



HEALTH DAY

Sunday, January 13, 2013

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The unit you are viewing, Health Day, is a compact unit. This means that it does not have a supporting cultural resource unit and a full worship unit. Instead, to enliven the imagination of preachers and teachers, we have provided a scriptural text that we suggest for this moment on the calendar, along with a sermonic outline, suggested links, books, articles, songs, and videos. For additional information on Health Day, see the archive of the Lectionary for 2010–2012.

I. Description of the Liturgical Moment

Health Day is a day when many Christian communities take the time to remind themselves and others about the importance of good physical health. On this day, some communities invite health care professionals to speak about health issues that may be impacting their communities. Some faith communities sponsor health fairs (in the days leading up to Health Day) during which members of the surrounding community, as well as members of the congregation, may receive basic health care such as blood pressure checks, blood testing, eye exams, and cancer screening. During this time, attendees may also get advice about how to cook healthy meals and how to start and maintain an exercise regimen.

By drawing attention to the importance of physical health, Christians are reminded that although our spiritual well-being is very important, it is not a substitute for our physical and mental well-being. We must glorify God not only with our hearts and souls but with our minds and bodies as well. On the website HealthThroughPrayer.com, seven common-sense suggestions for healthy souls and bodies are offered: **pray, exercise, eat less, eat better, conquer temptation, nurture relationships, and rest.**

II. Health Day: Sermonic Outline

A. Sermonic Focus Text: Proverbs 14:30 (New Revised Standard Version)

(v. 30) A tranquil mind gives life to the flesh, but passion makes the bones rot.

B. Possible Titles

- i. Healthy Inside and Out

ii. A Clean Temple

iii. Let's Get Fit

C. Point of Exegetical Inquiry

Although often referred to as the writings of one man, the book of Proverbs is a collection of wisdom sayings that reflect a tradition of several ancient cultures. The Proverbs collection does contain some patterns. For example most of the sayings reflect a conversation between a kingly father (King Solomon or King Lemuel) to a princely son. Further, the father can be heard urging the son to pursue one of two women: the Lady Wisdom over the Harlot Folly. In addition to offering moral counsel, the fatherly advice in Proverbs often speaks to specific incidents or aspects of human life. Proverbs frequently uses various forms of parallelism to urge the reader into making a hopefully wise choice that will allow him or her to live a safe, full, and prosperous life. This differs from the Mosaic or Levitical laws that tend to function more as commands. Although judgmental and abomination language are found in Proverbs, the dominating theme is that of choice—specifically choices that will produce life.¹

In this text an antithetic parallelism, which is the most common parallelism used in Proverbs, is at play, illustrating to the reader the expected outcomes of two choices. The first phrase and the second phrase are conflicting opposites.² I see the words *tranquil* and *passion* as the two most active words in this text. In the KJV, the words are *sound* and *envy*, respectively. The Hebrew word for *tranquil* means “a curative deliverance”; the modern-day definition of *tranquil* is “free from commotion, disturbance, or agitation—peaceful.” In both the Hebrew and modern-day context, *passion* refers to loss of control, in particular emotional control. Although KJV uses the emotion envy, the destructive consequence of losing emotional control remains the central theme. Different organs are mentioned in the KJV, but the primary idea is that a sound and tranquil person is far better than an emotional (overly passionate) or envious one.

III. Introduction

I have always been fascinated with the inner workings of the human body. Indeed the beating of our hearts, complexity of our hands, and the speed of our nerves outperforms many of today's fanciest machines. Science still has not made a material that can match the weight, flexibility, strength, and durability of human bone.³ Yet in spite of its amazing functions and defense mechanism, the human body can easily be misused and misshapen if not cared for properly. God has given our bodies durability to function under stress and strain. However, stress and strain can take their toll. Like any other machine, when the human body is not adequately maintained, it will dysfunction or stop functioning completely. Our bodies are gifts from God that should be treated as such.

It is no secret that the African American experience has been plagued with oppression and bias. Nevertheless, many of the current causes of a shortened African American life span are self-inflicted issues:

- Violence—Homicide (Black on Black crime) and suicide;
- Diabetes & Obesity—Diets high in fat, sugar, and chemically processed foods; and
- High Blood Pressure and Heart Disease—Again, bad diet, lack of exercise, stress, and poor sleeping habits.

