

Healing in Christ's fourth wound - Sun 15 Aug

The prophet Isaiah declared 'by His stripes we are healed.' Isa 53:5. The stripes that Christ experienced came when He was scourged with the cat o' nine tails. Blood flowed from multiple wounds as the skin was peeled from His back. The blood that flowed in this fourth wound brings healing & deliverance from the many & varied personality flaws that we have. Most often, these have developed during our formative, childhood years. Sometimes, we are born with them. Mostly, we are not aware of them. They have just become our default mode of living. We justify them with statements like 'This is just how I am'. However, it is not how God intended us to be – they are not part of His name that He predestined for us.

The example of Jacob

Jacob was born into a covenant house as the son of Isaac, grandson of Abraham. Yet his personality was flawed. The name Jacob means 'a supplanter' & he was by nature a deceiver & a cheater. On two occasions, he deceived his brother Esau, who hated Jacob & wanted to kill him. Jacob left the family home to live & work with his uncle. There, Jacob had a long season of testing. His uncle changed his wages repeatedly, then tricked Jacob into marrying his eldest daughter when he really loved her sister. He had to work for another 7 years to get the daughter he had first chosen. He was really treated very poorly & suffered gross injustice.

The Lord used those injustices to join Jacob to the fellowship of His sufferings, where Jacob's name & nature could be changed by the healing from Christ's fourth wound. He had to accept that the injustices were the chastening hand of the Lord in his life. After 20 years, Jacob headed back to his home in Canaan with his two wives. Nearing home, he feared the displeasure of his brother Esau & cried out to God. In answer to his prayer, God met Jacob & wrestled with him through the night, finally dislocating Jacob's thigh. Jacob was brought to a place of helplessness & became poor in spirit. He received a new name 'Israel', meaning a prince with God.

Jacob called the place of this encounter 'Peniel', meaning 'face of God'. He had met the Lord face to face, found repentance & was a changed man. The evidence of this is that he was able to humble himself before his brother Esau, and the two brothers were reconciled. Jacob testified that his brother Esau was in fact the face of God to him. When Jacob settled in the land, God met him again & repeated to him the blessing of Abraham and he was sanctified to his path in life as one of the patriarchs of the nation.

Meeting Christ face to face

In this season, Christ has been walking amongst us & His eyes, like a flame of fire, have been upon us. These are eyes of judgement but they are also eyes of love. His word has pierced our heart for He is wanting to meet us & bring healing to the many personality flaws that we have. We may have been born into a covenant house, but that does not make us immune to these corruptions. Unaware of how we are or how we affect others, we may need to hear from a brother who becomes the face of God to us.

Ultimately, we need to humble ourselves before the Lord and become poor in spirit. Where we have been treated unjustly, we must see this as the hand of the Lord. We are not to despise the chastening of the Lord, nor be discouraged when we are rebuked by Him. For whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives. Heb 12:5-6. As we join the fellowship of His fourth wound, we know the scourging that every son receives. But this process brings healing to our soul and spirit as the Lord delivers us from the many deep-seated personality traits that are not part of our name.

Following his wrestle with God, Jacob was left with a permanent limp. This was part of the ongoing suffering that touched his life & a reminder that the Lord had healed and regenerated his nature. In a similar way, our scourging leaves a scar as a permanent reminder that we are eternally joined to the fellowship of His offering. Like Jacob, we may need to humble ourselves before those who have inflicted injustice upon us. As the love of God is poured into our heart by the Holy Spirit, we are able to find forgiveness and be reconciled to our brethren. We can then walk in the pathway of sanctification that the Lord has already established for us.