

In Sickness and in Health

These thoughts have been inspired by the Prayer and Fasting meditations that HBC members considered during February 2020. Here, we look at the passage suggested for Monday 10th Feb:

Exodus 3:1-4:17

In this passage, Moses engages in a lengthy argument with God, attempting to persuade God to give the challenge of liberating the Israelites to someone else. At one point in the discussion Moses is struck with leprosy.

The Biblical word for leprosy was used for various diseases affecting the skin. Those suffering with it were forced into isolation, separated from social activities and risked premature death. Do you remember the scene from the film 'Ben Hur' which showed the horrific impact on family life and the despair felt by those who were afflicted? Social standing was no defence, as this passage from 2 Chronicles 26 shows:

King Uzziah had leprosy until the day he died. He lived in a separate house – leprous and excluded from the temple of the Lord.

Does all this sound familiar? COVID19 is clinically very different but the impact on our lives certainly is very similar. Moses had that experience of leprosy as a sign from God – did he remember that event when his sister Miriam also was struck with leprosy? One source has suggested that Moses used his experience to encourage Miriam, describing it as a demonstration of God's power not only to discipline but also to heal and restore.

The Bible contains many stories of involving those who were sick but Luke 4 v 27 reminds us that not all were healed. We cannot assume that being a member of God's family on earth gives us immunity from the troubles that surround us, but we can echo David's words with confidence:

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

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