

Healing in His Wings

Lesson 2 “What About Paul’s Thorn in the Flesh?”

- I. Introduction - Tonight we are starting a series on the healing ministry of Jesus. We are calling it “Healing in His Wings.

A. The title comes from *Malachi 4:2: But to you who fear My name The Sun of Righteousness shall arise With healing in His wings; And you shall go out And grow fat like stall-fed calves.*

1. The Sun of Righteousness speaks of Jesus. As He arises He carries healing with Him (in His wings). Birds carry things in their wings.
2. Living in His shadow means living in protection and healing. Ex: People healed off of Peter’s shadow.
3. One of the things I studied in the early days of our church is the ministry of Jesus and the Apostles. They preached the gospel of the kingdom everywhere they went and they healed the sick: **Matthew 4:23** and **Matthew 10:7-8**.

B. Review - Last week we began answering the question, “Is it God’s Will to Heal?” That came from *Mark 1:40-45*, where the leper asked Jesus, “Are you willing to make me clean?”

1. Most people don’t doubt God’s power, they doubt His willingness.
2. We talked about how healing was a part of the covenant - *1 Peter 2:24* (it’s part of our benefits package.”
3. We also began to look at the handful of scriptures that make it appear that look like God doesn’t always heal. We specifically studied Job and saw how it was Satan who set his heart to afflict Job. God didn’t cause this attack.

II. What about Paul’s Thorn in the Flesh?

A. Many people have been taught God gave Paul a thorn in the flesh, which was some form of sickness (thought to be an eye disease). When Paul went to the Lord in prayer and asked Him to remove, they thought God said, “No, my grace is sufficient.” **Tonight, I want to show you from the word, Paul’s thorn was not sickness, it was persecution.**

B. 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

1. *Verse 7* The messenger was from Satan and not God. It came because of the abundance of revelations. **Mark 4:17** *Satan comes for the word with affliction and persecution.*
2. Old Testament references to thorn - **Numbers 33:55**, **Joshua 23:13**, **Judges 2:3**. Each of these are affliction, persecution brought on God’s people by those

who are enemies of God. This was demonically inspired. In none of these 3 examples is sickness mentioned.

3. What about the infirmities mentioned in *verse 9*? Sometimes it means sickness and sometimes it means weakness. The context of the passage determines the definition.

a. infirmity - **asthénéia**, feebleness (of mind or body); by implication, malady; morally, frailty:—disease, infirmity, sickness, weakness.

b. Times used in scripture for weakness: **Romans 6:9, Romans 8:26, Hebrews 4:15.**

c. In this context, Paul's infirmity was weakness against persecution. **2 Corinthians 11:30** and **2 Corinthians 11:22-29**. Nowhere in these passages does it say Paul was struck with a disease. His infirmity was natural weakness against the immense persecution he faced: shipwreck, beaten with whips, hunger, toil, care for the churches. Paul was tired.

4. Paul asked that all affliction/persecution be removed and God's answer was no. Why? Because Jesus said, "*In this world will have tribulation, but be of God cheer I have overcome the world.*"

a. God's grace is sufficient to help us overcome persecution.

b. God will not remove persecution/tribulation from our lives because in order for Him to do that, he would have to strip the persecutors of their free will. He won't do that.

5. **Galatians 4:13** One time in Paul's life where **asthénéia** meant physical ailment. What happened? Paul was stoned when he first went to Galatia.

a. After traveling to Antioch, Iconium, Lystra he went to Derbe (all of these are cities in the region of Galatia).

b. He was stoned there and the disciples gathered around him and most likely prayed. Paul was healed. In other words, when he was stoned he initially had a physical ailment, but then God healed him. He didn't stay impaired.

III. Conclusion - Satan may have attacked you with a physical ailment, but you don't have to stay impaired. A big key is knowing God didn't bring the attack and He's not behind the sickness. From there, we need to do what the disciples did and pray the prayer of faith!

A. Offering Verse: **2 Corinthians 9:6-8**

B. Call Up Prayer Team and Pray Closing Prayer