

A Balm in Gilead – Finding Healing in Troubled Times

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[0 : 00] A balm in Gilead. The prophet Jeremiah asks, Healing.

And let's make an honest assessment today. We have need of healthcare. The point is that we need healing as a nation. And it's God's healing that we need.

We need a balm, a soothing ointment. People might know of different ointments. For example, there's one called Tiger Balm. It's a soothing ointment.

It's an ointment that you apply to have healing. And the word of God here tells of this balm, of this ointment, this soothing ointment.

And Jeremiah, as the prophet in Judah, he's setting before the people of Judah this sentence of judgment for those who harden their hearts, for those who acknowledge God only with their lips but not in action.

[1 : 19] And Judah here, there was a stubbornness, a spiritual sickness, a godlessness, a lack of faithfulness, a time of crisis. It was a time of apostasy.

They turned away from God. And in the context, it tells of a people, of a society that could not blush anymore. There's this seared conscience.

Now, I know I was at a formal meeting somewhere and there was a council meeting and one of the staff, they'd left their mobile phone on and this funny jingle played.

And I looked across at him and he was red in the face, this staff member. He was so embarrassed that he had interrupted the meeting by having the mobile phone go off in this serious, solemn meeting.

And we're living in a time where people don't blush anymore about anything. It's the kind of world we're living in, isn't it? Sin is so rampant and blatant.

[2 : 23] And this is the picture here of people who won't blush anymore, not embarrassed about sin. And there's this spiritual blindness, this seared conscience they had, this brokenness and many burdens.

Judas is here an idolatrous land and the Lord rebukes them for their idolatry, their rebellion, their carved images and idols and their false religious leaders were crying out, there's false peace, peace, peace, when there is no peace.

And it tells how they committed abomination yet they were not at all ashamed. They did not know how to blush. Look at our own nation, Australia, our own city, our fair city.

Sin abounds, doesn't it? Lawlessness, violence, conflict, immorality. Here are knifings lately over the road. Corruption, perversion, broken homes, broken lives, the grief, the sadness.

People are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. People are hurting, broken, wounded, abused, bruised.

[3 : 35] We see the despair, don't we? On our streets, the injury, the pain. We need a cure, don't we? Jeremiah's task was to take the word to the land, to the people, to warn of judgment, of coming captivity.

And Jeremiah tells about this dismay that had taken hold. He says, the harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved. What a shocking warning.

We may sit under the sound of the gospel often, and yet not be saved. It tells of the wound of the daughter of my people. He talks about a heart wounded.

It tells of this condition, this sin-sick soul. As the song goes, it's a spiritual condition. And so the prophet tells of this dire situation. We need to see the need.

Jeremiah 30 verse 12, the prophet tells, For thus saith the Lord, Thy bruise is incurable, and thy wound is grievous. There's this affliction, this sore, this running sore, and it's incurable.

[4 : 39] It's a condition that plagues the whole human race. Jeremiah tells how the priests, the leaders of the people of God, were worldly, and they'd forsaken the truth. God's reproofing his people in the context here to urge them to turn unto himself, to turn from their backsliding.

And it tells of the hard-hearted. There's no hope for them. The ones determined in his sin, there's only judgment for them. But for those who are backsliding, it speaks of the neglect of God, of the believer fallen into sin.

And some have this engagement, in part, maybe with formalism, with an outward compliance, yet lacking that love of their heart unto him. And they're not making God the chief end, which is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.

They've got other priorities crept in, distracting themselves from service, from worship, that they should offer to God. Other things have crept in, backsliding. It's a real and present danger for the church of God.

It happens in increments. You know, it suddenly backslides, it's incremental, bit by bit, creeps up on you. Were they ashamed when they committed abomination?

[5 : 55] No, they weren't ashamed. There was no conviction. They weren't embarrassed. They just went blasé into their sin. Sin was completely normalised. That's the culture of Australia, isn't it?

That's our culture. She'll be right, mate. Jeremiah grieves over the nation here. He wonders, is there not something to bring healing? Is there not some physician, some doctor who can address this to restore health?

And we can relate to some of these themes in our land. Our world is in trouble, isn't it? There's not a person alive who's not feeling the effects of sin in some way.

