

Balm of Gilead 1 of 2

#0164

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—February 18, 1977

“Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there?
why then is not the health of the daughter of My people
recovered?” Jeremiah 8:22.

Gilead is on the east side of the River Jordan, the northern part of that territory that the Israelites conquered before they crossed over the river and took the main part of Palestine. It was settled by Ruben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. The mountains of Gilead were the original home of the prophet Elijah. In those tablelands and mountains, there grows an evergreen tree that exudes a resin, which was highly prized among the ancients as the healing balsam. From time to time in the Bible, we hear of this balm of Gilead. The Ishmaelites, who were on their way down to Egypt at the time that Joseph’s brothers sold him as a slave, were carrying the balm of Gilead, among other things that they were taking down to sell.

Jeremiah lifts this expression from the physical and applies it to the spiritual. He likens the problems of the people of God at that time to physical sickness. He says, “Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no medicine, no treatment that can meet the need of this patient? Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of My people recovered?” In *Christ Object Lessons*, page 418, I read this sweet assurance:

“Tell them that there is a balm in Gilead and a Physician
there” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 418.

Tonight I want to study with you about the balm of Gilead, dispensed by the great Physician. Christ, of course, is the Great Physician, and He’s dispensing the balm of Gilead, which means His grace, His love, His Spirit, which is a mighty, healing power. In the book *Testimonies to Ministers*, I read:

“The Great Physician alone can apply the balm of Gilead”
Testimonies to Ministers, page 200.

So this isn’t something we can buy in the drugstore. It isn’t something that some commercial firm can get its hands on and charge so much for a pill or a package. And remember, if you and I are to have any part in applying this balsam, we have to be the agents, the partners of the Great Physician. The Great Physician alone can apply the balm of Gilead. Do you believe that?

Let me make a very practical application of it right now at the beginning of our study. The only way that true medical missionary work can be done successfully is by those who have Jesus in their hearts. It was never *meant* to work any other way.

The balm of Gilead for body and mind and soul can be dispensed only by the Great Physician.

In *Counsels on Health*, I read:

“The Great Physician in chief is at the side of every true, earnest, God-fearing practitioner who works with his acquired knowledge to relieve the sufferings of the human body. He, the chief of physicians is ready to dispense the balm of Gilead” *Counsels on Health*, page 536.

I thank the Lord for doctors and nurses that believe that. When I get sick, which isn't very often, but even if it's once in a lifetime, I'm so glad that there is a place where there are some doctors and nurses that under Jesus, the Chief Physician, are dispensing the balm of Gilead. Thank God for the healing power of Christ flowing through the ministry of those whose lives are dedicated to the medical missionary work.

Now this evening, I want to study some of the ways in which this balm of Gilead can be applied to us and through us, all of us, if we will just share with Jesus. You remember in Psalm 147, notice that God is in the business, not only of healing broken bones but broken hearts. Broken hearts are harder to heal than broken bones, my friends. But thank God, the balm of Gilead is specific.

“He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds” Psalm 147:3.

Thank God for that promise, aren't you glad?

Isaiah 66:13, a wonderful promise of comfort and health, and hope.

“As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you”
Isaiah 66:13.

My dear friends, that man that I was reading to you about from the letter, he had to have blood of a certain type in order to take care of his needs, didn't he? Yes. The broken in heart need blood of a certain type. Thank God, Jesus is the only One. And you and I have this job of getting together the patient and Physician that supplies this blood type, or back to our original figure the balm of Gilead.

Now turn over to the New Testament to 1 Thessalonians 4, and we'll see an example of that application of this balm of Gilead to broken hearts, to sorrowing spirits. Paul had preached the message of Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and ascension there in Thessalonica, and a number had accepted the message. He had to leave and go on to other places, and he wrote them this letter to encourage them. Some of them were so disappointed because some of their number had fallen asleep in death, and their hearts were sad. Paul by the Spirit of God, wrote them this letter to comfort their hearts.

Many here tonight have at one time or another suffered the pain of bereavement, the loss of father or mother, a husband, a wife, a brother, a sister, a son or daughter, or some other loved one; someone near to you by the ties of nature or friendship. Listen to this oft quoted, never-too-often, promise of God. See how it applies the balm of Gilead to the wounded heart:

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words” 1 Thessalonians 4:16–18.