Christ's commission to go into all the world and make disciples requires both spiritual and physical work. The better we maintain our physical and mental states the more work we can do for Jesus and the world.

IV. Moves/Points

Move/Point One – Healthy living and unhealthy living cannot coexist.

- a. A tranquil mental and physical state allows a person to function at his or her optimum. “Living flesh” cannot exist over or in the presence of “rotting bone.” Further, if the rotting bone is not treated or removed, it will quickly invade and destroy healthy flesh even to the point of death.
- b. This is a cautionary word reminding us that rotting bone or rotting anything in our lives should not be taken lightly. Moreover, this principle of tranquility requires a mentality of self-discipline and self-control that contrasts modern society's focus on material excess and immediate, excessive pleasure.
- c. On Health Day, we recognize that soundness and tranquility are meant for both soul and body. In the African American tradition, the church experience tends to do a great job of nurturing and healing our souls. However, in this life our souls are not separate from our bodies. Unfortunately, our community suffers from disproportionate increases in deaths and complications from heart disease, obesity, diabetes, and several cancers.

Move/Point Two – The fruit of the Spirit will make us healthier.

- a. Through peace and self-control, which are fruit of the Holy Spirit, we can have better eating habits, sleeping habits, exercise habits, and sexual habits that will allow our bodies and souls to experience true tranquility and soundness.
- b. Soundness should not be blended into tranquility. Tranquility is an emotional and mental state. Soundness refers to the physical nature of something. To be sound means to be physically well-constructed and properly fit for an intended use.

Move/Point Three – Healthy spiritual lives and healthy bodies are a choice.

- a. As we hone and develop our spiritual maturity we must also hone and develop our physical durability.
- b. Our verse can remind us of the Catholic tradition's Seven Cardinal/Deadly Sins and Seven Virtues. In particular, the Seven Cardinal Sins—lust, gluttony, greed, sloth, wrath, envy, and pride—are viewed in Catholicism as the basis for all forms of moral decay and evil. (The Seven Virtues, which correspond inversely with the Deadly Sins, are chastity, temperance, charity, diligence, patience, kindness, and humility.) Of course envy is one of these sins that part b of our verse says will make our very bones rot. The Seven Sins and Virtues were guidelines meant to highlight to believers the importance of making good choices that lead to good habits and then to good character.⁴ None of the Seven Deadly Sins or Seven Virtues is a passive or random attribute that happen to unsuspecting individuals. Instead, they are dependent on choices solely made by the individual.

Celebration

The celebration for this text is embedded in the parallelism of the verse and the choices that all humans are free to make. In our post-modern world that is also post-Puritan and post-Victorian, many westerners

view God as a repressive figure full of judgment and punishment. However, this Old Testament Proverb shows the people of God’s natural disposition towards humanity:

- Freedom. The lie that God is repressive is disproven because all of our interactions with God are hinged on choice. As powerful and almighty as God is, God still allows humans to have a say in the outcomes of their lives.
- Fulfillment. “A tranquil mind gives life to the flesh”; a mind in right relationship with God is a mind that can have inexplicable peace. True peace allows us to experience true fulfillment.
- Future. The outcomes in this text remind us that life is NOT stagnant. Oftentimes individuals feel that their lives are going nowhere. That is not true. Even when we are doing nothing that is a choice that will lead to a certain outcome. We are always making choices that are leading us towards something. With the grace and help of God we can make choices that will ensure our latter will be greater.
- Fitness. Starting in the Garden of Eden with Adam naming all the animals, God always has some work for us to do. We will joyfully stay healthy and fit knowing that God has WORK for us to do. We were created to make a difference.

V. Sights in the Passage

Sights: Rotting bone-decaying, broken, dysfunctional limbs; living flesh—active, strong, and purposeful.

VI. Illustration

The Watkins Man

As a child, I was told that long ago, a man used to travel throughout the streets of our neighborhood. He was called the Watkins Man. I never saw him myself, but they tell me had a traveling partner, a large black bag that carried remedies for whatever ailed you. He had lotions, cleaning solutions, and medicines. The most famous item he had was called Watkins Salve. It came in a green tin with a white top on it. People used to rub it on places where they ached. Wherever you rubbed the Watkins Salve, you thought healing was taking place because the spot felt warm. You may have never heard of the Watkins Man; that’s unimportant. I came to tell you about another man who also travels door-to-door. This man can fix whatever ails you, but he doesn’t carry his cures in a bag. This man is Jesus and his traveling partner is the Holy Spirit. He came over 42 generations ago, with healing for all who were sick. His healing is still available. He is the cure for what ails America.

