

**Scriptures and Doctrine :: Sozo / Discernment****Sozo / Discernment - posted by menderofnets (), on: 2014/1/13 21:13**

Hello all,

Can I please ask for your prayers and wisdom around a current problem involving our local church here in the UK?

The minister has recently introduced Sozo ministry into the ministry of the church, and several people have gone through it, reporting afterwards some general benefit. There has, however, been a substantial amount of concern from several within the congregation relating to this, partly fuelled by 'information' readily available via the internet, but also stemming in some cases from a genuine concern from mature believers.

Over the years I have struggled with situations where I have thought it necessary to speak the truth in love, and to offer correction or rebuke in a way that is honouring to God and edifying to the Body, rather than staying silent out of fear for calling something that is from God unholy and thus incurring suffering. I am much in need of wisdom:

What is the scriptural basis and provision made by God through Jesus Christ to believers in the areas of healing and deliverance?

Where we are instructed in Scripture to be discerning and to test the spirits (1 Jn 4 et al), how do we test new things that are claimed to be 'of/from God' where there is testimonial evidence of changed lives in some capacity?

Is Sozo a valid ministry, a useful tool in Christian ministry, a dangerous practice, or something else?

Please pray for me and our fellowship in this, as my deepest concern is that there will be an ungodly division resulting from this, causing damage and bringing God's name into disrepute.

Thank you and God bless,

Jamie

Re: Sozo / Discernment - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2014/1/13 22:05

This is a ministry of Bethel Church in California (Bill Johnston).

--

HISTORY OF SOZO

In 1997 Randy Clark, a healing evangelist, held meetings at Bethel Church. At that time, Pastor Clark would send a team to train a congregation how to be prayer servants. A small portion of that training was a model of "deliverance" from Argentina. This model became our first tool "The Four Doors".

Dawna DeSilva, the leader and founder of the Sozo Ministry, attended this training at Bethel. Afterward, Dawna began to use the concept of "The Four Doors" when she prayed for people. Seeing a miraculous difference in people's level of freedom, the "Sozo Ministry" was birthed. As the Sozo Ministry developed, the Lord introduced other tools that have aided in people being healed and released from the wounds and lies which have hindered those individuals from the Godhead and their destiny.

In 1998 other churches and organizations requested the Sozo Ministry to share what God had started. Thus, the Bethel Sozo Ministry started traveling to train and equip other churches and organizations to start their own Sozo Ministry. We have traveled international and to numerous states for this training and equipping.

In 2005, the Bethel Sozo Ministry so covered the global, the International Bethel Sozo Organization was created to aid and support all the Bethel Sozo Ministry Teams around the world.

I personally would be very discerning of this and not accept it.

Re: Sozo / Discernment - posted by amranger (), on: 2014/1/14 0:36

First let me say I'm not endorsing the Sozo ministry and what I'm writing has nothing to do with them. But I do want to answer one of the questions posed.

Quote:
----- What is the scriptural basis and provision made by God through Jesus Christ to believers in the areas of healing and deliverance?

Isaiah 53:4-5

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

Matthew 8:14-17 elaborates on these verses for us.

14 And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever. 15 And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them. 16 When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with word, and healed all that were sick: 17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.

Acts 10:38

How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

1 Peter 2:24

Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

3 John 2

Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.

John 10:10

The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have more abundantly.

Re: Sozo / Discernment - posted by tbsounde2 (), on: 2014/1/14 0:47

I agree with brother Greg. Sozo is very much in line with Bill Johnson's teaching that Christians should never be sick because Jesus purchased total physical healing for us on the cross for us here and now. He even goes to the extent of saying, and I quote "any gospel that allows for sickness is a false gospel." What this then leads to is the belief that the reason you are sick is because you don't have enough faith and also the idea that every Christian should be able to exercise the gift of healing. Now if one looks to scripture, it is clear that both assumptions are incorrect as there are countless examples in the old and new testament alike that indicate that God uses and allows sickness, much like any other trial (even the devil himself), for the good of His children, and that different gifts were given to different people for the building up of the church, not everyone is a foot or a hand or an eye. It really comes down to poor exegesis of the Word and trying to mold theology by experience and personal bias rather than discerning and testing subjective experiences based on the objective Word and theology, leading to wrongful teaching and emphasis of what the Christian life and worship are supposed to look like, and thus leading themselves and others into error. Sadly, it also just feeds another major error of Bill Johnson and others involved in his circles that the endtime church will be a world conquering, signs and wonders, bringing heaven to earth powerhouse rather than a persecuted and outwardly weak church in the midst of a seemingly victorious world abounding with false signs and wonders and great boasts. The warnings in scripture and the signs of the times don't lie: people will be haters of the truth and heap up for themselves teachers to suit their sensuality and soulishness and the Lord will send them a strong delusion accompanied by great signs and wonders so that they'll believe what is false so that their judgment will be assured, and this starting with the house of God...