He who heals the broken in heart and binds up their wounds is in this promise applying the balm of Gilead to the wounded heart. It's specific. “Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” I thank God for this comfort. I thank God that Jesus has applied it to my heart as from time to time, I've had to stand by the open grave and lay away a loved one. I thank God that He has helped me scores of times to apply this balm of Gilead to other hearts who were called upon to go through the pain and sorrow of bereavement. Thank God the prescription is a good one. Comfort one another with these words: “He heals the broken in heart, and binds up their wounds.”

I was reading a beautiful example of this in a letter that the prophet of the remnant wrote to the believers on Pitcairn Island back in 1894. In a storm, some of their number had been lost at sea and drowned. She's writing to the bereaved on that little Island in the South Pacific. Listen as she comforts these dear ones:

“Be of good comfort in the hope of the resurrection morning. The waters of which you have been drinking are as bitter to your taste as were the waters of Marah to the children of Israel in the wilderness, but Jesus can make them so sweet with His love” *Selected Messages*, Book 2, page 273.

The woman who wrote these words had been called again and again to go through the experience of bereavement. She lost her oldest son when he was a promising young man in his later teens, a beautiful singer. Everyone thought he would make a strong worker for God, but he was laid away in death. She was called upon to stand by the grave of her youngest child, a little babe. Her mother-heart was torn with anguish. And then later her dear husband—they stood side by side in preaching this message through the early days, laying the foundations of this church. She had to see him laid away. So she knew what she was writing about, that there is a balm in Gilead; that's what she says here:

“God has provided a balm for every wound. There is a balm in Gilead, there is a physician there... In every trial plead with Jesus to show you a way out of your troubles, then your eyes will be opened to behold the remedy and to apply to

your case the healing promises that have been recorded in His Word" *Ibid*.

If you'd been one of the little bands on Pitcairn, wouldn't it have made you glad to receive such a message from the prophet, written especially to you in that situation? But why is it printed here? So that you and I can have it, so that this message can be a blessing to us when we're called upon to meet the pain and sorrow of bereavement; when we're called to share with others that are bereaved. Thank God, dear friends, the anchor holds. Thank God, there *is* a balm in Gilead, a balsam for weary and wounded hearts.

Now, I want to ask you a very practical question: If you believe that Jesus can comfort people who have to meet the terrible trial of seeing the one they love most dearly taken away in death, if you believe that Jesus can take a broken heart like that and heal it, do you believe that He could take care of some smaller trials? Would it be a good thing for us to test Him and prove Him and experience the healing power of the balm of Gilead in other situations? Ah, my friends, we need to know God in the little trials in order that our faith may grow and develop. And when the big trial comes, we're ready for it. This is so important.

What is your trial? What is your sorrow? What is your pain? What is your wound? Is there balm in Gilead? Is there a Physician there? Can Jesus help you in your trial? If you can say, "Yes, I know it is true, it's working," thank God, you can help others. But if in your own life the wound is incurable, whatever it is, how can you offer to others a medicine which does not work in your own case? How can you, in faith, bring others to a Physician who apparently has been able to do nothing for you? How can you do it? Do you see the importance of knowing in your own life the healing power of this balm of Gilead?

If you turn back to Deuteronomy 32, you see another illustration. The balm of Gilead is from the vegetable world. Now we'll take an illustration from the animal world. Moses is talking about God's care for His people. He compares the way God deals with His people to the way the eagle takes care of and trains her young.

"For the LORD'S portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; He led him about, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: So the LORD alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him"
Deuteronomy 32:9–12.

I want you to picture a little eagle in the nest, way up on the crag. Here comes the mother eagle. What's she bringing? Something to eat. That little eagle is so glad to see mama. Sure. You'd be, wouldn't you, if you were up there? I want you to think of it: The days go by and all the time here comes mother in with something to eat. And here I am, I'm the little eagle. I really have it good, don't I? I have it made, and I don't want anything else. I like it just like it is. I've nothing to

worry about. I get my three squares a day, maybe oftener if the commuter train is working.

