

January 22, 2012

“I Am the Lord Who Heals You” (Based on a sermon by Charles Spurgeon)

Exodus 15:22-26

22 Then Moses led the people of Israel away from the Red Sea, and they moved out into the desert of Shur. They traveled in this desert for three days without finding any water. 23 When they came to the oasis of Marah, the water was too bitter to drink. So they called the place Marah (which means "bitter").

24 Then the people complained and turned against Moses. "What are we going to drink?" they demanded. 25 So Moses cried out to the LORD for help, and the LORD showed him a piece of wood. Moses threw it into the water, and this made the water good to drink.

It was there at Ma-rah that the LORD set before them the following decree as a standard to test their faithfulness to him.

26 He said, "If you will listen carefully to the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in his sight, obeying his commands and keeping all his decrees, then I will not make you suffer any of the diseases I sent on the Egyptians; for I am the LORD who heals you."

The beginning of these verses is an illustration for the last words of the text, “for I am the Lord who heals you.” The healing of the bitter water at the oasis of Ma-rah is an illustration for learning the lesson of this last sentence, “I am the Lord who heals you.”

1. The Lord has healing power on our circumstances

Ever been thirsty?

The Israelites had traveled three days in the desert of Shur (Shoor) without finding water. They come to the oasis of Ma-rah where they hope to quench their thirst. You have heard of a mirage that tricks thirsty travelers in the desert. An illusion of water, but when the thirsty traveler rushes there they find only sand. But the water at Ma-rah was real, it was not a delusion. I’m sure when the Israelites saw it they chaotically ran eager to get a drink. What a disappointment when they found that the water was bitter, too bitter to drink. A person dying of thirst will drink almost anything, but this water was undrinkable. Then the people complained and turned against Moses, and the truth is against God.

Don’t we do the same thing? Have you ever or are you currently going through a harsh and difficult circumstance that has continued for a long time and you’ve become weary?

Maybe along the way there was a ray of hope, a possibility of escape or change, but it failed you and your spirit sank within you? This despair makes you feel like you just can't take it any longer and you moan and grumble against God (for it's a lack of faith).

Ever have something you want turn bitter?

Here are the Israelites, thirst, and with all this water in front of them, but it is so bitter they wouldn't take a second taste. Haven't you had the same experience? You get what you thought would deliver you, and it turned bitter. Things we trust in become bitter, reminding us that God is our only hope to heal our circumstances. I want you to remember times when God has healed your bitter waters and made them sweet by healing our circumstances; for If God has delivered you before when you cried out to Him, can't He do it again?

Ever have God turn something bitter into something sweet?

There are times when the circumstances didn't change but God put something in the water to make you endure, even giving grace that changed your complaining to acceptance and sorrow to joy. I was talking to someone recently who experienced this. He needed a job and when he got a job he hated the hours, his schedule changed each week and he would complain to everyone about it. Then the Lord spoke to him and he realized he should be thankful for the job no matter what the circumstances of the scheduling. Now, not only does he go to work with joy, it turns out the schedule change is actually good for him and his lifestyle. The Lord has healing power on our circumstances.

2. The Lord has healing powers on our bodies

If we have been redeemed by Jesus, why do we still get illnesses and pain?

Romans 8:10 (NIV) has the answer:

But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness.

It is not until we go to be with the Lord or the Lord comes and resurrects us that we shall finally have complete redemption of our body. "Resurrection will accomplish for our bodies what regeneration has done for our souls" (Spurgeon). When we were born again we were given a new spiritual nature, but our bodies were not born again and are still liable to sickness, aging, and death. One day our bodies will be born again too ...

1 Corinthians 15:50-53 (NLT)

What I am saying, dear brothers and sisters, is that our physical bodies cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. These dying bodies cannot inherit what will last forever.

But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will all be transformed! It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live

forever. And we who are living will also be transformed. For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies.

Our dying bodies remind us of the effects of sin, and our aches and pains cause us to long for heaven where we will never say again the words, "I am sick."