Jamie, you and your church will definitely be in my prayers. Be strong and courageous, for the Lord is faithful and promises to work all things for good to those that love Him and are called according to His purpose. The issues you are facing are not things that can be fought in the natural as this particular evil is very unlike others which come to us clearly as an opposing force, like homosexuality or atheism, etc. It comes at us in pretense of being about Christ, much like a cloud that slips through our fingers the harder we try to grip it in our hands. It is something that can only be fought through much prayer and faith and patience and tears and humility and compassion, trusting that God is still somehow in control and sovereign in the midst of it all and working all things according to His great wisdom and love. Just as much as God is concerned about your church, remember that He is also concerned for you and your sanctification; that He not only wants to fix the problem but wants to mold you and shape you to be more Christlike through the process. Fight the good fight of faith my dear friend in Christ, you are not alone in this battle and pilgrimage, the Lord is our defender and the Captain of our salvation.

Your brother in Christ,

Will

Re: - posted by rufnrust (), on: 2014/1/14 0:56

May I add to amrangers thought. Mark 27 holds the story of the Syrophenician woman., a Greek. Her daughter vexed with devils and certainly very ill, asked Jesus to set her daughter free. He responded by telling her that what she was asking for was the "children's bread". Of course He healed her daughter but praise God this is our bread, our daily provision.

Ruf

Re: Sozo, on: 2014/1/14 4:40

Hi Jamie

First of all, the ministry you are talking about HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH BETHEL CHURCH and was in existence long before that Sozo started.

<http://www.sozo.org.uk/>

I attended a weekend ministry back in 2001 because I was desperate for some healing and saw some folk who were apparently healed. I was not but was encouraged spiritually and blessed by the elderly mother of the woman running the show, who spent some time helping me to sit up from the foldable beds at the back of the services which were provided for the very sick, and give me drinks of water.

I have a very mixed impression of them. It is without doubt, a badly needed ministry they provide for the very sick who often cannot attend church services, even young people who have ME, and who the church at large ignores. This is tragic

for many as the medical world writes them off (and often their friends and family desert them eventually) and very little money has been going into research, as the condition has been tarnished by the psychiatric lobby despite studies which show how altered immune response and serious neurological problems. Besides, very young are afflicted with it and sadly there have been cases in the UK of them being taken away from their parents, and even a few cases of them dying when exercise has been enforced on them, claiming they have 'faulty illness beliefs' they gained from their parents. One child nearly died when it was thrown into a swimming pool in the belief that they would start to swim. The child did not and nearly drowned. I am not exaggerating. Do some research.

There are a sizeable number of Christians with this illness who have no support and who live their lives in the shadows, and who desperately need the help of their brothers and sisters to mount campaigns to change things as things were changed for people with Multiple Sclerosis who at one time shared a similar fate.

I have heard that a large amount of people who claim to be healed through Sozo, later become ill again. In the WWW community of people with ME, no-one comes forward saying they have been healed there.

I did a lot of studying on healing after my contact with this organisation, and despite being very keen to believe the healing gospel, I came to the conclusion that the healings spoken of in the NT were because of the presence of the Son of God on the earth at that time and because of the various signs to the Jews, that the Messiah (Healer) had come. The fact is that since then healings have been sporadic and few of them last.

Even the top dogs in charismatic circles, end up with cancer and heart attacks etc. Reality just does not match with the claims, therefore the doctrine is just wrong. God can and does heal, but it is not part of the Atonement.

I have to admire that side of the work they do but they are building up hope in people which become dashed, and to add insult to injury, the people not healed are blamed for it. It is a very dangerous doctrine imo and causes some to lose their faith. I had a crisis about the matter.

But anyway, I would not put myself under the ministry of any man or woman who cannot even control their appetite and who are grossly overweight. A true servant of the Lord and who spends a great deal of time on prayer, of necessity if they are ministering to others and who is not convicted of their gluttony, is not a person who I would like to lay hands on me.

