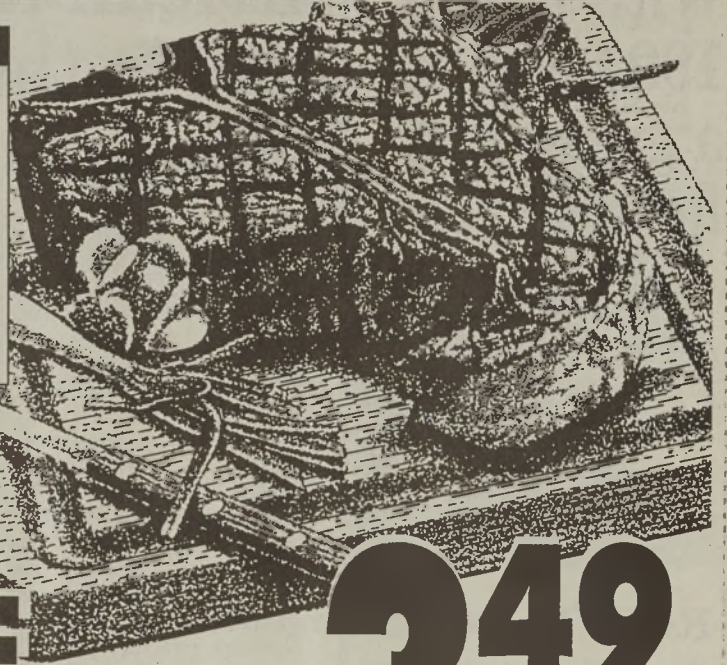
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