

Jesus the Healer – Malachi 4:1-3 (NIV)

Introduction: About 500 before Jesus was born Buddha came along and established a religion and many people gathered around him and tried to live by his teachings.

But before he was born, nobody ever said: *“Hey Buddah is going to come along someday and he’ll come from a particular family. These are his credentials, and this is how you’ll know he is who he said he was.”*

Mohammed was born about 500 years after Christ. He established a religion we now call Islam and many people gathered around him and tried to live by his teachings.

But before he was born, nobody ever said: *“Hey Mohammad is going to come along someday and he’ll come from a particular family. These are his credentials, and this is how you’ll know he is who he said he was.”*

But, when Jesus came... He didn’t just pop up in history and say *“Hey, I have a great idea!”* No, long before Jesus was ever born, God put His stamp of approval on Him, so that we can know that all of the Old Testament looked forward to the birth of this one little boy in Bethlehem.

And because of Jesus – miracle after miracle has taken place in the lives of men and women of all ages.

Malachi was one of those men who foretold of the coming of Jesus. He was one of God’s prophets. Now Malachi didn’t see all the details we see about the first coming of Jesus. He didn’t know, for example, that the Messiah would actually come twice; first as a Lamb to die for our sins, then as a Lion to rule and reign forever. You see, Prophets like Malachi saw the big picture. The details would be revealed later in the New Testament. So we stand in the middle of this prophecy because we live between the first and second coming of Christ.

But Malachi’s prophecy was about both comings. His predictions began to be fulfilled when Jesus was born. That is when Malachi said, *“the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings.”* And Jesus has been rising ever since until one day, He’ll reach high noon and He’ll appear again in all His glory. That’s when our healing will be fully completed.

Tonight, we’re going to think about how Jesus becomes our healer. How will our spiritual healing come about? Well, first, according to Malachi, it will come about when we:

1. Learn to Live in Fear of God (2)

“But for you who revere my name...” You know, a lot of folks really don’t understand the fear of God too much today. Secular psychologists will tell you that having a fear of God is an unhealthy thing, and they’ll try to rid you of that fear. But according to God’s Word, having a proper fear of God is a good thing. In **Malachi 1:14 (NIV)** the Lord says, *“...For I am a great king...and my name is to be feared among the nations.”* For those who fear or revere God, there are great blessings.

But as I said, there is a growing lack of fear anymore for anything about God. At last year’s Emmy award show, Comedienne Kathy Griffin won an Emmy for Outstanding Reality Program with her cable show, *Kathy Griffith: My Life on the D-List*. In her acceptance speech she said: *“Now, a lot of people come up here and thank Jesus for this award. I want you to know that no one had less to do with this award than Jesus. He didn’t help me a bit...So all I can say is suck it, Jesus, this award is my god now!”*

See what I mean! Used to be, people would never say something like that I public, but now-a-days, the fear of God has gone by the wayside.

But what does it mean to fear His name? Does it mean that we’re supposed to cower in a corner somewhere – terrified to move or say anything that would possibly anger Him? No! When the Bible talks about fearing God, it’s not talking about a *“run from”* kind of fear that makes us hide from Him, but rather a *“run to”* kind of fear that leads us to honor Him. Having a fear of God doesn’t cause us to be afraid of Him, but rather to be available to Him. It’s having a respect and a reverence for a God who is characterized by both judgment and justice.

On my first day of elementary school, someone pointed out to me the principal. He was this big, burly hulk of a man named Mr Keown. When he came down the hall, I thought, *“I’d better not get in his way or he’ll run over me.”* I was intimidated by Him, and scared of him. I had a *“run from”* kind of fear of him.

But later that week, he came in our classroom to talk to us. I remember him saying to us something like, *“I’m your principal. The word ‘Principal’ ends in ‘p-a-l’ and that’s how I want you to think of me, as you pal”* And then he came around to all of us and gave us a big hug. I found out that he was just a big ole teddy bear. I quickly went from a *“run from”* kind of fear to a *“run to”* kind of respect. That is what God is looking for from us – a *“run to”* kind of fear and respect.