Re: Sozo / Discernment - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2014/1/14 9:46

Jamie,

Any time that a ministry comes to your church and teaches you anything that you are not familiar with, check it out in the Word of God. The Holy Spirit dwells within every born again Christian, and He will either witness to this ministry, or He will put a check in your spirit.

I can say this to you Jamie, that there is a strong scriptural basis from both the Old and New Testament that Jesus Christ not only died for our sins, but He also paid the price for our sicknesses and diseases. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the power of God to save, and this salvation is more than just the salvation of the soul, but it also includes healing, deliverance, and rescue from danger and destruction. This is the meaning of the word salvation in the Greek. (Sozo).

To say as some such as John MacArthur that the Lord is not healing anyone today is to close your eyes and not acknowledge the documented miracles and healings that have taken place just in the last century. Men of God such as Watchman Nee, Andrew Murray, and A.B. Simpson believed and taught on the healing of the body, and experienced healing in their own lives. If you just take the ministry of two men, John G. Lake, and Smith Wigglesworth, you would find that there were numerous healings and miracles that occurred. John G. Lake's ministry was thoroughly investigated by many professional people such as doctors, and they could not refute the evidence that they witnessed.

The gifts of healing are for today and not just for the early Church. You are going to find that in churches where healing is taught and believers are obeying the scriptures of calling for the elders of the church to anoint them with oil, that there is a much greater percentage of people being healed than in those churches where the prayer is "if it be Thy will". I can't explain why every one is not healed that is believing for their healing, but I can tell you that I have not only experienced healing in my own body, but have prayed for others that have been healed, and have witnessed numerous healings over the 40 years that I have been a Christian.

It is true that missionaries in other countries are witnessing many more healings and miracles than what is taking place in this country, and there is a reason for this, and that is that many of the simple people in other nations believe the gospel, and take Jesus at His word, and the Lord is confirming His Word with signs following.

Any over emphasis on healing and miracles to the exclusion of Godly character, holiness, and developing the fruit of the Spirit should be avoided. This has been done by many Charismatics, and it is one of the reasons why non Charismatics avoid the supernatural gifts all together.

If we would simply believe the Words of Jesus and scripture, and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit, there would not be this lop sided development in the spiritual lives that we are seeing in many Christians. The Body of Christ is to manifest Christ on this earth, and Jesus Christ was manifested to destroy the works of the devil.

"how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and power; who went about doing good, and healing all that that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him." (Acts 10:38).

One of the signs that follow them that believe: "they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." (Mark 16:17,18)

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believes on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go to my Father." (John 14:12).

Mike

Re: - posted by tbsounde2 (), on: 2014/1/14 14:55

Brother Mike,

I whole heartedly agree with you that we should seek to use the gifts that God has given to each of us for the building up of His church and that we should pray in faith for healing and such when the opportunity presents itself but it is a different matter to say that every single sickness MUST be healed in this life because that is what the atonement purchased for us. None of us on this thread have said that the gifts have ceased or implied that they have. I would venture to say that most if not all of us on this thread believe that the gifts are still for today (please correct me if I have misrepresented any of you on this thread).

Now regarding the word sozo. As you said, it is the greek word for salvation. But let me ask you, are we fully saved yet in this life? Or are we placing our hope in the salvation to come? This is a classical mistake that people make from overgeneralization. Yes, although we are justified, we have not been glorified, which means that although my salvation is secured in Christ, the fullness of my salvation has yet to be actualized, which will not be manifest until I leave this earthly body of corruption. Even the Apostle Paul said that even he himself had not yet obtained it but that he presses onward to make it his own. So the mistake that is made from the proponents of "sozo" is the idea that every promise of the bible in regards to healing and perfection are for now instead of later. Once again, I wholeheartedly agree with you that God heals today and that every good and perfect gift comes from our Heavenly Father, but one must not forget that He in His sovereign wisdom has decided to sanctify us through trials and suffering, to the extent that even Paul was given a thorn in the flesh, an emissary of Satan sent by God Himself, to keep him from becoming proud. Yes, we must believe God for healing and that is a part of our faith, but also we must be able to boast in our weaknesses (which is mentioned by Paul right after talking about His thorn in the flesh) and thank and trust God in EVERY situation, especially when it seems like the Lord is tarrying with a request for healing, remembering the promise that He causes ALL things (sickness, persecution, trials, suffering, loss, etc.) to work for our good.

