

“A Little Balm”

Introduction. Among the items that Jacob told his sons to take their brother Joseph in Egypt (though neither Jacob nor his sons knew, at this point, it was Joseph or that he was now governor) for a present was “a little balm, and a little honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts, and almonds” (Genesis 43:11).

Balm was an aromatic resin or gum widely used in the ancient Near East for cosmetic and medical purposes (Genesis 37:25; Ezekiel 27:17). Likewise, the New Testament mentions “oil” related to healing (Luke 10:34; James 5:14). We still have helpful balms or salves used in healing today, like Vick’s VapoRub.

Balm is used in a metaphorical way in the Bible. In Jeremiah (8:22; 46:11; 51:8) it was used in regard to the healing of spiritual and political evils of dying Judah. We want to consider that kind of usage today in our lesson. Good people need “a little balm” for a multitude of reasons.

I. Husbands And Wives Need To Use “A Little Balm”

- A. Marriage means that we should consider one another (1 Peter 3:1-2, 7; cp. Genesis 26:8). Husbands and wives should not be hypercritical of each other or cutting each other down in front of children or others.
- B. In the master/servant relationship, Peter acknowledges that enduring sorrows while suffering unjustly will not always be easy, but God will be gracious to the person who endures it (1 Peter 2:18-19). The same will be true in a marriage.
- C. But we can do better. We know that it is easier to catch flies with honey than with poison. Likewise, it is easier (and much better) to win each other with love and kindness, and praise and adoration, than with harsh words, cruel ridicule, and insults (Proverbs 17:14; 21:19; 26:21).

II. Parents Need To Use “A Little Balm”

- A. Realize that they are but children and that they will act like children (Matthew 11:16-17; 1 Corinthians 13:11).
- B. Nurture them and train them with great patience (Deuteronomy 6:6-12; Ephesians 6:4).
- C. And especially when they get into trouble or have a problem and need correction — soon afterwards give them “a little balm”.

III. Overseers In The Local Church Need To Use “A Little Balm”

- A. Elders take heed to and feed the flock (Acts 20:28). They are given the task of exposing the works of the flesh and the unfruitful works of darkness (Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 5:18).
- B. Elders should see that the weak are strengthened and are encouraged (Acts 20:35; 1 Thessalonians 5:14). This is done by exercising tender care, not ruthless unconcern (1 Peter 5:1-4).

IV. Christians Need To Use “A Little Balm”

- A. Remember that we are all a part of “one another” (1 Corinthians 12:25; Ephesians 4:25; 5:21; 1 Peter 5:5).

- B. Saul was grateful for the assistance he received by the hands of his brethren (Acts 9:23-27; cp. John 13:14; Galatians 5:13).
- C. When brethren get at odds with one another, “a little balm” is needed (Ephesians 4:31-32; Colossians 3:12-14).
- D. While the elders have the need to use “a little balm,” the same could be said for all those who submit to them (Hebrews 13:17). If you have never had to correct someone, the task is a difficult one!

V. Preachers Need To Use “A Little Balm”

- A. They should not brow-beat, using the pulpit to get even or hurt someone.
- B. They should be “gentle” and “longsuffering” (1 Thessalonians 2:7; 2 Timothy 2:24; 4:2).

VI. Members Of Society Need To Use “A Little Balm”

- A. We are all part of humankind so we should show a little human kindness (Luke 10:25-37).
- B. This means even during the small times: driving, shopping at work, etc. (Matthew 5:13-16; 7:12).

Conclusion. Would it not be nice if everyone gave “a little balm” for healing? Jesus holds out “a little balm” to the sinner (Matthew 11:28-30; 28:19-20; Revelation 3:20), so we want to do the same as we close our lesson this morning by extending our invitation for you to obey the gospel of Christ.