Our world is sick. We're educated and sophisticated, but we're spiritually sick and wounded. There's no technology or science to address this.

No innovations of men can fix this. Sin is compared to a sickness. Numbers are tied through the word of God. It tells us how sin is like a deep wound.

[6 : 56] Isaiah tells of that, of describing this sinful heart as like a heart full of bruises and wounds. And sin is described as this festering, painful wound.

Sores that are open and oozing. It tells us here in Isaiah 1, verse 5 through 6, the whole head is sick and the whole heart faint from the sole of the foot even onto the head.

There's no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores. This is the description of sin, of the dread disease we're all subject to.

And it's passed on from generation to generation. We have Adam's DNA, don't we? There's only one who didn't have Adam's DNA. Only one man.

But sin spreads, it corrupts the heart, the mind, leaving us spiritually crippled. Sin, it leads to this estrangement from God, this separation, this spiritual blindness, this hardening of the heart.

[7 : 56] And ultimately, it leads to death. These are the consequences of a life turned away from God. It speaks of the deepest need of the human soul. Is there not a balm in Gilead?

All people suffer from this destruction, this sickness. It brings grief and loss, this debilitating disease. It affects our whole being from head to toe, spiritually, emotionally, physically, too.

Sin is likened to this disease, likened to leprosy, this highly contagious disease that damages the skin and the nerves. Leprosy made people unclean.

Sin separates us from God. Sin also is likened to this blindness, impairing our sight, spiritually, our understanding, such that this spiritual blindness happens.

As Paul writes of this blindness, he says, the God of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not. There's a blindness out there and ultimately the consequence of sin is death.

[9 : 04] As James describes, he talks about first the tempting and then the lust conceives and then it brings forth sin and when it is finished, it brings forth death.

Temptation, lust, sin, death. Sin is this fatal illness. It has a terminal diagnosis, eternal consequences.

Consider the dread condition of man. Every thought, every word, every action is polluted by sin. Our mind, our will chooses evil. Our affections chase after earthly things.

Our passions and our pride, our conscience is carnal, weak and worldly minded. Sin impacts us if we're honest today.

All the evils of the human heart is polluted and vile. What a dread, terrible condition man is in. And without intervention, we're in this desperate state.

[10:05] As Jeremiah tells, he says, the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked. Who can know it? It's interesting, this word wicked, elsewhere, it's translated in our Bible, very sick, incurable.

Jeremiah tells this wickedness, this heart condition that is very sick, incurable. Is there any medicine for such a world, for a sick society?

Is there any hope, something that will help us? Is there any hope, is there any balm, some help? Is there some medicine that can address this, this hurting, this wounding of spirit?

If there was no balm in Gilead, what could we do but lie down and despair and die? Our sins are so great, our back sliding so repeated, our minds so dark, our hearts so hard, hard, our affections so cold.

If there were no balm in Gilead, no precious blood, no sweet promises, no great grace of God, if there were no physician, no risen saviour to look to, no great high priest over the house of God, if there were no balm in Gilead, what a hopeless state we would all be in.

[11:29] Is there no physician here, says the prophet, is the one, is the one who can heal the wounds, the deep wounds of sin? Thank God, yes, yes, there is, there is a physician, he's here, and he's provided the remedy which answers our desperate need.

So he's seen our need, let's look at the remedy. Notice the great remedy that God gives for such a desperate condition. He provides the spiritual cure, this remedy for the sin that infects every heart. The prophet tells of a remedy, a balm in Gilead, this healing ointment, if you could consider it, there's something that we can apply, a balm, this healing ointment, this medication, that it speaks of spiritual health.

And we hear about Gilead, Gilead was this mountainous region east of the Jordan River, and Gilead was a place where certain red trees grew of great value, and on the mountains of Gilead there were these special evergreen trees.

And from the trunk and the branch of these trees, from the bark, they distilled this pungent gum, this resin, and it was known for its healing properties, its medicinal properties, and it had this healing power, this special resin, this gum, it had this healing power, it was powerful for healing wounds.

[12:59] And this was a rare and precious balm, it was potent, it was effective to heal. Notice that the healing comes from a tree.

Back in Genesis, man messed everything up. How did it begin? It was a tree. God told Adam, whatever you do, don't eat of that tree, the tree of good and evil.

