

The Lord Our Healer



Life's Bitter Pool (Part 4)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again as we continue with our theme for this week: "Life's Bitter Pool." Our theme is taken from an incident in the history of God's people, Israel, just after they had miraculously crossed the Red Sea and started out on their journey through the desert. They went three days in the desert without finding water. They were hot, thirsty, tired, discouraged. They came to this pool of water. They thought they could drink but when they tried to drink, the waters were too bitter for them to drink. That's the situation.

And then out of that situation came this revelation from God to Moses—the revelation of the tree. He cast the tree into the bitter waters and the water became sweet. The story is old but the lessons from it are contemporary.

Here are some of the main lessons that we have noted so far. First, great victories prepare us for great testing. Second, the Bitter Pool was in God's program. He had a purpose. It was He who brought them to the very shore of the Bitter Pool. Third, the question is not whether we will experience testing, but only how we will respond to testing. Fourth, two alternative responses are indicated in this incident—the people grumbled and Moses prayed. The people got nothing—Moses got the answer. Fifth, to Moses' prayer of faith God in turn responded with a new revelation of Himself. And that was God's purpose. He wanted to bring His people there so that He might give them this further deeper fuller revelation of Himself.

Yesterday we looked at the first aspect of the Revelation—"The Healing Tree." I pointed out that the word "tree" in Hebrew is used of a tree whether it is growing or whether it is cut down. It's used of a gallows, a gibbet, it's used of the cross. And so that tree there that made the bitter waters sweet is for you and me a picture of the cross of Jesus. On the cross of Jesus, He was made a curse. That's from the Old Testament—"...cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree..." Jesus received the curse that we might receive the blessing. Jesus drank the bitter that we might enjoy the sweet. On the cross He was wounded that we might be healed. On the cross every human need was met by the substitutionary atoning sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. That's the healing tree—the revelation of what was accomplished for you and me by the death of Jesus on that tree which was the cross.

Today I want to look at the second aspect of the Revelation—"The Lord Our Healer." You see, in every spiritual experience in which we relate to God, when we receive provision from God we always need to look beyond the provision to the Provider. The provision was the tree, but the Provider was the Lord. And the Lord did not allow Israel merely to receive the revelation of the tree. But the revelation of the tree led up to the revelation of the Lord as their Healer. I'll read these words again in Exodus 15 verses 25-26:

> "Then he [that's 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. And He 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.' [or I am the Lord your healer.]" (NASB)

You see, the ultimate revelation was not a revelation of a provision, but a revelation of the Provider. And that's a very important principle that you need to lay hold of. Every revelation of God, if we follow it through to its intended conclusion, will bring us to God Himself. "I am the Lord your healer." That word that's translated "healer" is the modern Hebrew word for a "doctor." It hasn't changed in over three thousand years. And that's exactly what it means. We need to understand that. The Lord desires to be His people's doctor, our physician. It was that revelation for which He was preparing His people when He brought them to the pool. It is a revelation. It is not something that the natural mind can receive. Normally we have to come into some kind of a situation where we need the revelation.

Many years ago I myself lay for one year on end in hospital with a condition that the doctors were not able to heal. And in that situation, through the Bible and through the Holy Spirit, the Lord revealed Himself to me as my doctor. "I am the Lord your healer, your doctor, your physician." That's the revelation to which He's bringing us.

You see, one thing we have to understand is that God never changes. He not merely WAS His people's doctor, He IS His people's doctor. Let me just read to you two or three scriptures. Malachi chapter 3 verse 6, right at the end of the old covenant,

> "I the Lord do not change [or I am the Lord, I do not change.]" (NIV)

He was, He is, He will be. He doesn't change. Our healer, our physician. And then in the New Testament, Hebrews 13:8:

> "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." (NIV)

You know so many times we can believe for yesterday and we can believe forever, but what about today. We can believe, oh, it happened in the Bible and it will happen when we get to heaven, but don't forget, it's today too. Jesus Christ is the same as He was when He was on earth. Today God is the same as He was at the Bitter Pool. He is our physician, our doctor, our healer.