—Carmen Avery, Atlanta, GA

This illustration was taken from the African American Lectionary Illustrations section. See this section for additional illustrations.

VII. Helpful Websites

- Great site linked to an inexpensive book with tips on health and wellness issues:
www.healththroughprayer.com

- Tons of diet and exercise tips with a Christian perspective: www.fitchristian.com
- Several easy songs to teach children how to develop and maintain good health and hygiene habits: www.songsforteaching.com/healthsongs
- Center for Disease Control offers great data on African American health issues: <http://www.cdc.gov/minorityhealth/populations/REMP/black.html> or simply www.cdc.gov
- Tips on health and wellness issues: www.healththroughprayer.com
- Diet and exercise tips with a Christian perspective: www.fitchristian.com
- Center for Disease Control data on African American health issues: <http://www.cdc.gov/minorityhealth/populations/REMP/black.html>
- Nation CHIP (Coronary Health Improvement Project) 30-day lifestyle education program: <http://www.adventistchip.org/>

VIII. Videos, Audio, and/or Interactive Media

- Church Health Center, the largest faith-based clinic of its type in the country, provides healthcare for the working uninsured and promotes health education and prevention through exercise plans and cooking classes; provides support, consultation, and education to start or strengthen health ministries in congregations; develops faith-health curriculum for congregations; and collaborates with faith communities in other ways as well. Online location: <http://www.YOUTUBE.com/watch?v=GmzVzsn9Mic>
- James Tate of First Baptist Church of Glenarden, Glenarden, MD, talks about how he lost more than 200 pounds. He discusses modeling his life after Christ, and references the health programs and classes offered at his church, along with books and other resources he used to achieve his health goals. Online location: http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/james-tate-what-would-jesus-eat/2012/06/30/gJQANyNBEW_video.html accessed 4 September 2012

IX. Worship Planning Information and Songs to Accompany This Sermon

This portion of the compact unit was prepared by Michelle Riley Jones, Lectionary Liturgist.

In our churches, the Health Ministries Leader is responsible for implementing ministry to serve the people by evaluating the hopes, concerns, and needs for healthcare in the congregation, helping to improve health literacy, and elevating health promotion to a priority if it currently isn't—not just for your congregation, but for the entire community it serves. They are responsible for leading the congregation to pay attention to their own and others' physical, mental, and spiritual health as a valid component of discipleship, and for directing services and educational offerings to people of all ages so that their lives may become whole.

For this Health Day, the music/worship team should partner with the Health Ministries team to support and expand the ministry goals through worship. This partnership requires that the music/worship team have knowledge of: (1) the goals of the congregation; and (2) biblical counsel on health and healthy lifestyles. Such partnership will enable the music/worship team to plan music and other worship elements that can help people

of all ages in the congregation grow in their own understanding of counsels on health in the Word of God and become better equipped for daily living as faithful disciples.

From the Call to Worship through the Benediction, the service should:

A. Focus on healing and wholeness of body, mind and spirit.

- Include songs whose title/lyrics connect with health principals of physical exercise, healthy eating, rest, etc.:
 - physical exercise—**Walking** Up the Kings Highway. By Margaret Gardner and Thomas A. Dorsey
 - mental health—God Be in My **Head**. By David Evan Thomas
 - healthy eating—There Is **Bread** in This House. By Covenant Church Choir
 - physical exercise—**Lift** Him Up. By Johnson Oatman, Jr.
 - cardiovascular health—My **Heart** Has Been Restored. By Jonathan Nelson
 - rest—**Resting** on His Promise. By J. J. Hairston
- Recognize and honor those in your congregation in the medical, wellness, nutrition, fitness, etc. professions.
- Provide information on current and newly developed church-based resources, indicating contact information, information sessions, registration, etc.