The day you eat of that tree, you will surely die. Consider, friends, do they consider it was a tree where they hung our Saviour high.

1 Peter 2:24, who his own self bear our sins in his own body on the tree that we being dead to sin should live unto righteousness by whose stripes ye were healed.

There is a cure for our dying world. Let me quote here, that cure comes from a single tree, planted only once outside the walls of Jerusalem on a hill called Golgotha, a tree without roots, watered briefly for eternity with blood that dripped from a sacrificial lamb.

[14:12] A tree that stood for only a few hours, a tree that offered no shade, harbored no nests, waved in no breeze and produced only one piece of fruit, the saving grace of God, one tree.

Think of it, friends, the balm was from a tree. Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician here? There is one, one lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world.

There is a comforter for you, one who says that he has been sent to heal the broken hearted, Luke 4. Jesus says, come unto me, all you that labour and are heavy laden, all you who are weary and burdened down, and I will give you rest.

The balm in Gilead was this rare and costly ointment. It had healing qualities, especially for treating wounds and ailments. We hear of it even right back in Genesis when Joseph's brothers sold him to some slave traders and it tells how they were also carrying this balm to Egypt.

It was the balm of Gilead. They were carrying the balm, this healing ointment, they were carrying it to Egypt. It was something that was worthy of trading.

[15:37] It was something valuable. And the word Gilead, the term, the word Gilead, it means a perpetual fountain or testimony. And the word Gilead apparently is related to Galilee and Golgotha.

Golgotha. Gilead was a rugged place with lots of beauty, mountains with a tree, likewise Calvary. And the cross is that place of an encounter with God, isn't it? The balm, it symbolised healing and restorative power, most perfectly revealed in Christ.

Is there a physician? Think of our Lord Jesus. He's the ultimate physician, isn't he? The one, only one, who can heal not only physical infirmity but more importantly the ailments of the soul.

And you think of his life, wherever he went, he touched people, didn't he? He reached out and he touched people. He touched lives and he restored hope. Is there not a balm in Gilead?

[16:42] What is this precious balm? We could reflect, is it not the Saviour's blood? Is it not that sacrifice of his cross? Of his rising to life provides the ultimate healing, the balm, the blood of Jesus Christ.

You could say the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses not from sins, not from many sins, not from a thousand sins, not from a million sins, but the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin, all sin. This is the balm. And we need a physician, don't we, who knows our secret, maladies, he knows our heart, the heart disease, the head disease, he knows he sees our back slidings in life and lip, he knows our doubts, our fears, our inclination to coldness and deadness, our helplessness, our unbelief, he sees it all, he knows us through and through.

and do we go to this physician, this doctor and read the diagnosis, you're mortally sick. He sees, he knows, he looks into our hearts, he perfectly understands us, our condition, yet how does he deal with us?

With tenderness. Sure enough, he might wield the scalpel, but he'll do it tenderly, he'll do it graciously, won't he? This is the one, this almighty physician, if we can, but by his grace yield ourselves unto him, let him take you into his own hands and tenderly deal with you and heal you.

[18:24] There is an answer, there is a balm in Gilead and his name is Jesus. He's the only one, the only hope for a sin-sick soul, a sin-sick world, he's the one and only hope, isn't he?

Our Lord, can't we just see him as it were today, this physician and know this physician, this doctor, this one who wants to treat us, he's always available.

You know, that's a book weeks ahead to make an appointment. Think of that. There's no one waiting to see him, we can go straight to him, straight unto him.

He's always available and he offers forgiveness, cleansing, restoration. Think of the balm of Gilead, reminds us of the healing that we have through repentance and faith in Christ as we trust him, as we come unto him, as we yield ourselves unto him, our great saviour and find his great forgiveness and grace.

And just as physical ailments require appropriate remedies, so do spiritual wounds. We must come unto the only one, the one and only one who can heal us from our sin through his atoning blood.

[19:44] And we could see even the word of God as a medicine also where it reads Psalm 107, it tells how then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble and he savet them out of their distresses.

He sent his word and healed them and delivered them from their destructions. You know there's healing here, there's healing here people in the word of God, there's healing.

He sent his word and he healed them, he sent his word. The prophet says why are some people not healed? Why are some people not spiritually healthy and strong?