But one day something happens. What does the verse say? “As the eagle stirreth up her nest.” The day comes and the mother eagle says, in effect, “Something’s going to be different today.” “So here I am; I am out of the nest, and I find myself pushed out over the side of that precipice.” How would you feel? What do I think—“What’s the matter with mama? Doesn’t she love me anymore? Why, everything was going along fine. What did I do? Why am I being punished like this?” Down and down I go, and I’m about to be dashed to death on the rocks. But suddenly right under me in flies who? Mama eagle. Oh, how good it feels. Up and up she soars. When I get over the shock of this whole thing, I say, “Well, this isn’t so bad after all. Take a ride like this, and back I go to the nest and get my dinner.”

But do you know what happens tomorrow? All over again, the nest gets stirred up, and down I flutter. Maybe it’s a little easier the second time. I remember what mama did, and sure enough in she comes before I hit bottom. And incidentally, you know what’s happening? I’m learning to fly. My poor little head didn’t know that was the *purpose* of the whole thing. I thought that life meant to just sit in that nest and wait for mama to bring the food. But someday, I’m soaring on my own wings, just going here and there like a great eagle does. And I say in my soul, “This is better than sitting in the nest being fed by mama.” Do you agree with me?

What does Moses say?

“As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: So the LORD alone did lead him” Deuteronomy 32:11–12.

Has He ever done it for you, my friend? Has He ever stirred up your nest just when you thought you had it made; just when you thought you had everything coming just about right? Then something happens to stir up your nest, perhaps literally, geographically, or perhaps emotionally, perhaps financially, perhaps health wise. Something happens unforeseen, unplanned by you; nothing that you ever called for, and you didn’t order it from Sears and Roebucks or anywhere else. It just came and stirred up your nest, and you flutter as you fall. Ah, dear one, will you let God be to you what that mother eagle is to its young? Will you let Him *direct* in *when* you sit in the nest and are fed from His hand? And *when* He lets circumstances, or people, or whatever, *stir* things up and you seem to be falling, will you then do what that little eagle does and cry for mama? “As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you.”

This is what God is trying to teach us. It’s the same lesson as the balm in Gilead, isn’t it, friends? Same thing. But the help is in *Jesus*, but what He’s after (and don’t miss it) is to make us so that we can fly in the heavens and not just sit in the nest and be fed.

God does this sometimes with the human agency He uses. Did you ever have somebody study the Bible with you, and as we say, bring you into the truth, and

then after baptism, you felt dropped like a hot potato? Why were they so interested in me beforehand, and now I'm in the church? *Indeed* why? Why, it's time for you to learn to fly, my friend. The life program is not to just sit in the nest and have some pastor, some Bible worker, some church elder, just visit you and feed you and take care of you from here on out 'till the trumpet sounds. Oh, no. Thank God, you can learn to fly. Why? So you can help others. This thing has got to go on and on and spread. Do you see?

Listen, if people—don't miss this—don't know enough to teach you to fly, God will take over Himself and see that it happens. Yes, that's right. Do you remember that boy Joseph? His father was taking care of him very tenderly. And that's nice; if I'd been Jacob, I would have appreciated a boy like Joseph, wouldn't you? But God saw that 17-year-old Joseph, it was time for him to learn to fly, and He stirred up his nest. What a stir it was! He found himself a slave down in Potiphar's house. But bless God, he learned to *fly*. He wasn't dashed on the rocks. *Who* lifted him up on the everlasting arms? God did.

It's right, my friend, that we should do everything we can to help people: sick people, weary people, sad people, discouraged people. But unless we can get them to get anchored in Jesus, depending on Jesus, we will not live long enough to save them ourselves. No human hand can lift the burden. No human remedy can heal the wound. Christ alone can apply the balm of Gilead to the weary, the sick, the sad, the sinning. And our business, you and I, is just what the disciples did with Jesus day after day as they journeyed through Judea and Galilee. It was to bring the sick and sinning to Christ. It was *His* presence that brought healing and salvation.

That's our business—to get people in touch with Christ, to anchor them in Christ. If you lead them to depend on *you*, you're missing the point of the eagle. You're missing the lesson. They must learn to fly. They must learn that God is able to make them strong, to bear their burdens and do things for themselves, and not forever to be dependent on you.

“As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: So the LORD alone did lead him” Deuteronomy 32:11–12.