There's one verse in the New Testament that describes the ministry of Jesus on earth which I think says it more completely in one verse than anywhere else I know. It's Acts chapter 10 verse 38. Peter is speaking to the household of Cornelius and he is describing the ministry of Jesus on earth as he himself witnessed it. And this is what he said, Acts 10:38:

> "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him." (NIV)

See, what blesses me is we have all three persons of the eternal Godhead, God the Father anointed Jesus the Son with the Holy Spirit. What was the result? Healing. Liberation. Deliverance. Wholeness for everybody that Jesus came in contact with. It seems to me if I can say it reverently, there's almost a jealousy between the persons of the Godhead when it comes to blessing the human race. Not one of them wants to be left out. The Father anointed the Son with the Spirit, that all of them might share in this ministry of mercy and deliverance and making whole. This is the revelation of God's eternal nature. God allowed His people to come to a place of need there at the waters of Marah so that they might receive the revelation.

Now today if you're in a place of need, if you feel that you're faced with those bitter waters, I want to suggest to you that you take the attitude—God permitted this, God is in this, He has a program, I won't grumble, I'll pray, I'll wait on God, I'll allow Him to speak to me, I'll let Him show me the revelation that He has for me in this situation.

I want to emphasize once more that the full purpose of God was not merely to reveal the tree, but to reveal Himself. I think this needs to be said to multitudes of Christians today. We are never intended by God to stop short at an experience, at a doctrine, at a revelation, at a blessing. Thank God for every one of those things that we receive. But we cannot rest in them. Each one of them, in a sense, is somewhat impersonal and impermanent. What we need in the last resort is a person. And every true doctrine or revelation we receive will always lead us in the end to the person of God Himself.

I want you to follow me just in a few scriptures from Old and New Testament that bring out this principle. Exodus 19:4, God said to Israel:

> "You yourselves have seen what I did in Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles wings; and brought you to myself." (NIV)

Notice, the purpose of God was to bring Israel to Himself. Not just to the Law. Not just to a covenant, not just to the Promised Land, but to Himself. That's always God's purpose.

And then in Psalm 73 verse 26, the Psalmist says:

> "My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." (NIV)

God is my portion, Not some blessing, not some experience, not some revelation. God is my portion. I'm not going to settle for anything less than God Himself. Isaiah 12:2:

> "Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The Lord, the Lord, is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation." (NIV)

That's a revelation. When you can say the Lord is my salvation—not the church, not a doctrine, not an experience—but the Lord. There you are secure. There you've come to the fullness of the revelation. Don't stop short of the tree. Don't stop short of the experience. No matter how blessed it may be, always move on to the revelation of the Lord Himself.

And then those beautiful words of Jesus in Matthew 11:28:

> "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." (NIV)

That's the ultimate invitation. "Come to me, I will give you rest." Don't stop short at anything less than God manifested in Jesus Himself. Come to Him. He will give you rest. You see the human heart craves a person. The human heart can never be satisfied with something impersonal. Ultimately we need a person and God is the person that everyone of us needs and needs to come to know.

Our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I'll continue with this theme of the bitter pool. My topic will be "Death Before Resurrection."

Radio Program

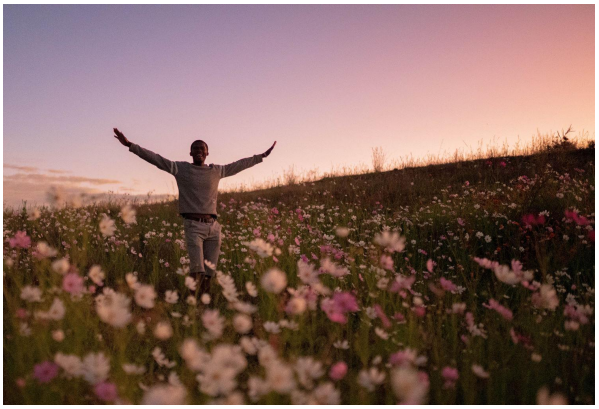
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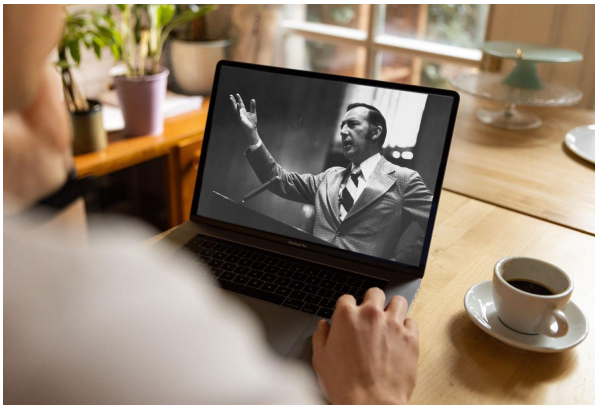
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