Now on a similar note, in regards to Jesus destroying the works of the devil:

If that was a fully actualized promise at this very moment, I would have to say from personal experience and observation and from scripture that He failed...If Jesus already at this very moment destroyed every work of the devil, then what do you say about the coming man of lawlessness and all that is talked about in the book of Revelation? Once again, this is where overgeneralization leads us into trouble. Jesus is sovereign as we all will agree and in His sovereignty He is going to allow the devil to run amuck in this world and make things get crazier and crazier as the Judgment Day approaches. Now, although these things have to be fulfilled according to chronological time, God is not bound to chronological time but rather exists in kairos time because His Word is that certain. When He says that the devil and his angels and death and

hades itself will be thrown into the lake of fire, to Him it is as if it has already happened because His Word is that certain and unchanging. So in this sense, yes, Jesus has already destroyed the works of the devil, but in the chronological sense, it has yet to be fully actualized.

Regarding the idea of "ye shall do greater works," I love how brother John Piper put it, that we as people living post Jesus's death and resurrection get to do something that even He didn't do in His earthly ministry, which is to preach of Christ crucified and resurrected for our salvation. Signs and wonders were not a new thing and was present in the old as well as the new testament, but the preaching of Christ and what He accomplished and the now justifying of God's forgiveness of sinners can now be preached unto all the world. This is the "greater than these" because the gospel is the pinnacle of it all, the point from which everything else flows and feeds back into in that things like signs and wonders, etc. are merely to testify of the gospel and not the gospel in itself.

Re: - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2014/1/14 16:00

tbsounde2,

Brother, I agree with what you are saying here. God has provided for a complete salvation but we are indeed in the process of being saved and sanctified.

I also believe as you do that although God is not the author of sickness, that He uses sickness for His own purposes. Sickness can be a chastisement for a Christian that is walking in disobedience and sin.

Brother, Jesus Christ has already "spoiled principalities and powers and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in His cross." (Col.2:15) "He who knew no sin was made to be sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Cor.5:21). Is it God's will for His children to be under bondage to the enemy, when Jesus has given us the victory? Is it God's will for a Christian to sin when Jesus has bore our sins and given us a complete deliverance from sin? Is it God's will for His children to be sick when He not only forgives us for all of our sins, but He heals us from all of our diseases?

It is true that these flesh and blood bodies will only be fully redeemed when we receive our glorified bodies. Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit, and the same Spirit that raised Jesus Christ from the dead will also quicken our mortal bodies one day when we receive our glorified bodies, but also in this life there is life imparted for healing. That is what healing really is: Through the power of the Holy Spirit that is working in our bodies through faith in what Jesus has done for us in bearing our sicknesses and diseases, the law of the Spirit of life that is in Christ Jesus is working in us. Just as sin is cleansed by faith in the blood, healing comes through appropriating the finished work of Jesus Christ. "Surely He has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows." Another version of this same verse in Isaiah 53:4 says: "Surely our disease He did bear, and our pains He carried."

Are we sure that Paul's thorn in the flesh was sickness and disease?

Mike

Re: - posted by tbsounde2 (), on: 2014/1/14 22:57

Actually, according to scripture, it seems to indicate God is the author of sickness (and all other forms of judgment toward sin):

Here are some examples from scripture to support my statement (although it is definitely not an exhaustive search):

11 Then the Lord said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the Lord? (Exodus 4:11)

then I will do this to you: I will visit you with panic, with wasting disease and fever that consume the eyes and make the heart ache. And you shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. (Leviticus 26:16)

While the meat was yet between their teeth, before it was consumed, the anger of the Lord was kindled against the people

le, and the Lord struck down the people with a very great plague. (Numbers 11:33)

5 But to Hannah he gave a double portion, because he loved her, though the Lord had closed her womb. 6 And her rival used to provoke her grievously to irritate her, because the Lord had closed her womb. (1 Samuel 1:5-6)

And about ten days later the Lord struck Nabal, and he died. (1 Samuel 25:38)

And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah, and God struck him down there because of his error, and he died there beside the ark of God. (2 Samuel 6:7)

And when the Syrians came down against him, Elisha prayed to the Lord and said, "Please strike this people with blindness." So he struck them with blindness in accordance with the prayer of Elisha. (2 Kings 6:18)