Yet the Lord does heal our bodies. First of all at times **God prevents sickness/diseases** (Ex 15:26): "If you will listen carefully to the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in his sight, obeying his commands and keeping all his decrees, then I will not make you suffer any of the diseases I sent on the Egyptians; for I am the LORD who heals you."

Do you ever praise God for preventing you from diseases? We don't think of that or we often forget to praise Him for preserving us. We make thank Him for our recovery from illness but not prevention.

God heals us from diseases. We see the healing power of the Lord when we have been sick, and made well. Then too we must thank the Lord for it is not the doctor, it is not the medicine, these may be the outward means of recovery, and we thank God for them too, but it is the Lord who is the Great Physician; "I am the Lord who heal you." The Lord does use medication, and surgery as a means to heal, just as in v26 when...

Moses cried out to the LORD for help, the LORD showed him a piece of wood. Moses threw it into the water, and this made the water good to drink.

God could have just said the word and made the waters of Ma-rah sweet, but He did not choose to do it that way, because He wanted to exercise the faith and obedience of His people. You should see a doctor when you are sick, and take the medicine prescribed, or have the surgery needed (or see Mike Iarocci and take his prescribed supplements).

Does God still do miracles? Yes, I have seen others miraculously healed and have experienced a miraculous healing myself. But even when James wrote:

James 5:14 (NLT)

Are any of you sick? You should call for the elders of the church to come and pray over you, anointing you with oil in the name of the Lord.

In Biblical times besides oil being symbolic of the Holy Spirit as it is today, oil was also used as a medicine (as in the story of the Good Samaritan). Still, whether by miracle or medicine, it is the Lord who heals you. Remember God has given us healthy food, and the means to exercise, and fresh air, to keep us healthy so thank Him and use the means

He has given to stay healthy. But be very careful that when God does heal by a miraculous touch of His hand that you don't attribute it to something else or try to reason that it was something other than God alone. The Lord has healing powers on our bodies

And now we come to this...

3. The Lord has healing powers on our souls.

And He does it somewhat in the same manner that He healed the waters of Ma-rah.

First, God let the people know how bitter the water was. That water could not be healed until it was discovered just how bitter it was, then, after they knew its bitterness the Lord made it sweet. So it is with sin. It must become more and more bitter to you. You have to discover that you cannot live by your own power. When you trust in anything but God you will eventually discover its bitterness. The Israelites had to taste the bitterness before God made it sweet.

Second, Moses cried out to the Lord - prayer was offered. We have to cry out to God in a prayer of faith if we are going to receive from Him. Daily we must continue to pray and stay connected to God. Moses cried out to the Lord and received a blessing, and blessings will be poured out on us, but only if we first pour out our faith in prayer to God. Your soul can not be healed, your spirit cannot be one with God's spirit, your spirit cannot be made well, made whole unless you cry out to Jesus in prayer. The water of Ma-rah became good by the introduction of something from outside itself. Now, there is no type of wood that can be thrown into bitter water to make it good for drinking. What happened at Ma-rah was a miracle; the piece of wood was merely used as an instrument, that's all. There is no tree that has that power, but I do know of a tree on which Christ was sacrificed for us and by His sacrifice for our sins on a cross and by that alone can our souls be healed, if we will trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. We too must give up our lives and give them completely to the Lord Jesus if we are to have our entire nature changed.

Again making the water of Ma-rah sweet enough to drink could not have been done by human power, but **(third) God makes the water good.** The task of changing our nature is impossible for us. But it is easy for God and. He can give us a new heart and a right spirit, and good motives to do what is right and good. If we had to try and make ourselves perfect and holy it would never be done, but God's Spirit can do it. God will complete in us the change we need, just as Paul wrote: Philippians 1:6 (NLT)
And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.

It was God alone who did the changing at Ma-rah, and it is God alone who will change our bitterness into something good, it is the Lord who heals you. God who loves us so much, God who loves holiness so much and hates sin, will surely make His family pure. As you have believed in Jesus for the forgiveness of your sin not believe in Him to

make you pure and sanctified (set apart for God alone). That's what God wants, He wants to make you like Jesus so that you can have that same close relationship with God that Jesus had with His Abba (Father). God has healed our circumstances, God has healed our bodies, certainly He will heal our spirits.