



A BALM IN GILEAD

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THERE IS A BALM IN GILEAD....WHAT IS IT?

INTRODUCTION:

There's a song (a spiritual) that is based upon the Scripture found in Jeremiah 8:22:

Jeremiah 8:22 (AMP)

²² Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people restored? [Because Zion no longer enjoyed the presence of the Great Physician!]

The chorus of the song states:

**“There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole;
There is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul.”**

So, as we look at the Scriptures, we'll look more at why this is mentioned in the Bible and its significance.

As we look at this balm and the region it came from, there is an important spiritual significance that I believe the Lord would like for us to see.

Not only are there many walking around who are “sin-sick” as the song relates, but there are many believers “walking around” with wounds or hurts of various kinds that are still “baggage” that they are carrying around. The Lord wants to set us all free so we can be at our full potential for Him...that there will be nothing to hinder our relationship with Him and nothing will hinder us from walking in FULL obedience to His ways and His words.

Let's look first at the natural aspect of this balm and why it is often mentioned in the Scriptures.

This particular balm was famous as a gum or spice and was used to heal wounds and also as a cosmetic. It was sometimes mixed with olive oil and was swallowed or put on wounds and sores. The substance of this particular balm would be similar to honey and had a pleasant aromatic smell to it. Gilead is important and mentioned along with this balm as this was the region this particular plant was found. So many came to this area to obtain this well-known substance.

A few Scriptures where we see the balm mentioned (particularly that it was a valuable, sought-after substance) are:

* Genesis 37:25

A caravan of Ishmaelites are taking Joseph (coming up from the area of Gilead).

* Genesis 43:11

Father Israel had Joseph's brothers take back gifts to Joseph when they went to Egypt to purchase more food. The items they took were highly valuable, specialty items which were not common in Egypt. Because of the famine, they were even more rare. Among these items, balm is mentioned.

Let's go back to the Scripture reference of Jeremiah 8:22 (our theme Scripture for this study).

It is interesting that the Amplified Bible adds to this verse that it was because Zion no longer enjoyed the presence of the Great Physician. To tie this thought in with this verse, look at Exodus 15:26. Write what this verse says:

To answer the first question.....is there no physician there? Hopefully, you can answer with me.....YES!!! When it came to their condition, it was of their own choosing and the fact that they had rejected the One Who can apply the healing balm. They would not use the remedy. They would not apply (or go to) the healing of the Great Physician. Therefore, they could no longer enjoy His presence (they were not walking in obedience).

Think about that in your own life....where you may have hurts/wounds of any kind. Have you gone to the Great Physician? Do you just take what He offers as "matter of fact" and not really in the depths of your being know that He is the only answer? We can sometimes know this with our minds, but do we really know it from our hearts and apply it?" Do you "draw the line" when it comes to some areas of obedience to His Word because of hurts? Take some time here to contemplate these questions and approach the Physician regarding them.

Let's now move on to another Scripture: Jeremiah 46:11. Read this verse through.

What really "jumped out" at me as I read this particular verse was that in the Amplified Bible, it states that in vain you use many medicines and for that one, there is no remedy.

What about in your life? Have you tried many other "remedies" for healing? Have you looked to others to find answers instead of the One Who has the balm/the remedy?

In the previous verses of Jeremiah 46, it mentions Egypt (which represents all that we should have left behind). Egypt (verse 8) was trying to rise like the Nile (overflow and

inundate the countryside)...trying to cover the earth. Although Egypt amassed a mighty army, the battle belonged to the Lord (verse 10). It states that even if they went to Gilead to get balm for their wounds, there would be no healing. God will come to our defense and will do battle when we flee to “Gilead” (Jesus) for safety. Have you fled to Jesus when “Egypt” was trying to come in and overflow your life?

The area of Gilead was a fortified area and many fugitives fled to this region for safety. Look at some of these Scriptures and make note of who fled to this region:

1. Genesis 31:21: _____
2. 1 Samuel 13:7: _____
3. 2 Samuel 2:8-9: _____
4. 2 Samuel 17:22,26: _____

We must come to the point in our lives when we know that there is no other place to flee when we are hurting (but to Jesus Who is our Gilead) and it is there we can receive the healing balm that only He has. It is there that we will find healing as well as safety.

Take some time to go through the following Scriptures and write your thoughts about these. You might even memorize any that you find particularly significant to you and your situation.

2 Samuel 22:2;33

Psalm 59:16,17

Psalm 71:3

Psalm 15:2

Psalm 62:2; 5-8

Psalm 91:2-4

In this fallen, sinful world there are many hurts and abuses which people have suffered in the past (or maybe still going through). Particularly difficult may be abuses that people may have suffered as a child. No matter what it is that we have suffered in our past, the ONLY answer is still Jesus’ healing balm. It may take many times going to Him and being persistent in our going before we can obtain that healing, but never give up as you keep coming to Him and letting Him know that you KNOW He is the only answer.

There are also other reasons why we may suffer:

1. It may be a direct result of our own sin.
2. Some may be because of our own foolishness.
3. Some may be because we live in a fallen world (as mentioned previously). Whatever the reason (because of what has been done to us or what we have done), the healing balm is the same!

Jesus understands our hurts and what we have endured. Jesus Himself was abused. Look at 1 Peter 2:19 for example and in your own words, write what this verse states.

Take a moment and think about Jesus' life here on earth. Write down all the times that you can think of (or examples you can find in the Bible) where He was abused in some way.

We may go along in our spiritual walk and do just fine for awhile, but then when it comes to some issues where we must trust others or even submit to others as Scripture exhorts us to do, we are again faced with this issue if hurts and wounds are still part of the "baggage" we are carrying around. When we refuse to place ourselves under authority because of prior abuse, stop and think about why this is. Are we possibly trying to take our protection into our own hands rather than trust the One our lives are supposed to be entrusted to?

Take a look at 1 Peter 2:19 (we're going to go back to the issue of following Christ's example). Once again, write this verse out. **Suggestion**: write it out from a different translation than the previous one you used earlier).

In the previous verses, Peter was talking to household servants. However, in this verse, he is setting forth a principle that can be applied to any situation where unjust suffering occurs. No credit occurs for enduring punishment for doing wrong, but it is when respectful submission to undeserved suffering that finds favor with God. Such behavior demonstrates His grace (which is the power and ability to endure). That is when it is a testimony to others around us. Hard as that is to "swallow", it is a principle that we all need to apply. The "bottom line" is are we willingly submitting because it is what God has asked of us or is it for some other reason? (NOTE: This is not condoning staying in abusive situations where physical abuse should be tolerated. This is another issue which we will not cover at this time.)

Let's refer on down to verse 21 of 1 Peter 2: It states "FOR EVEN TO THIS you were CALLED (it is inseparable from your vocation) for Christ ALSO suffered for you, bearing you (His personal example, so that you should follow in His footsteps."

The bottom line: Christ did not say we would have an easy walk..He stated we should "take up our cross" and follow Him. The true test of our walk with Him is if we are willing to follow His example.

Also look at Colossians 3:22-25 for the corresponding Scripture to this principle that we have discussed as found in 1 Peter 2:19. In your own words, write out what you feel God's Word is saying to you.

TO SUM IT ALL UP: In our society, we want everything to be soft, comfortable, warm, "cushy", no hurts, pain, etc. Unfortunately, we Christians have done a great disservice to others we may be discipling or brought to the Lord if we have led them to believe anything else. We are not facing reality (in regards) to sometimes enduring "misunderstandings" or "sufferings") if we are determined to walk in obedience and the

“fear of the Lord.” Anything and everything that we do should be with Him in mind (because He has asked it of us) and not anyone else. This is not to be hard or callous, but it is a word that we need to understand and is often “glossed over” and as mentioned before, perhaps something we were not even taught as part of the “package” when it came to being follower of Jesus Christ.

It is my prayer that we all begin to realize that the only answer to every single issue in our lives is JESUS!!! NO ONE else can bring the comfort, the peace, the strength that we need for whatever we have to face and go through. He understands our difficulties and our pains because He went through whatever we too face and even faced **more than what we may ever face. That’s where His comfort and grace (which is the ability to face and do) enters into the picture.**

Again, we return to the Scripture in Jeremiah 8:22 that asks the question, “Is there no physician there?” The answer lies in the One Who is the Great Physician and He will and does come and heal our brokenness (whatever form that takes). Write out what Psalm 147:3 states:

Also: along with this, read Isaiah 61:1

Our determination needs to be, “Lord, whatever I have to face, whatever you ask of me, whatever you ask of me from Your Word, that I will do and I do it willingly...not grudgingly because of my love and devotion to You.

LET ME CLOSE WITH A PRAYER:

“Lord Jesus, I thank You that we can come to You for our healing and allow You to apply the balm that is needed in our lives. We acknowledge, Lord Jesus that You are our Balm in Gilead. We look to no other, and we ask that You give us the grace to walk in obedience to You and the determination to walk with You whatever the path may be. Thank You, Jesus that You give us the comfort and the strength and that healing.”

I pray that you can come to the point that you can sing that song from the depths of your being because you have experienced it!