Why should we fear His name? Well, vs. 1 says, *"Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and that day that is coming will set them on fire,"* says the LORD Almighty. *"Not a root or a branch will be left to them."*

God says that some people – the arrogant evildoers - are facing a blazing furnace in the future if they don't mend their ways and come to Him. They can't ignore God forever. One day their opportunities to make things right will be over because a day of judgment is coming.

So it is to our eternal advantage to respect His judgmental side now while He is still on the side of grace and justice. . **Psalm 85:9 (NIV)** says, *"Surely his salvation is near those who fear him...."* We need to run to our pal Jesus as a sinner seeking a savior. When we do, He'll bring healing to our lives.

Secondly, our spiritual healing will come about when we:

2. Learn to Lie in the Son of God (2)

Close your eyes and imagine yourself lying on Waikiki Beach right now. You're surrounded by lush palm trees, a warm tropical breeze is blowing, the ocean waves are gently splashing, and you're basking in the glow of the warm sun with out a care in the world. Isn't it a nice and relaxing thought? Well, what you can imagine mentally and physically you can experience spiritually because *"the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings."* Jesus, the Son of God is that rising sun of righteousness.

And what can He do for you? Well first:

Jesus brings warmth to a cold heart. With all the junk we have to put up with out there in the world, it's easy to become cold and calloused toward people and toward the things of God. Our hearts can turn cold and stony and we can become cynical and crotchety if we're not careful.

We need to learn to lie in the Son of God for awhile and bask in Jesus' love. He'll help warm our hearts.

But also, if you learn to lie in the Son of God, He'll make right any wrong in your life. Lying in the sun means lying in the light. And when sun rises and you're in the light of God, you can clearly see the right from the wrong.

Jesus will point the way for you to go. He'll show the danger of the choices we have before we make them. And He can guard us from the evil that lurks only in the darkness. When we're lying in the light of Jesus, He'll help us do right and healing will come.

But also, if you learn to lie in the Son of God, He'll bring hope and health to a hopeless and diseased life.

Many people are filled with despair these days. They don't know which way to turn. But when we learn to lie in the Son of God, He'll show us the way. He can bring hope when your life looks the bleakest.

Look at His name. In the Old Testament, one of the names of God is *Jehovah-Rapha*. In **Exodus 15:26 (NIV)** He said, *"If you listen carefully to the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD, who heals you."* The word *Rapha* means *"to mend, repair, to make whole, to invigorate, to give strength."*

When we turn to God's Son, Jesus the Healer, He will heal us by giving us renewed strength and vitality. He'll restore life. He'll pick up the broken pieces of a shattered life and put them back together. He is the sun who rises with healing. He is the incarnation of Jehovah-Rapha.

What do you need to do to lie in the Son of God more? It will involve finding your place in the house of worship, and learning all you can in study of God's Word in Sunday School and Wed. Night Bible Studies. It will take getting involved in mission trips or working with children or youth. Our healing will come when we learn to live in fear of God and when we learn to lie in the Son of God, but finally, our healing will come when we:

2. Learn that Life is for Leaping (2c-3)

Some people just live life going through the motions. Every day is the same old same old. They don't know how to get in a groove because they're stuck in a rut.

But God designed us to be passionate about life. **Mal. 1:2c-3 (NIV)** says, *"...And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall. Then you will trample down the wicked; they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day when I do these things," says the LORD Almighty.*"

It talks about calves that have been cooped up in a dirty, smelly stall that have grown restless being in captivity being set free to roam in the sun. When they are released, they don't just walk around - they leap for joy because they are free.

We have a deep longing for freedom because freedom is essential to joy! And Jesus promises to give it to us. Until He comes into our lives, it's like we're trapped in our stalls. And we'll never know the freedom for which we were created until we are released from the stall.

Do you know the joy of being really free? Do you have a zest for life or are you just going through the motions? God has made it possible for everyone to have a spring in their step. Don't use your springs to sleep on. Learn to live in a proper fear of God. Learn to lie in His presence, and learn to leap for Him. Otherwise, you're going to look really out of place when you get to heaven because there's going to be a lot of people running and leaping down that street of gold.