And Jeremiah knows there is a balm in Gilead, there is a balm in Gilead. But some people are not healed.

when the balm is right there. Now we take the message to the streets every Saturday and some open the door just so hard and then they slam it so hard too.

[20:47] They don't want to know. They don't want the healing of their soul. They don't want to hear it. He sent his word.

We've got to open our ears and hear it. The word of the gospel. He sent his word and we'll hear it. Faith cometh by hearing, doesn't it? Hear it. And you can be healed.

Why are some people not healed? They don't want to hear the word. They don't want to hear the gospel. Jeremiah knows there is a balm in Gilead but some people are not healed even when the balm is offered to them.

They reject him still, don't they? He came unto his own, his own received him not but to as many as received him. Will you be one who will receive him to become a child of God?

If you've got a balm, this soothing salve, it's not going to do you any good unless you apply it. So he's seen the need, he's seen the remedy but there must be an application, an application.

[22:00] The balm, this ointment cannot help you unless you apply it, apply it. Proverbs foretells us, my son, attend to my words, incline thine ear unto my sayings, let them not depart from thine eyes, keep them in the midst of thine heart, for they are life unto those that find them and health to

all their flesh.

There's health here, there's the health care for your soul, there's a healthy healing, healing words, the word of God, love, grace, mercy, forgiveness, it's all here in his word.

God reproves his people in the context for their hardness of heart, this hardness of heart, this hardness unto God or for their backsliding, he tells of this physician who can heal.

And when you think of this one today, this physician that has come, his name is Jesus, Jesus of Nazareth. Is there a physician? Is there no physician there?

Yes, there is. He's here. Well, why then is the health of the daughter of my people recovered? Why aren't people getting better? It's obvious they're not using the medicine.

[23 : 19] Here's the key point. Apply the balm. Take the medicine. To receive healing, we must come unto him. In faith, in surrender, to trust him, to yield our burdens, our hurts, our sins to God.

Our Lord beckons, he says, come, answer me. All ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. We have to apply the balm.

And it's when we draw near to him, our Lord. And when Jeremiah asks, is there no balm in Gilead, he's saying really, is there no help? Is there no hope? Yes, there is.

There is help. God, in his mercy, the ultimate physician, extends healing, if we will but receive it. It tells us in Jeremiah 30, verse 17, God promises, I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds.

Friends, this morning, he's still the answer. He's still the answer for our world today. He's still the healer. He's still the one that saves. He's still the one, the only one that brings us hope.

[24 : 29] He's the one that can heal this broken world and give you peace deep down within. Jesus Christ is the balm of Gilead. He's the one who brings healing, restoration.

Our Lord Jesus himself, he is our balm. in Gilead. And he offers salvation and healing for our souls. Think of it, friends, of the healing, the health, this word that heals, the word of the gospel.

It will heal your mind. It will heal your life. It will deliver your soul. In a broken world, there is still, still a balm in Gilead. Now, the Hebrew word for balm, sorry, means to crack as from pressure or leak.

And what leaks out is a resin. So there's a pressure, this pressure causes this rupture, this leak, and what leaks out is this resin, this balm, this healing resin.

You think of it, I guess, in Canada, they have the maple, don't they? They squeeze the tree, and out comes this resin, this gum, balm, and so too in the balm of Gilead, this healing resin is forced out from the stems, from the leaves of this plant by piercing.

[25 : 47] The resin leaks out through these open wounds in the tree. Our great physician was wounded, wasn't he? He was the one pierced.

As this plant, this tree was pierced, and these physicians would make and apply their healing balm from the leaves, from the bark, from the extraction of this resin, of this tree.

And think of our Lord today. Christ was pierced, wounded, wasn't he? That we might benefit, and we must apply the balm.

We must come unto the Saviour. Keep on applying the balm of Gilead, as it were, to your life. And it's interesting, it could reflect how this balm, this ointment, it has this fragrance.

Think of the scent of our healer, the fragrance of the Saviour. We can know healing, a healing for our mental and emotional needs. May we trust Christ today as the only source of our true healing for our souls.

[26 : 56] The balm of Gilead, it's Christ, it's Christ crucified. The balm of Gilead, it shows us the sufficiency of our Saviour, of his sacrifice.