B. Provide biblical references to the importance of healthy living.

- Include scripture references for all songs in the service in the bulletins, on screens, and in any introductions for the music. Example: Taste and See. By James E. Moore – Psalm 34

C. Provide spiritual admonition on “honoring one’s temple” to live like Christ and our personal commitment to do so.

- Include “focus on health” moment/s in the service using quotes from books, articles, etc. Example: What Would Jesus Eat: The Ultimate Program for Eating Well, Feeling Great, and Living Longer by Don Colbert.
- Include personal testimonies from members of your congregation.
- “Wear your sneakers to worship”—encourage your congregation to wear their running shoes and plan an activity for all congregational members following the worship service, e.g. a walk throughout the community distributing health-related information and/or health programs provided by the church, a walk through the local historical area/site, or a walk on local walking trails.

D. Include population-specific information about health concerns in the African American community and your church congregation.

- On this day each year, you can emphasize awareness in specialty areas: kidney disease, heart health, organ donation, vegan diet, etc., in the service.
- Search The African American Lectionary for music/worship resources focused on:
 - ❖ Cancer Awareness
 - ❖ Anti-Addiction

- ❖ Children/Youth and Health
- ❖ Service of Healing
- ❖ HIV and AIDS
- ❖ Disability Awareness
- ❖ Women's Health
- ❖ Youth and Sex
- ❖ Mental Health

E. Emphasize the role each congregant plays in encouraging and supporting each other towards better health awareness, fitness, and healthy living.

- Include a special prayer in the service for those who are sick and those who are house-bound due to illness. If they agree, list their names and illnesses (again, if they agree) on index cards and distribute them to members who are prayer warriors who are willing to pray for them daily.
- For the period of prayer in the service, have the congregation pray in groups of 2–3 to support commitments for healthier living and to pray for those who are sick.

A. Gospel Song(s) for Choirs and Praise Teams

- Back on My Feet. By Malcolm Williams
- Get Your House in Order. By Dottie Peoples
YouTube: <http://www.YOUTUbe.com/watch?v=ZwHIgXuDAR8>
- Press Toward the Mark. By Norman Hutchins
YouTube: <http://www.YOUTUbe.com/watch?v=L81FapMFUo8>

B. Modern Song(s) (Written between 2005–2012)

- Breath of Life. By Khristian Dentley
- Eyes on You. By Marvin L. Winans
- Healing Rain/Let It Rain. By Matt Bronleewe and Michael W. Smith

C. Spiritual(s) and Traditional Song(s)

- In the Presence of Jehovah. Traditional
- Lord, Help Me to Hold Out. By James Cleveland. Traditional
- Footprints of Jesus. By Lucie E. Campbell
- Precious Lord Take My Hand. By Thomas A. Dorsey. Tune, (PRECIOUS LORD), by George N. Allen

D. Liturgical Dance Music

- Back II Eden. By Donald Lawrence
YouTube: <http://www.YOUTUBE.com/watch?v=A7clB6JcNIA>
- Walking. By Crystal Waters, Erica Campbell, Neal Conway, Tina Campbell, and Warryn Campbell
YouTube: <http://www.YOUTUBE.com/watch?v=p-baoSWy8jY>

E. Song(s) for the Period of Prayer

- Jesus, Lover of My Soul. By Charles Wesley. Tune, (MARTYN), by Dr. Simeon B. Marsh
YouTube: <http://www.YOUTUBE.com/watch?v=3gknkn7Eolo>
- A Praying Spirit. By Elberita “Twinkie” Clark
YouTube: <http://www.YOUTUBE.com/watch?v=VvKCct2Qs7Bs>
- Keep Me Every Day. Text and Tune, (EVERY DAY), by Franklin L. Elland

F. Sermonic Selection

- Worship You with All of Me. By Mary Alessi and Martha Munizzi
- Influence My Heart. By Marvin Winans
- Your Masterpiece. By Philip Nathan Thompson and Zenzo Matoga
YouTube: <http://www.YOUTUBE.com/watch?v=m8oU5UwFhVs>

G. Benediction Song(s)

- God Be in My Head. By David Evan Thomas. For SATB choir, a capella
- Be a Worship. By David Frazier
YouTube: <http://www.YOUTUBE.com/watch?v=AO208JZJYyE>

X. Notes for Select Songs

A. Gospel Song(s) for Choirs and Praise Teams

- Back on My Feet. By Malcolm Williams
Location:
Williams, Malcolm & Great Faith. Spectacular. Chicago, IL: Malcolm James Music, 2011.
- Get Your House in Order. By Dottie Peoples
Location:
Peoples, Dottie & The Peoples Choice Chorale. On Time God. Atlanta, GA: Atlanta International Records, 1994.

- Press Toward the Mark. By Norman Hutchins
Location:
The West Angeles Church of God in Christ Mass Choir & Congregation. The West Angeles COGIC Mass Choir And Congregation: Saints in Praise—Volume 2. Nashville, TN: Sparrow Records, 1990.

B. Modern Song(s) (Written between 2005–2012)

- Breath of Life. By Khristian Dentley
Location:
The BOL Worship Center. Excellence: A Praise and Worship Experience. Inglewood, CA: Breath of Life Records, 2012.
- Eyes on You. By Marvin L. Winans
Location:
Marvin L. Winans Presents: The Praise and Worship Experience. Detroit, MI: MLW Productions, Inc., 2012.
- Healing Rain/Let It Rain. By Matt Bronleewe and Michael W. Smith
Location:
Smith, Michael W. A New Hallelujah. New York, NY: Provident Label Group, 2008.

C. Spiritual(s) and Traditional Song(s)

- In the Presence of Jehovah. Traditional
Location:
Total Praise. Chicago, IL/Nashville, TN: GIA Publications, Inc./Sunday School Publishing Board, 2011. #95
- Lord, Help Me to Hold Out. By James Cleveland. Traditional
Location:
Total Praise. #456
- Footprints of Jesus. By Lucie E. Campbell
Location:
The New National Baptist Hymnal 21st Century Edition. Nashville, TN: Triad Publications, 2005. #230
- Precious Lord Take My Hand. By Thomas A. Dorsey. Tune, (PRECIOUS LORD), by George N. Allen
Location:
Boys Choir of Harlem. Precious Lord... Take My Hand. New York, NY: Boys Choir of Harlem, 2004.

D. Liturgical Dance Music

- Back II Eden. By Donald Lawrence
Location:

Lawrence, Donald & Company. The Law of Confession, Pt. 1. New York, NY: Zomba Recording, 2009.

- Walking. By Crystal Waters, Erica Campbell, Neal Conway, Tina Campbell, and Warryn Campbell
Location:
Mary, Mary. Something Big. New York, NY: Sony Music, 2011.

E. Song(s) for the Period of Prayer

- Jesus, Lover of My Soul. By Charles Wesley. Tune, (MARTYN), by Dr. Simeon B. Marsh
Location:
Smallwood, Richard. Memorable Moments. New York, NY: EMI, 1999.

Total Praise. #446

- A Praying Spirit. By Elbernita “Twinkie” Clark
Location:
Total Praise. #452
- Keep Me Every Day. Text and Tune, (EVERY DAY), by Franklin L. Elland
Location:
Total Praise. #453

F. Sermonic Selection

- Worship You with All of Me. By Mary Alessi and Martha Munizzi
Location:
Covenant Church Choir. Atmosphere: A Covenant Worship Experience. Covenant Church, 2002.
- Influence My Heart. By Marvin Winans
Location:
Marvin L. Winans Presents: The Praise and Worship Experience. Detroit, MI: MLW Productions, Inc., 2012.
- Your Masterpiece. By Philip Nathan Thompson and Zenzo Matoga
Location:
Ashmont Hill. Your Masterpiece. New York, NY: Axiom Records, 2010.

G. Benediction Song(s)

- God Be in My Head. By David Evan Thomas. For SATB choir, a capella
Location:
MorningStar Music Publishers
1727 Larkin Williams Road
Fenton, MO 63026-2024
Phone: 1-800-647-2117

Online location: www.sheetmusicplus.com

- Be a Worship. By David Frazier
Location:
Psalms Hymns & Spiritual Songs Volume III: Favor. Carrollton, TX: God's Music Inc./David Frazier Music, 2011.

Notes

1. Gaultney, Monroe. The Parallel Structure of Proverbs. South African Theological Seminary. A Masters Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Department of Biblical Studies in Candidacy for the Masters of Theology degree, 2005.
2. Hildebrandt, Ted. "Motivation and Antithetic Parallelism in Proverbs 10–15." Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 35:4 (December 1992) 433–444.
3. Brand, Paul & Yancey, Philip. Fearfully and Wonderfully Made. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Press, 1980, [Chapter 8-A Frame].
4. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven_deadly_sins