And that night the angel of the Lord went out and struck down 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians. And when people awoke early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies. (2 Kings 19:35)

And after all this the Lord struck him in his bowels with an incurable disease. (2 Chronicles 21:18)

And Azariah the chief priest and all the priests looked at him, and behold, he was leprous in his forehead! And they rushed him out quickly, and he himself hurried to go out, because the Lord had struck him. (2 Chronicles 26:20)

The ten plagues of Egypt

Moses and Aaron did as the Lord commanded. In the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants he lifted up the staff and struck the water in the Nile, and all the water in the Nile turned into blood. (Exodus 7:20)

you shall say, "It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, for he passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt, when he struck the Egyptians but spared our houses." And the people bowed their heads and worshipped. (Exodus 12:17)

for all the firstborn are mine. On the day that I struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I consecrated for my own all the firstborn in Israel, both of man and of beast. They shall be mine: I am the Lord. (Numbers 3:13)

Examples from the new testament:

5 When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. And great fear came upon all who heard of it. 6 The young men rose and wrapped him up and carried him out and buried him. (Acts 5:5-6)

And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and unable to see the sun for a time. Immediately mist and darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking people to lead him by the hand. (Acts 13:11)

27 Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. 28 Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. 30 That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. 31 But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. 32 But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world. (1 Corinthians 11:27-32)

Not to mention the trumpet and bowl judgments of the book of Revelation where it is clearly that God is the One who is destroying the world and all who dwell on it.

Now, I will try to address some of the other points you brought up by breaking them down into small sections.

In regards to your statement: "Is it God's will for His children to be under bondage to the enemy, when Jesus has given

us the victory?"

Not quite sure what you mean by bondage, but it is clear that Paul had a sort of "bondage" or a restricting influence over him in the form of the thorn in his flesh. It is also clear from Revelation that God actually will give the enemy the authority to prevail against the saints (in regards to killing them):

Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation, (Revelation 13:7)

Clearly, the "victory" over the enemy is not something fully actualized until the end is complete, and that they enemy is very much allowed, rather used by God for His purpose, even for our good.

Regarding your statement: "Is it God's will for His children to be sick when He not only forgives us for all of our sins, but He heals us from all of our diseases?"

This is what I was talking about in my previous comment, that the healing purchased by the atonement is not to be fully actualized until the day of Judgment and our glorification. And yes, it is many times the will of God for us to be sick, just as much as it is the will of God for us to undergo much hardship and suffering in this life, and even to the extent of the enemy "conquering" the church for a time, because this body counts for nothing, it is a tent and not my real home.

Regarding your statement: "Just as sin is cleansed by faith in the blood, healing comes through appropriating the finished work of Jesus Christ."

I absolutely agree, that whatever healing one receives ultimately comes back to the atoning work of Christ on the cross but what I am saying is that it doesn't give me a sure-found guarantee that I will receive healing or that my receiving of healing in the here and now is always 100% the will of God because His purpose for us on this side of eternity is not prosperity but rather sanctification.

Regarding your statement: "Are we sure that Paul's thorn in the flesh was sickness and disease? "

Although the implication is strongly toward a bodily ailment, it is a moot point to argue because if sickness is outside the will of God and therefore it is something caused by the devil, we find clear precedence from the thorn in the flesh example that God even uses the devil himself for the good His children.

Now just to be clear, my heart is FOR healing and I believe with all my heart that the Lord heals TODAY, but I cannot accept the teaching that every sickness is outside the will of God because the bible seems pretty clear in my opinion that it is God who gives and takes as He so chooses and that He uses everything, whether sickness or the devil himself for His sovereign purposes. Now one might argue, how can we really believe God for a healing then, it might be His will not to heal me. But I would then say, let us be careful not to presume to know the mind of God and put ourselves in God's shoes and say who He will heal and who He will not heal, but rather come to Him knowing that He is our faithful and compassionate Father who hears our requests and will answer accordingly in His boundless wisdom and love toward us whatever would be the best means to make us more like Christ, which in the end is what really matters.

Re: Balance please! - posted by Sidewalk (), on: 2014/1/15 0:49

Quite an exhaustive list! I won't go verse by verse, but a little context and a bit of Theology needs to come against the idea that God has a sovereign right to inflict diseases on people at His whim. He does not.

When James says in his letter that anyone who knows to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin- he is declaring the character of the law of God, and the obligations we have to the law are shared by all moral agents including the Godhead. Just as Jesus kept the law in sinless perfection, He was doing what He saw the Father doing. The Father keeps the law, has no trouble with that because it is the transcript of His character. If God were to set Himself above the law he loses His authority to enforce it and becomes a tyrant. Our God is not a tyrant, He wants the highest and best for all of His creation.

Yet He is the only being in the universe who has both the power and the moral authority to enforce the law. This He does in perfection and the examples you cite are merely that enforcement in action. None of these reflect a wavering, a shadow of turning from the steadfast love that marks His whole being. In short, He does not inflict illnesses on people without that essential element of enforcement filling out the reasonable judgements He makes.

No believer should live with a fear that God will turn on him and smite him in a human type of anger. He is good, His works are good, and no one will be able to sustain a charge against Him that He broke His own law!

Mockers beware- those who think they can get away with their sin are on a slippery slope and may be placing themselves beyond God's protective reach! You have the right to perish, and God is under no obligation to keep you from your wisdoms.

Re: - posted by tbsounde2 (), on: 2014/1/15 1:25

Hi Sidewalk,

True, that God is not a tyrant in the sense that He finds pleasure in the death of the wicked or the suffering of man, but that doesn't mean that He doesn't use sickness for the good of His people as well as for judging sinners. Not sure what this actually has to do with His Law, as in Him breaking it? It is the same loving God that also made a place called hell, which is not a place where demons rule, but a place where all sinners and rebels burn under the pure judgment fire of a Holy God, who does this in complete justice and righteousness. Once again, as mentioned in my previous comment, what would one make of Paul clearly being allowed to be tormented by an emissary of Satan, and by God's actual sending for the purpose of preventing Paul from becoming proud? Clearly one might say how can a loving God do such a thing? Surely this must be against His nature? But this is a premature understanding and conclusion, primarily because of the promise that God is working ALL things for good, and all means all, sickness, persecution, trials, suffering is all working for us a glory that cannot be compared to anything in this life.

Now regarding your statement: "In short, He does not inflict illnesses on people without that essential element of enforcement filling out the reasonable judgements He makes."

The judgment was as follows, sin equals death, and sin dwells in the flesh (Romans 7), this is why we still deal with death as Christians. The fact is clear, we are all in a fallen world living in fallen flesh, therefore still under the curse or result of the fall, that is in our flesh. Under this very premise, it completely makes sense that we would therefore still suffer in this life. But it is God in His grace that turns that suffering to ours and His glory, as it makes us more like Christ in sanctification. This concept is quite clear from scripture, Paul even saying that He hasn't yet obtained it yet, but strains onward to make it His own (the completion of Salvation that comes when we see Christ face to face in glorification).

Regarding your statement: "No believer should live with a fear that God will turn on him and smite him in a human type of anger. He is good, His works are good, and no one will be able to sustain a charge against Him that He broke His own law!"

Absolutely, but that doesn't mean that we cannot grieve God (Ephesians 4:30) and move Him to discipline us as a loving Father is supposed to do. This is clear from 1 Corinthians 11:27-32 (also mentioned in previous comment). And indeed, His works are GOOD, that not only includes the salvation of man but also the judgment of man, they are all GOOD. And although our earthly parents were not perfect in that their disciplining of us was sometimes mixed with anger, God who is perfect, disciplines us in perfect love, but the clear reality is that it is not beyond God or against any of His attributes to do so, even using the devil himself for our good (as was the case with Paul). THIS is what it means that He is sovereign and the hope we find in the promise that He causes ALL things to work for our good. This present life counts for nothing. This flesh is but a tent in my pilgrimage to the hope that awaits me, when I leave this earth to join my Savior and my King, where He will personally wipe away every tear and cast death and Hades into the lake of fire, when salvation is completed and fully actualized and all the promises fulfilled, which is not yet, but will be, as His Word declares.