We can know his forgiveness, his cleansing, his renewal, his healing. Deep down from the soul, the spirit, the heart, we must make application salvation.

of the balm. To soften and melt our hearts, to humble and thoroughly heal. This balm, it can strengthen every nerve, it can heal the blindness, that spiritual blindness, it can remedy our deafness, it can cure our paralysis, it can make the lame man leap as a deer, and the tongue of the mute can sing.

It's when we have that deep down healing by faith, when our heart gets purified by faith, and we get that sense of God's goodness and grace, that he's touched us, just as truly as Christ touched the ones in the gospels, he can touch you and me in the here and now, right here, right now, and it's by faith that the balm of Gilead can touch us today.

And when we think of the gospel, it makes Jesus precious to our soul. We see the wonder of it all. We see that though we have this inclination of the sinful living, the grace of God is ever more necessary.

[28 : 42] Is there no balm in Gilead? Yes, there is. Blessed be God. The blood of Jesus, the precious promises, the sweet promises of the gospel are for us.

Why then are people not healed? They choose to ignore the remedy. They won't come unto the great physician. They won't come and make application.

Is there no physician there? Yes, bless God, he's here, he's here now. A wise, a mighty, an almighty, an all sufficient physician, the only one who can heal our soul.

Will you seek his face and call upon his name? Hope in his mercy and trust him for time and for eternity. There is a balm in Gilead.

His name is Jesus. He's the source of healing, of comfort. He is the one, the physician in the land. He's here right now and he wants to apply that healing to you.

[29 : 56] Can we come unto him? And sure enough, we can all have wounds and hurts and needs of his touch as safe people still, can't we?

We're still fragile, vulnerable, inclined to be wounded and hurting. He wants you to apply his healing power and then to transfer it, to transmit it to, his healing power to others.

In all the brokenness and despair of our world, you have the message, his healing, his grace. He is the balm, broken and crushed for us.

Only Christ can save a sin-seek soul. His name is Jesus this morning and he's the only hope for us. And he still saves, he still sets people free.

Broken people can be healed holy, made whole by the healing virtue of Jesus today.

[30 : 58] And the balm in Gilead, it speaks of the remedy of God for the sickness of sin. And this remedy, it's only in Christ we can know it. As we trust him, as we acknowledge our need, yes I can see the diagnosis has been written, all have sinned, that means me.

It says there is a saviour, there is a remedy, Christ died for my sins according to the scriptures. I'm going to make application, I'm going to take that prescription and take that medicine, I'm going to call on the name of the Lord and I'm going to be saved.

Saved. S-A-V-E-D. Friends, the remedy has been offered, it's provided, but will we receive it? Trust him for your forgiveness for eternal life, trust him now.

No wound is too deep, no sin too great, no sorrow too overwhelming that he cannot heal it. Find relief in the saviour this morning. It tells us that we can have comfort, comfort of the scriptures, there's comfort in the comforter.

It tells of him, surely he hath borne our grace and carried our sorrows, and yet we did esteem him, stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. Grace, sorrows, he knows the tears on our pillow, God knows all about it, God knows all about it.

[32 : 33] He's borne our grace, he's carried our sorrows, but he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, as they nailed his hands, his feet, it was for me, for me, for me, for me, every scar, every bruising, every injury, every abusing, it was for me, for you, bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement, this punishment of our peace was upon him and with his stripes we are healed.

In Christ there is a balm for every wound. Friends, will you trust him? He says, I've been sent to heal the broken heart. Even as believers, we have times of heavy, heavy times.

He's come to heal. He's come to heal the broken hearted. We can know a healing for our soul, a setting free, a healing for our spirit, such that we won't be bruised anymore.

He'll take it all away by his grace. There's still God's comfort. There's still the great physician for the wounded soul. There's still the one, this physician, is there a physician?

Yes, there is. And he's here now. And he wants you to apply the healing balm, to take the remedy, take the medicine. Just as we receive the healing balm, and we are healed, let's also share it.

[34 : 10] This is too good for us to keep to ourselves, this healing balm. We're all ministers, we're all physicians, we're all sent as a healthcare force into this world that's full of this misery, of this brokenness and pain, of this lostness, to be instruments of his grace, to take the healing balm of God's love.

