

FOR THE LOVE OF GOD + -

THE ORIGINS OF WESTERN HEALTHCARE

This segment comes from **EPISODE 3: RICH + POOR**.

From decadent medieval popes to modern televangelists with private jets, religion and money can make for an unsavoury mix. But why do we think of charity – care for the poor and the sick – as a good in the first place? The Graeco-Roman world didn't think so: they mostly thought the poor and suffering deserved what they got. It was Jewish thought, turbocharged by the teaching of Jesus, that transformed the way we think vulnerable people should be treated. This segment traces the origins of healthcare in the West, and focuses on the story of Fabiola, the wealthy noblewoman who founded Rome's first hospital.



THEME QUESTION

Should people be concerned about the physical wellbeing of others?



ENGAGE

1. Discuss a time when either you or someone close to you has been very sick. What treatment and care did you or that person receive?
2. If you could eradicate one disease from the world, which disease would you choose and why?
3. Watch [this video](https://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/16/world/ebola-virus-outbreak.html) ([cpx.video/ebola](https://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/16/world/ebola-virus-outbreak.html)) about the 2014 Ebola Virus Outbreak in Sierra Leone from The New York Times.
 - a. How has Ebola devastated this town?
 - b. Imagine your suburb has been infected with an epidemic like Ebola. Write a Facebook post describing your experiences and calling for help.
4. Choose three different images to describe “healthcare”. Explain your choices.
5. On the line below, mark how important you think it is for a society to provide affordable, quality healthcare.



Not at all important



Extremely important

UNDERSTAND AND EVALUATE



WATCH the segment: “The origins of Western healthcare” (cpx.video/health)

1. What was the Christian response to the plagues that hit the ancient Roman world?



2. Imagine you are a Christian at the time of these plagues. How would you counter the advice from your Roman friend to flee to another city?
3. Dr Lynn Cohick of Wheaton College says, “Christians believe that each person is made in the image of God, and thus each person should be cared for, even if they are very ill.” How might this belief have shaped the lives of the early Christians who cared for plague victims?
4. In the boxes below, sketch some of the things Fabiola did to help the sick.

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5. Underline a line from Jerome’s quote about Fabiola that particularly stands out to you.

"SHE FOUNDED AN INFIRMARY AND GATHERED INTO IT SUFFERERS FROM THE STREETS, GIVING A NURSE'S CARE TO POOR BODIES WORN WITH SICKNESS AND HUNGER—MAIMED NOSES, LOST EYES, SCORCHED FEET, LEPROUS ARMS, SWOLLEN BELLIES. HOW OFTEN SHE CARRIED ON HER OWN SHOULDERS POOR FILTHY WRETCHES TORTURED BY EPILEPSY! HOW OFTEN DID SHE WASH AWAY THE PURULENT MATTER FROM WOUNDS WHICH OTHERS COULD NOT EVEN ENDURE TO LOOK AT! SHE GAVE FOOD WITH HER OWN HAND, AND EVEN WHEN A MAN WAS BUT A BREATHING CORPSE, SHE WOULD MOISTEN HIS LIPS WITH DROPS OF WATER. ROME WAS NOT LARGE ENOUGH FOR HER KINDNESS." **JEROME**

6. Summarise Friedrich Nietzsche’s views about the care for the sick displayed by Jesus and carried out by the early church.

"THIS JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE INCARNATE GOSPEL OF LOVE, THIS "REDEEMER" BRINGING SALVATION AND VICTORY TO THE POOR, THE SICK, THE SINFUL— WAS HE NOT REALLY TEMPTATION IN ITS MOST SINISTER AND IRRESISTIBLE FORM ...?

... PREVENTING THE SICK MAKING THE HEALTHY SICK ... THIS OUGHT TO BE OUR SUPREME OBJECT IN THE WORLD — BUT FOR THIS, IT IS ABOVE ALL ESSENTIAL THAT THE HEALTHY SHOULD REMAIN SEPARATED FROM THE SICK, THAT THEY SHOULD EVEN GUARD THEMSELVES FROM THE LOOK OF THE SICK, THAT THEY SHOULD NOT EVEN ASSOCIATE WITH THE SICK ... THE HIGHER MUST NOT DEGRADE ITSELF TO BE THE TOOL OF THE LOWER." **FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE**

- a. Nietzsche’s views were based on the idea that “nature intended the strong to thrive and the weak to disappear”. Argue for and against this idea.

BIBLE FOCUS

READ Luke 4:38-40.

1. In small groups, re-enact this passage as a TV news report.
2. What proof can you find that Jesus was not reluctant to be near sick people?
3. What does this passage show us about Jesus’ attitude and actions towards the sick?

READ Mark 12:28-31.

4. Who is Jesus talking about when he says “your neighbour”?
5. Create a scenario that demonstrates what loving another person as yourself would look like.
6. How did the early Christians interpret this teaching?

APPLY

1. Imagine you are given \$50 million to open a hospital.
 - a. Where would it be?
 - b. What sorts of things would you do in your hospital to value and show love to the patients?
2. Write Jesus' response to Nietzsche.
3. List some of the ways our society is doing a good job of caring for the sick, and the ways it could improve.

Good	Could Improve

EXTEND

1. Research a hospital anywhere in the world that was set up by Christians. Make a poster highlighting what the hospital does and how Christian values shape their practices. (For an example, watch [CPX's interview \(cpx.video/healafrika\)](https://www.cpx.video/healafrika) with founder Dr Jo Lusi and CEO Dr Justin Paluku of the HEAL Africa hospital in the Democratic Republic of the Congo).
2. Listen to CPX's podcast episode "[In sickness and in health](https://www.cpx.video/sickness)" ([cpx.video/sickness](https://www.cpx.video/sickness)). Write down three things that stand out to you.