Re: - posted by brothagary, on: 2014/1/15 1:59

hi there

i think brother mike is right on the ball

if we believe in a universal atonement that is appropriated by faith ,,that is it can be effected towards everyone by faith , it was intended to save the world ,,then it would be impossible to separate the healing side of the atonement ,and say it is not intended for the whole world ,that would be inconsistent ,,tho a 5 point Calvinist could say it was a limited atonement in the area of salvation and healing due to sovereign election,,

i would like to actually start a topic on healing in the atonement i used to say no its not ,,the by his stripes we are healed only talking about salvation ,,but then i saw that was not true in scripture

even though god is sovereign and is the author of sickness he also created satan and the demons and authored their fall and the fall of man kind in the realm of the demonic ,,for the whole world lies under the sway of the evil one ,,and many sicknesses are directly linked to possession and the others are linked to the fall from grace ,,

when god so when some one is born blind and mute as the scriptural example our brother showed ,,it is according to god's sovereignty on one hand and according to the fall and the vexations of the devil and his demons who have free reign over all creation ,,for he is the god of this world

we see in the story of job that when god brought a sickness to job it was done through the devil all the oppression and disasters came by god's sovereign hand through the devil ,, so in that science it's god's sovereignty but scripture points to the devil and demons as the fundamental cause under the sovereignty of god ,,that's scripture points examples of god's supernatural judgments can also come by angles ,,but that would be another topic

paul talks about handing the sinning christian over to satan for the destruction of the flesh ,,it would seem appropriate to say this is the most common expression of what is going on when god judges in other situations that are in the same context so to speak

nowhere does the bible say that paul's thorn in the flesh is a sickness ,,but if we look in to scripture the thorn is mentioned regarding a demonic driven person or people persecuting the godly

where does it say healing is not fully actualized till judgment day and glorification day ,,i've not read that but the scriptures does say believers will lay hands on the sick and they will recover and is there any sick among you ,let them go to the elders of the church ,and let them pray over them anointing them with oil in the name of our lord jesus christ and that prayer of faith will save the sick and the lord will raise him up .full stop

what are we going to listen to brothers and sisters scripture or theology based on experiences and bad examples

lastly how is even possible to pray with complete faith with no doubting like jesus commands us to ,,if we have kinks or cracks in our shield ,by having a belief system in place that causes us to believe that it's not god's will to heal or ,,i submit to you brothers and sisters that one can't pray with 100 percent faith all the time for all sick and oppressed without believing god will heal all that we pray for ,,we need to cast out that type of doubting out of our hearts

where did jesus say these words that i here well meaning christians ,speaking ,,,,,

it's not god's will to heal that man
or god's using this sickness to humble that man

did jesus or the apostles say anything like that

NO he did not last time i look at scripture

but the only example in the new testament to my knowledge ,about some one not getting healed ,jesus said it was your lack of faith and this one only comes out by prayer and fasting

jesus says just do it ,heal the sick he didnt say think about or creat doubts in your minds weather it is gods will it is a comand that is gods will ,,you dont need a word of knowlage ,,do it now noing that healing is provied in the atome nt and it a unaversal atonment ,approraited by our faith or there faith ,,if the sick person doesnt have the faith ,then for g ods sake for his glorys sake you have the faith ,,just like peter did in the book of acts ,,gold and silver i have none but wh at i have i give to you

IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST ,RISE UP AND WALK

BE HEALD

i singed that last line with tears and tremling with brokenness and joy

when you pray ,believe that you have what it is that you prayed for and it will be done for you that my father will be glorif ied

christs atonment has givern this to us ,,just believe it and go and heal the sick ,sore and demon possessed freely you have recieved ,,freely you shal give

blessings brother gary

Re: you will find whatever you seek after, on: 2014/1/15 8:31

Just a few passing comments that struck me after reading this thread.

1) SOZO is a ministry idea that is based out of Bethel Church, Redding California. I have been associated with a few ch urches in Houston who have brought this "course" to their congregations. I have mixed feelings about it. On the one han d there is some truth taught that God saves, heals and delivers, but on the other hand, I am skeptical of promoting a "Go d Healing Clinic" without determing if the patients are even born again. What good will it do to dig into the past of a pati ent, digging up all kinds of trash, if there is no effort brought to get to the root of the problem. In many cases...the people who are sick and suffering are simply not saved...they do not KNOW Christ. If this is not addressed, dealing with sicknes ses of the mind and body will only produce a temporary reprieve at best.

2) I know people who have gone through the SOZO course and what they have told me is that it is very intensive...a lot of digging into the past life and sin of the patients is done by well meaning christian counselors. I have a huge problem w ith this in that it is very unhealthy to unload deep and person family issues on strangers or with leaders in churches. For sure some people can be trusted but once you start to air the "dirty laundry" around other christians, these things are not easy for them to forget and you will find that "people talk". I am not saying that confessing our sins to one another is not healthy but what I am saying is be very careful who you talk to and how much you dig up. My advice is to confess you si n to the Lord and leave it under the blood of Jesus. Little is to be gained by digging up the past and in some cases I hav e heard that the continual digging and prodding has produced tremendous guilt that was previously not there before thes e intense counselling sessions.