Many are broken and in pain. They're searching, some searching, we must be the ones to tell them, before the cults do. We're called to be vessels of God's love.

Take the message of his hope. Be an ambassador, bring those words, those healing words. He sent his word, we're part of that. He sent his word, we're part of that.

Who's going to tell them? He sent his word, how's he going to send his word? Through your lips, through your lips.

He sent his word and he healed them. Friends, praise God for that. Be a vessel that he can use.

[35 : 22] There is a balm in Gilead, there is a physician who can bring healing. Only one, there's only one. There's only one who can deal with the hardness of my heart and make it soft.

My back slidings, my inclination to go to the slough of despond, there's only Christ can pull me out of that. And the physician, his identity is given in the gospel, it's Christ.

This physician, the great physician, isn't he? Will you hear the voice of the good shepherd, that healing voice? He says, I'll give you rest.

Rest to your soul. Some never know the rest. There's a striving when there should be a resting, resting, resting.

Is there any balm in Gilead? Is there any medicine for the sick society? How can we be more sensitive to the needs all around us, the streets, the people?

[36 : 30] How can we be more sensitive? I know for myself I'm inclined to be selfish. I don't know about you.

I think we can be. We don't care about others, about souls. There's brokenness all around us, there's brokenness. There's a great sickness that covers the earth.

Moral, spiritual, and it's been ever since sin entered the bloodstream of man in the garden. Sin. Man is dead in trespasses and sins.

The question is, is there any balm? Is there any hope? Is there any medicine? Is there any ointment that can take this dread affliction away? Is there any balm? In Gilead when man is lost and can't find his way?

The answer is not in religion. It's not in the church. It's not in sacraments. It's not in ordinances. It's in the person of Jesus Christ.

[37 : 34] He is the balm in Gilead. And it's that same Jesus we want to tell others about, don't we? And it's interesting, the people that Jeremiah was preaching to, they were actually close to Gilead.

They didn't have to take some big long journey to get there. It wasn't that they had to travel many thousands and thousands of miles to get to Gilead, to get to this medicine.

It was nearby. They had no excuse. not only was the balm available, but the balm was close by.

And friends, this morning, right here, right now, Jesus is close by.

He's passing by. He's passing by this moment. So it is with Jesus and with your salvation. The salvation is in Jesus. You can come to the Lord Jesus anytime, anywhere.

He's close. He's near. He's nigh. He's near at hand. You can come unto him right now. and receive forgiveness. There is a balm in Gilead.

[38 : 46] Christ is the universal medicine for everything that we need. And here's the ultimate cure. May we just open our eyes and see our need. The diagnosis is grim.

I've got a terminal condition. But the remedy is here. The ointment, the salve, the balm, this healing, medication, it's Christ.

I'm going to trust this great doctor to be the one, to pay, to make that healing happen, to make that healing mine.

I'm going to trust him. Is that you this morning? To know our need, our brokenness and see, is there a physician here? Is there a physician here?

bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases, who redeemeth thy life from destruction, who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies.

[40 : 01] Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician here? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?

We must come to receive his healing. Receive his healing for your soul today. Lord, we thank you that as the prophet cried, is there no balm?

Yes, there is a balm. It's your healing, Lord, that you as the physician, as the great doctor of our soul, that you are the one who comes and you grant us the ears to hear, Lord, to receive such a gift.

We pray each one might have a heart that your Holy Spirit will soften and will see our great need, our great lack, and come unto you and find that great rest for our soul.

Pray that each one might have that heart's trust to know the saving grace that by faith we can trust and know everlasting life by virtue of that tree.

[41 : 03] Lord, as we see Adam took of that tree, Lord, we can, as it were, take of that tree, the tree of Calvary, to take that virtue that is your work on our part, not that the tree is of any veneration, but that we can see in the cross that great act of love that still works wonders today, that great virtue of your shed blood.

Lord, we praise you for it, Lord. We pray each one might have that heart's trust and help us, Lord, as we go through life's journey. We know we're going to get bruised. We're going to continue to get bruised and hurt.

The abuse that is in our world at times, Lord, the hurting, Lord, yet the healing is always there in Christ. We thank you for it in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen.