



Exodus 15:22-27

Sweet Water of Life

The LORD delivered the children of Israel out the bondage in Egypt with His mighty hand. What a demonstration of His sovereign power as Israel walked on dry land across the Dead Sea with the waters held back like a wall on either side. When the walls of water came back together on the Egyptian soldiers, it was total disaster. Israel looked back and saw the dead soldiers on the seashore. "When Israel saw the great power which the Lord had used against the Egyptians, the people feared the Lord, and they believed in the Lord and in His servant Moses" (Exodus 14:31). After they had crossed the Red Sea, they broke forth singing the first recorded song of redemption in the Bible (Exodus 15). Compare it with the last song in the Bible, the victory song of redemption (Revelation 15). The result of God's deliverance was fear of the Yahweh and great rejoicing in Him. "The LORD is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation . . ." (Exodus 15:2). "Sing to the LORD, for He is highly exalted; The horse and his rider He has hurled into the sea" (v. 21).

Three days later in the wilderness "the people grumbled at Moses" (v. 24). How sad. They went from the bondage of slavery in a foreign land to the thrill and excitement of freedom and praise to the LORD God. Then they were overcome by their old way as slaves looking at life. They allowed their circumstances to dictate their attitude toward their leader.

Who led them to Marah? They were led there by the Pillar of Cloud (13:22). Their murmuring against Moses was, in reality, murmuring against Yahweh! What was the cause of their murmuring? Their eyes were no longer upon God.

Three days into the wilderness they found no water. And when they came to Marah, the water was so bitter that they couldn't drink it (v. 22-23).

THE LORD YOUR HEALER

God uses the "marahas" in our lives to remove all our false securities one by one so we will trust in Him alone.

Sin also makes our waters in life become bitter as gall. What makes your experiences so bitter and distasteful, blasted and filled with broken promises? Do you experience wounds that ache, and injuries that fester and infect the memory? Do you find yourself in the midst of a hot desert and the bitter waters of Marah will not sooth your parched life?

The people in the wilderness of Sin grumbled at Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?" (v. 24). They failed to reason that if Yahweh can hold back the

we drink?" (v. 24). They failed to reason that if Yahweh can hold back the walls of water in the Red Sea can He not provide water.

Moses "cried out to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a tree; and he threw *it* into the waters, and the waters became sweet. There He made for them a statute and regulation, and there He tested them." God said, "If you will give earnest heed to the voice of the Lord your God, and do what is right in His sight, and give ear 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, the Lord, am your healer. Then they came to Elim where there *were* twelve springs of water and seventy date palms, and they camped there beside the waters" (vv. 26-27). It was nothing short of a miracle. God answered Moses prayer (v. 25). The wood thrown into the water was symbolic of God working a miracle in the water. There was nothing magic in the tree limb. God sweetened the bitter waters. Again, Moses and the people could say, "I saw God do it!"

God revealed Himself at Marah as *Yahweh Ropecha*, "I the LORD, am your healer." The word for "healer" means "to restore, to heal, to cure, or a physician." He not only heals physically, but morally and spiritually. "The LORD your God heals." The word means "to mend," like the mending of a torn garment. It has the idea of repairing as being reconstructed and to cure as a diseased person is restored to health. "The LORD is the physician."

We all come to life with a need of healing. Our waters become bitter as gall. "Where will you be stricken again, *as* you continue in *your* rebellion? The whole head is sick and the whole heart is faint. From the sole of the foot even to the head there is nothing sound in it, *only* bruises, welts and raw wounds, not pressed out or bandaged, nor softened with oil" (Isaiah 1:5, 6). The LORD says, "The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?" (Jer. 17:9). The Apostle Paul says, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

How poignant are the questions in Jeremiah 8:21-22. "For the brokenness of the daughter of my people I am broken; I mourn, dismay has taken hold of me. Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then has not the health of the daughter of my people been restored?" Resin was derived from a special tree which grew in Gilead that was known for its healing properties. It was a very costly and therefore precious resin, in which fifty or sixty drops were extracted from a tree a day. It possessed marvelous curative properties that cured poison venom (v. 17). It cleansed, soothed and healed and it was readily available.

Is there one who can bring healing to our broken lives? Have we learned how to make the bitter waters in our lives sweet? What changes the bitter experiences of your life in to the sweet fragrance of life?

JESUS, OUR GREAT PHYSICIAN

At the beginning of His ministry Jesus opened the scroll to Isaiah 61 and read Himself into His messianic office. He read aloud in the synagogue at Nazareth, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, And recovery of sight to the blind, To set free those who are oppressed, To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord" (Luke 4:18-19).

What did Jesus do for over three years? The disciples of John the Baptizer asked that question. They reported back to John, "*the blind receive sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them*" (Matthew 11:5). The Gospel writer Matthew said, "Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people. The news about Him spread throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, those suffering with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics; and He healed them" (4:23-24).

Jesus treated all men as spiritual in essence. One day some men tore a roof up where Jesus was teaching in the room below, and let their friend down on a pallet attached to ropes. Jesus saw their faith and said to the paralytic, "My son, your sins are forgiven" (Mark 2:5). The Pharisees hopped on it and said, "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" (v. 7). They were correct! "The Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" (v. 10). Jesus saw men as sinners in need of spiritual healing. As the God of grace He reaches down to us and brings us to the tree of healing. He knows the human heart just as He knows us individually. He deals with us as spiritual in essence, and He has never met a hopeless case.

Jesus is both the tree and the waters. "He (Christ) bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed" (1 Peter 2:24). Jesus alone brings spiritual healing to our broken lives. The tree of the cross is the only balm that can sooth our broken hearts and cleanse us from our sins. The cross of Christ sweetens the Marah's of life. He turns the cross into the tree that gives life.

One hot day in Samaria a woman met Jesus at Jacob's well. Jesus asked her for a drink of water since she had come with a rope on her bucket. In the conversations that ensued, Jesus offered her His living waters. "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, Give Me a drink, you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." She said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep; where then do You get that living water?" (John 4:10-14). Jesus responded, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life" (vv. 13-14).

The LORD who heals in the Old Testament is Jesus, the great Physician in the New.

When we get to heaven there will be no more crying there. "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away. . . Then He said to me, It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost" (Revelation 21:4, 6). Come to Him and drink of the sweet waters of eternal life while there is still time. The last invitation in the Bible closes with these words: "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let the one who hears say, Come. And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost" (22:17). Will you not come and drink from His fountain?

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