I was quite interested in this statement in the book *Ministry of Healing* on this:

“We are prone to look to our fellow men for sympathy and uplifting, instead of looking to Jesus. In His mercy and faithfulness, God often permits those in whom we place confidence to fail us, in order that we may learn the folly of trusting in man, and making flesh our arm. Let us trust fully, humbly, unselfishly in God” *Ministry of Healing*, page 486.

Let's do it, friends. What do you say?

There's another time when we need special help, special comfort. It's when we have plans to do something for God and those plans seem to be frustrated, perhaps dashed from our hand, the work we would do.

You remember David, after he had fully gotten hold of the kingdom, Judah and Israel, as he sat in his beautiful home one day he got to thinking, "Here I have this lovely palace, and the Ark of God is just in a tent. I want to build a house for God." Was that a good thought or a bad thought? That was a good thought. Then David, going at it the right way, he asked for counsel. Surely doing it the right way, he asked the prophet for counsel. Do you know what the prophet told him? "Oh that's a wonderful plan, David, go right ahead with it."

And then that night, the prophet had a dream. God said to Nathan, "Go tell My servant, David, that he's not to build that house. He'll have a son called Solomon that'll build the house, but he can't build a house." God had the reason.

What would you've said? With all David's mistakes, thank God he had some beautiful traits. One of them was when God spoke, David listened. Like David's harp that responded to David's fingers, David's heart responded to the touch of God. David accepted the divine mandate. He saw his plans to build that house put aside. But thank God, he had the joy of helping Solomon get ready to build the house. He never saw it built; he died before it happened, but he devoted the balance of his life toward gathering the materials and talking over everything with Solomon.

Can you stand having your plans set aside, or does it leave you raw, sour, disappointed, frustrated, hard to live with yourself, or perhaps with others? Can you take having your ambitions for God set aside? I'm not talking about ambitions to be big in the world. I'm talking about a sincere desire to do something in the work of God. Can you stand having your plans set aside, and the thing you dreamed about changed or denied? Can you? Thank God, David did. Notice the comment on this in *Ministry of Healing*:

"Our plans are not always God's plans. He may see that it is best for us and for His cause to refuse our very best intentions, as He did in the case of David... If He sees it best not to grant their desires, He will counterbalance the refusal by giving them tokens of His love, and entrusting to them another service... Often our plans fail, that God's plans for us may succeed" *Ministry of Healing*, page 473.

God wants us to lay plans, but He wants us to lay them at His feet, and then maybe have to lay them aside. That little eagle has plans to eat like it did yesterday. But something's going to happen before nightfall that will seriously interrupt his plans. He finds himself fluttering, battling for his life, but learning to fly. Oh, my friend, whatever the sorrow, the disappointment, the denial that comes to you, can you say, "Thank God, I *know* that God lives. I *know* He's on His throne. I *know* that whatever He allows is for a purpose, and I'm going to let Him run my life. If I'm wounded, I'm going to appeal to the Great Physician for the balm of Gilead, and I *know* that the Great Physician will heal me. If I'm disappointed, I'm going to run to the Comforter, and I *know* He will comfort me."

There is a confidence in true Christian experience that is indomitable. It's going to need that to carry us through the time of trouble. Let's get at least through the third grade, and on and on. Let's finish our elementary course and get into high school, and whatever we need beyond that. I'm talking about the school of learning to trust God, of learning to accept the assignment of His providence. "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their broken wounds."

Is there a balm in Gilead? Is there a Physician there? Thank God, there is. Praise His wonderful name.

May we kneel together in prayer?

[Appeal given]

Blessed Lord, Thou hast seen our hands, and Thou dost know our hearts. Thou dost read the life record of every man and woman, every boy and girl here. I thank Thee that Thou dost give each one the same attention as though that one were the only one in this chapel, the only soul on this planet, the only one in all the universe. Oh, what a wonderful God Thou art.

Just now apply the balm of Gilead to wounded hearts. Just now assure the weary and heavy-laden that there is rest in Christ. Just now, where we've been disappointed or frustrated, take from our souls the strain and stress. May we no longer wrestle against Thee, but in humble submission cast ourselves upon Thee as Jacob did at the Jabbok, saying, "I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me."

Where we've looked to humanity and been disappointed, help us to look to Thee, knowing that Thou will never disappoint us. Help us to learn to fly and not merely to be fed in the nest. We ask it for Jesus' sake, amen.

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