

One of the many hats a parent wears is that of the primary care doctor. You were the first line of health defense for your child. I remember my father cleaning my scraped knees and putting Mercurochrome or Methiolate on the wound as an antiseptic.

One of my earliest mommy/doctor recollections from my childhood, I was very young and I had a horrible chest cold. My mother put me in bed and rubbed my chest and neck with a thick balmy layer of Vick's Vapo-rub and then wrapped a towel around my neck and chest then put my pajama top on over that and tucked me in bed. It was very comforting. As Christian parents, how often did we appeal to our Father in heaven who is the Great Physician to help our sick loved ones? Don't we do this every time we come together as the church, to ask God to heal our loved ones?

That's one of the many ways God develops our faith in him, he wants us to trust him and be dependent upon him and often it is in our appeal to him for healing.

In Israel's early history God wanted to show his people that he would take care of them and he did it in the most amazing ways.

One such time was when Israel had just left their bondage in Egypt and they were traveling through the wilderness. In Exodus 15:24-26 we read, "The people murmured against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?" Then he cried to Yahweh. Yahweh showed him a tree, and he threw it into the waters, and the waters were made sweet. There he made a statute and an ordinance for them, and there he tested them; and he said, "If you will diligently listen to Yahweh your God's voice, and will do that which is right in his eyes,-

and will pay attention to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you, which I have put on the Egyptians; for I am Yahweh who heals you.”

This is where we are told that our God is a healer, he can heal us and heal our land and water. From these words we can infer that so long as we are walking in his commands we have access to his healing power, but if we walk contrary to his commands as the Egyptians did, we can expect disease and misery.

Over time Israel turned their backs on their God the healer. They turned to the false gods of the Canaanites and so Yahweh then sent them prophet after prophet to try to get them to repent of their sins which they refused to do.

So there comes a point where God has to make good on his word, and at the end of the book of Deuteronomy God through Moses explained to the Israelis that if they followed God’s word they would receive blessing upon blessing, but if they rejected God and served false gods they would be punished with the edge of the sword and those who escaped death received the harsh punishment of being carried away into a foreign land as captive slaves for seventy years.

Just before this calamity struck God’s people we have God speaking through Jeremiah the prophet asking these rhetorical questions about his people. Listen to this prophecy.

Jer. 8:19-22, “Behold, the voice of the cry of the daughter of my people from a land that is very far off: “Isn’t Yahweh in Zion? Isn’t her King in her?” “Why have they provoked me to anger with their engraved images, and with foreign idols?”

“The harvest is past. The summer has ended, and we are not saved.” For the hurt of the daughter of my people, I am hurt. I mourn. Dismay has taken hold of me. Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then isn’t the health of the daughter of my people recovered?”

In the first part of this prophecy God is cluing them in that they will be crying out from a land far away. Which they did end up in Babylon for seventy years. He then reminds them of the fact he was always very close to them, in Jerusalem where the temple is. Next God lays the charges against them; they were worshiping foreign gods and images which made him angry.

He lets them know that the hurt they are about to experience, he is going to feel as well because he is a kind, merciful and compassionate God, he is going to mourn for them. All he wanted from them was obedience, not even sacrifice.

God is particularly angry with the cohen, the priesthood, because they too are bringing pagan worship into the temple. They are the very ones who should be applying balm to the peoples spiritual wounds. God is also upset with all of the false prophets who were saying, “Peace, peace”, when they should have been warning the people to repent of their evil and turn back to God. The two groups of men that are responsible for the spiritual health of the people weren’t doing their job.

So God asks the question, “Is there no balm in Gilead, is there no physician?” With nobody to heal the people, he tells his faithful prophets to let them know help is on the way.

Isaiah foretells of the suffering Messiah who would heal them of their diseases.

Isa 53:4, "Surely He has borne our sicknesses, And our pains —He has carried them, And we have esteemed Him as plagued, struck of God, and afflicted."

While in the synagogue on the Sabbath, Jesus, the very one prophesied in this passage reads from the prophet Isaiah himself to explain to the people what part of his mission on earth was. Luke 4:17-21 reads,

"The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Jesus. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, and he began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

So part of Jesus job as Messiah was to be a healer, to apply the balm of Gilead to those who who were suffering, both physically and spiritually. Jesus is a healer.

Matthew 8:14-17, "When Jesus came into Peter's house, he saw Peter's mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever. He touched her hand and the fever left her, and she got up and began to wait on him. When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. This was to fulfill

what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: "He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases."

God is more concerned with our souls diseases than our physical ailments. Physical ailments won't keep you from entering heaven, but a sick soul needs healing before it can go to heaven.

So the same plea to God's people of OT times is valid for us today, listen to Solomon's prayer when he was dedicating the temple. 2Ch. 7:14, "if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

This is a truth through all the ages. If we have sinned we need to repent of it, we need the forgiveness of our Creator. God knows our hearts and can see if we are truly repenting. If we truly have a contrite heart.

Is. 57:18-21, "I have seen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts to him and to his mourners. I create the fruit of the lips: Peace, peace, to him who is far off and to him who is near," says Yahweh; "and I will heal them." But the wicked are like the troubled sea; for it can't rest, and its waters cast up mire and mud. "There is no peace", says my God, "for the wicked."

Jesus will not heal the sickness of unrepented sin. If you are struggling with sin, come to Jesus for healing.

Invitation