



## Scriptures and Doctrine :: Three Faithful Wounds

**Three Faithful Wounds - posted by chapel (), on: 2009/11/1 13:43**

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A.W. Tozer:

FAITHFUL ARE THE WOUNDS OF A FRIEND, says the Holy Spirit in Proverbs 27:6.

And lest we imagine that the preacher is the one who does the wounding, I want to read Job 5:17 and 18:

"Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty: for he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole." You see, the one who does the wounding here is not the servant, but the Master Himself. So with that in our minds I want to talk to you about three faithful wounds of a friend.

In order to get launched into my message let me introduce a little lady who has been dead for about six hundred years. She once lived and loved and prayed and sang in the city of Norwich, England. This little woman hadn't much light and she hadn't any way to get much light, but the beautiful thing about her was that, with what little Biblical light she had, she walked with God so wonderfully close that she became as fragrant as a flower. And long before Reformation times she was in spirit an evangelical. She lived and died and has now been with her Lord nearly six hundred years, but she has left behind her a fragrance of Christ.

England was a better place because this little lady lived. She wrote only one book, a very tiny book that you could slip into your side pocket or your purse, but it's so flavorful, so divine, so heavenly, that it has made a distinct contribution to the great spiritual literature of the world. The lady to whom I refer is the one called the Lady Julian.

Before she blossomed out into this radiant, glorious life which made her famous as a great Christian all over her part of the world, she prayed a prayer and God answered. It is this prayer with which I am concerned tonight. The essence of her prayer was this:

"O God, please give me three wounds; the wound of contrition and the wound of compassion and the wound of longing after God."

Then she added this little postscript which I think is one of the most beautiful things I have ever read:

"This I ask without condition." She wasn't dicker with God. She wanted three things and they were all for God's glory: "I ask this without condition, Father; do what I ask and then send me the bill. Anything that it costs will be all right with me."

All great Christians have been wounded souls. It is strange what a wound will do to a man. Here's a soldier who goes out to the battlefield. He is full of jokes and strength and self-assurance; then one day a piece of shrapnel tears through him and he falls, a whimpering, beaten, defeated man. Suddenly his whole world collapses around him and this man, instead of being the great, strong, broad-chested fellow that he thought he was, suddenly becomes a whimpering boy again. And such have ever been known, I am told, to cry for their mothers when they lie bleeding and suffering on the field of battle. There is nothing like a wound to take the self-assurance out of us, to reduce us to childhood again and make us small and helpless in our own sight.

Many of the Old Testament characters were wounded men, stricken of God and afflicted indeed as their Lord was after them. Take Jacob, for instance. Twice God afflicted him; twice he met God and each time it came as a wound, and one time it came actually as a physical wound and he limped on his thigh for the rest of his life.

And the man Elijah—was he not more than a theologian, more than a doctrinarian? He was a man who had been stricken; he had been struck with the sword of God and was no longer simply one of Adam's race standing up in his own self-assurance; he was a man who had had an encounter with God, who had been confronted by God and had been defeated and broken down before Him.

And when Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up, you know what it did to him. Or take the man Ezekiel, how he went down before his God and became a little child again. And there were many others. Now the wounded man is a defeated man, I say; the strong, robust and self-confident Adam-man ceases to fight back any longer; he lays down his sword and surrenders and the wound finishes him. Let's talk about these three wounds in their order.

The first is the wound of contrition.

Now I've heard for the last thirty years that repentance is a change of mind, and I believe it, of course, as far as it goes. But that's just what's the matter with us. We have reduced repentance to a change of mind. It is a mental act, indeed, but I point out that repentance is not likely to do us much good until it ceases to be a change of mind only and becomes a wound within our spirit. No man has truly repented until his sin has wounded him near to death, until the wound has broken him and defeated him and taken all the fight and self-assurance out of him and he sees himself as the one who nailed his Saviour on the tree.

I don't know about you, but the only way I can keep right with God is to keep contrite, to keep a sense of contrition upon my spirit. Now there's a lot of cheap and easy getting rid of sin and getting your repentance disposed of. But the great Christians, in and out of the Bible, have been those who were wounded with a sense of contrition so that they never quite got over the thought and the feeling that they personally had crucified Jesus. The great Bishop Usher each week used to go down by the riverbank and there all Saturday afternoon kneel by a log and bewail his sins before his God. Perhaps that was the secret of his greatness.

Let us beware of vain and over-hasty repentance, and particularly let us beware of no repentance at all. We are a sinful race, ladies and gentlemen, a sinful people, and until the knowledge has hit hard, until it has wounded us, until it has gotten through and past the little department of our theology, it has done us no good. A man can believe in total depravity and never have any sense of it for himself at all. Lots of us believe in total depravity who have never been wounded with the knowledge that we've sinned. Repentance is a wound I pray we may all feel.

And then there's the wound of compassion.

Now compassion is an emotional identification, and Christ had that in full perfection. The man who has this wound of compassion is a man who suffers along with other people.

Jesus Christ our Lord can never suffer to save us any more. This He did, once for all, when He gave Himself without spot through the Holy Ghost to the Father on Calvary's cross. He cannot suffer to save us but He still must suffer to win us. He does not call His people to redemptive suffering. That's impossible; it could not be. Redemption is a finished work. But He does call His people to feel along with Him and to feel along with those that rejoice and those that suffer. He calls His people to be to Him the kind of an earthly body in which He can weep again and suffer again and love again. For our Lord has two bodies. One is the body He took to the tree on Calvary; that was the body in which He suffered to redeem us. But He has a body on earth now, composed of those who have been baptized into it by the Holy Ghost at conversion. In that body He would now suffer to win men. Paul said that he was glad that he could suffer for the Colossian s and fill up the measure of the afflictions of Christ in his body for the church's sake.

Now, my brethren, I don't know whether I can make it clear or not. I know that things like this have to be felt rather than understood, but the wounded man is never a seeker after happiness. There is an ignoble pursuit of irresponsible happiness among us. Over the last years, as I have observed the human scene and have watched God's professed people live and die, I have seen that most of us would rather be happy than to feel the wounds of other people's sorrows. I do not believe that it is the will of God that we should seek to be happy, but rather that we should seek to be holy and useful. The holy man will be the useful man and he's likely to be a happy man too; but if he seeks happiness and forgets holiness and usefulness, he's a carnal man. I, for one, want no part in carnal religious joy. There are times when it's sinful to be happy. When Jesus our Lord was sweating it out there in the garden or hanging on the tree, He could not be happy. He was the "man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."

And the great saints of the past, who conquered and captured parts of the world for Jesus, when they were in travail were not happy. The woman, said Jesus, who is giving birth is not happy at the time of her travail, but as soon as the child is delivered she becomes happy because a man is born into the world. You and I are, in a sense, to be mothers in Israel, those through whom the Lord can suffer and grieve and love and pity again to bring children to birth.

Thirdly, there's the wound of longing after God.

This little woman wanted to long after God with a longing that became a pain in her heart. She wanted to be lovesick. She prayed in effect, "O God, that I might want Thee so badly that it becomes a wound in my heart that I can't get over." To day, accepting Christ becomes terminal.

That is the end. And all evangelism leads toward one thing-getting increased numbers of people to accept Christ, and th

ere we put a period. My criticism of most of our Bible conferences is that we spend our time counting again the treasures that we have in Christ but we never arrive at the place where any of that which is in Christ gets into us. He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ, but you can no more buy food with the money still in the bank than you can live on the treasures that are in Christ unless they're also experientially in you.

So many of us say, "All right, I'll attend another Bible conference," or "I'll take a course," or "I'll buy a book." My friends, what we need is not more instruction; we've been instructed to death. Where in the world is there more fundamental Bible teaching than here in Chicago? This is the Mecca of Fundamentalism. This is the Vatican of Evangelicalism. We've got notebooks at home stacked high that go back twenty-five years. They tell us of some new sidelight on some text or some new illustration somebody gave to point up a doctrine. But, oh, what weak creatures we are! What joyless people we are!

Note the paradoxes: To be happily forgiven and yet to be wounded and to remember the grief; to enjoy the peace of the finished work of Christ and yet suffer to win others; to find God and yet be always pursuing Him.

When Moses saw the glory of God he begged that he might see more. When God revealed to him that he had found grace, he wanted more grace. Remember this: the man that has the most of God is the man who is seeking the most ardently for more of God.

There was a man who talked about "a restless thirst, a sacred, infinite desire," and that is what I want for my own heart. Among the plastic saints of our times Jesus has to do all the dying and all we want is to hear another sermon about His dying; Jesus does all the sorrowing and we want to be happy. But, my brethren, if we were what we ought to be, we would seek to know in experience the meaning of the words, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

I have been greatly and deeply concerned that you and I do something more than listen, that we dare to go to God like the Lady Julian and dare to ask Him to give us a faithful, fatherly wound-maybe three of them, if you please: to wound us with a sense of our own sinful unworthiness that we'll never quite get over; to wound us with the sufferings of the world and the sorrows of the church; and then to wound us with the longing after God, a thirst, a sacred thirst and longing that will carry us on toward perfection.

The lack of desire is the ill of all ills; Many thousands through it the dark pathway have trod; The balsam, the wine of predestinate wills, Is a jubilant pining and longing for God.\*

Write that sentence down, "A jubilant pining and longing for God." Almost every day of my life I am praying that "a jubilant pining and longing for God" might come back on the evangelical churches. We don't need to have our doctrine straightened out; we're as orthodox as the Pharisees of old. But this longing for God that brings spiritual torrents and whirlwinds of seeking and self-denial-this is almost gone from our midst.

God loves to be longed for, He loves to be sought,  
For He sought us Himself with such longing and love;  
He died for desire of us, marvelous thought!  
And He longs for us now to be with Him above.\* (\*Frederick W. Faber)

I believe that God wants us to long for Him with the longing that will become lovesickness, that will become a wound to our spirits, to keep us always moving toward Him, always finding and always seeking, always having and always desiring. So the earth becomes less and less valuable and heaven gets closer as we move into God and up into Christ.

Dare we bow our hearts now and say, "Father, I've been an irresponsible, childish kind of Christian-more concerned with being happy than with being holy. O God, give me three wounds. Wound me with a sense of my own sinfulness. Wound me with compassion for the world, and wound me with love of Thee that will keep me always pursuing and always exploring and always seeking and always finding."

If you dare to pray that prayer sincerely and mean it before God, it could mean a turning point in your life. It could mean a door of victory opened to you. May God grant that it be so.

**Re: Three Faithful Wounds - posted by Heydave (), on: 2009/11/2 4:49**

Chapel,

Thanks for posting this. It is a real blessing to read. Much truth and how we need that reality of 'knowing God'. We talk a bout knowing God too easily, but do I really know Him intimately as I should or can. Oh that my dull heart would be warmed to desire Him more and seek him more. We need to pray for each other that this desire will burn within us.