

# Three Faithful Wounds

by A.W. Tozer

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking faithful wounds, specifically contrition, compassion, and longing after God, to deepen our relationship with God and become more like Christ.*

**Scripture:** Job 5:17, Proverbs 27:6

**Topics:** "Spiritual Growth", "The Nature of Repentance"

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## Description

A.W. Tozer explores the concept of 'faithful wounds' in his sermon, emphasizing that true wounds come from God and are essential for spiritual growth. He reflects on the life of Julian of Norwich, who prayed for three wounds: contrition, compassion, and longing for God, demonstrating a deep desire for spiritual maturity. Tozer argues that these wounds are necessary for true repentance and compassion, as they strip away self-assurance and lead to a closer relationship with God. He illustrates this through biblical figures like Jacob and Elijah, who were transformed through their wounds. Ultimately, Tozer encourages believers to embrace these wounds as a path to deeper faith and connection with Christ.

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## Transcript

"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 5:17,18: "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 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 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 of Norwich.

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 prayer with which I am concerned tonight. The essence of her prayer was this: "Oh 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 dickering 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 it costs me 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, and 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 even 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, 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 one time it came as a wound, and another 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? 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 an encounter with God, who had been confronted by God and had been defeated and broken down before. And when Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up, you know what it did to him. Or take Ezekiel, how he went down before his God and became a little child again. And there were many others. 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 is 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 Savior 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 had personally crucified Jesus.

Let us beware of vain and over hasty repentance, and particularly let us beware of no repentance at all. We are sinful race, ladies and gentlemen, a sinful people, and until the knowledge has hit hard, until it has wounded us, until it has got through and past the little department of our theology, it has done us no good.

Repentance is a wound I pray we may all feel.

THEN THERE IS THE WOUND OF COMPASSION. Now compassion is an emotion 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 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 a conversion. In that body He would now suffer to win men. Paul said that he was glad that he could suffer for the Colossians and fill up the measure of the afflictions of Christ in his body for the church's sake.

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Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/aw-tozer/three-faithful-wounds/>

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