3) YWAM employs a similar technique to dig into the dirt on their students, except they call their sessions, "Plumbline". All students are required to attend and are assigned a Plumbline counsellor to who they are asked to "spill their guts" an d dig up each and every horrible thing and sin etc from their past. It is quite possible that some who are helped by this b ut it concerns me that these sessions are documented and talked about amongst the staff of these organizations. Again, a stigma will be cast over certain people, depending on what is dug up and this will affect them going forward.

4) Finally regarding the comments here about God heals vs God doesn't heal. I find it interesting that some people like MacArthur would go out of their way to prove that God no longer heals or that God is the author of sickness. You know, if that is what you want to believe, then more power to you! But for me, I prefer the gentle ignorance of believing that Je sus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever and if He healed yesterday...then He will forever be our healer. If yo u do not want to believe that, then you will probably never ask in faith for God to heal you and your loved ones. I find tha t the things that we "go after" in God are the things that we tend to receive.

I shudder to think of what it might feel like to be always wondering if God wanted to help me in my distress, whether it be the forgiveness of my sins, the overcoming of the power of sin, the renewing of my mind, the deliverance from strongholds and habits, the healing of my body or the enduring of His power on my life for ministry. Generally speaking God will deliver the child of God from all of these things, but they are obtained by faith. Let not the double minded person expect to receive anything from the Lord.

Why look for reasons for God to NOT want to help you? But again, if that is your thing, don't let me stop you:) I prefer to seek God and to encourage others to believe Him to make manifest to me and my household all that His word says He will do for His children. Not every prayer is answered and sometimes prayers take much time before they are answered, but we do not lose hope, we continue to look to Christ as our Savior, Healer, Deliverer and King!

Re: - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2014/1/15 9:32

Brother Mark,

I agree with you that no ministry should be ministering to non believers other than to minister the gospel to them so that they would be saved and receive eternal life. No deliverance ministry should be ministering deliverance to anyone who does not want to repent of their sins.

I also agree with you that with many ministries that are ministering inner healing, there is both truth and error mixed within it. There is also a lot of psychology mixed in with those that are trying to bring you back to your past even to the point where you were born. The Holy Spirit is able to deal with past hurts, and Jesus Christ was anointed to heal the broken hearted, to set the captives free, and open the prison doors. God has anointed His sons to do the same thing, but it is not through the process of bringing them back to their painful memories, but it is through the anointing of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. There are many Christians that have been wounded. There are many Christians that need to be healed in their emotions. Counseling alone is not going to get it. One thing that I do believe that these ministries are doing some good is that many times they are helping believers to get to the root of the problem.

Cleansing Stream is a ministry that was founded by Jack Hayford and is being used in many Assembly of God Churches. For the most part it is a good ministry and is helping a lot of people. There are many wounds that Christians could be free of if they would obey the Word of God to forgive those that have hurt them. Many Christians are suffering from demonic oppression through unforgiveness, and when they do forgive, they are immediately released and healed.

I do not know much about SOZO ministry, but ministries such as Cleansing Stream lead Christians in many prayers of repentance, and deliverance is also ministered where there is demonic oppression.

It is important for us to allow the Lord to heal us inwardly, because much sickness is the result of emotional and mental problems. Worry and stress over a long period of time will definitely have negative effects on our physical health.

Mike

Re: - posted by menderofnets (), on: 2014/1/17 13:57

Hello all,

Thank you for your thoughts, opinions, considerations and replies to my original enquiry. It has been very much appreciated.

We had an open meeting at our church earlier this week where sozo ministry within the church was discussed. The outcome is that it has stopped at present. However, praise God, it didn't devolve into a for/against slanging match, but a genuine time of fellowship amongst God's people, which was encouraging for all.

I have appreciated your comments, as I have before - thank you all.

Jamie

Re: - posted by budgie, on: 2014/2/11 1:45

There is a great audio sermon that can be heard by John Piper from desiring god ministry called Christ and cancer, it is free to download, also there is a brilliant thesis done on healing
Type in on google thesis on smith wigglesworth and john g lake