

When the Wounds of a Friend Don't Seem to Be Faithful

by Carter Conlon

Carter Conlon's sermon explores the nature of wounds from friends, emphasizing the importance of faithful correction and God's healing grace in overcoming betrayal and pain.

Duration: 54:41

Scripture: Isaiah 30:18, Isaiah 41:10, Isaiah 43:2, Isaiah 54:17, Isaiah 61:1-2, Isaiah 62:4, Luke 4:18-19

Topics: "Wounds"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of not following man-made visions and plans, as they can lead to exhaustion and leave one in the wilderness. He uses the example of a mother casting her cherished son under a shrub to illustrate the danger of vulnerability. The speaker also highlights how many people have put their trust in men's plans and visions, only to be disappointed. However, he reassures the audience that God has a different purpose and plan for their lives, and encourages them to seek deliverance from their captivities and to allow the Holy Spirit to open their eyes.

Transcript

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You are welcome to make additional cassettes of this message for free distribution to friends. However, for all other forms of reproduction or electronic transmission, existing copyright laws apply. Luke chapter 4, let me just read you something.

I'm not preaching from Luke chapter 4 today. But it's that famous chapter where Jesus stood in the synagogue and took the scriptures of the prophet Isaiah and began to read and declare the intent of his ministry among those that were hearing him. And he said, the Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor.

Now, the poor, by virtue of that statement, would be those who knew that in themselves they had insufficient resource as it is to finish the journey. It doesn't mean necessarily just the physically poor, but those who knew they needed a savior. They were genuinely humble before God.

He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted and to preach deliverance to the captives and the recovering of sight to the blind and to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. In other words, Jesus said, now this is the time of God's favor. It was an incredible declaration because the people in that synagogue knew that these scriptures could only be fulfilled by the Messiah.

That's why, of course, the rage when he stood up and said this day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. I want to make a proclamation before I preach today because I know that in this sanctuary there are people and all these five things apply to you and you're going to see them in this message today. You don't have within you the resources to finish the journey.

You are quite well aware of it this morning. Some things have come into your life that have overwhelmed you. The Holy Spirit has so clearly spoken this to my heart throughout this week.

And this day is a day of good tidings for you because by virtue of the admission you can't finish the journey. You have now opened your heart to the work of God. God can now come and do what only God can do.

He's come to heal the brokenhearted. There are people here today who have been wounded. Your heart has been broken.

It's been so crushed and so hard that only Almighty God himself could ever make a difference in your life now. Because of it you've been captivated by memories of the past. You've been captivated by your circumstance or your betrayal, whatever it might be.

But the second thing he said I came to do was to preach deliverance to the captives and the recovering of sight to the blind. The Holy Spirit says now I'm going to open your eyes if you'll let me. And I'm going to show you something that you may not have seen for a long time that applies to you.

And to set at liberty those that are bruised. To open the door of that prison, that place sometimes just where self loves to wallow in pity and where perhaps the enemy likes to keep even the people of God in captivity. And Jesus said I'm going to open the door and I'm going to set you free.

And today, this day, this scripture is going to be fulfilled in your ears. My message this morning is entitled When the Wounds of a Friend Don't Seem to be Faithful. When the Wounds of a Friend Don't Seem to be Faithful.

Almighty God, I come before your throne this day and I cast myself as well as everyone in this sanctuary upon your grace and your mercy. I need grace to understand and I need grace to speak and we need grace to hear. And we acknowledge today that your kingdom is a kingdom of grace.

We haven't earned, we don't deserve the favor that you have given to us. We only stand as poor and we say Lord we don't have apart from you the resources to finish our journey. We don't have within ourselves the power to overcome the opposition and disappointments that come into all of our lives.

And Jesus I'm asking today God that by the power of that grace that you would anoint me and quicken me. That you would make alive your word. That you would take stories that you've spoken and words that you have penned in the scriptures and make them come absolutely alive.

I have no desire to impress anyone. All I desire Lord is to see your kingdom advance. I want to see you glorified in your church and understood among your people.

Mighty God show yourself powerful. Lord you will do everything you said you would do. And this day before even turning to the word we have an anticipation.

That God there is going to be a shout of genuine freedom. There's going to be new vision and hope. God you're going to release from prisons of loneliness and despair many who have been captivated.

You're going to set free. You're going to touch and liberate in this house. And I thank you for it with all my heart.

Lord this is all about you and it can only happen by your power. No persuasion of man could ever make this happen. No clever arguments could ever procure freedom that can only come by the spirit of God.

Lord we are all cast upon you today. We are all as it is cast upon the shores of your love and your grace. And we ask you God to come and do miracles in us.

Let your kingdom come in great power. And we acknowledge with all the saints of old that yours is the only kingdom, the only power, the only glory. It all belongs to you Lord.

We are all in need of great grace. And we thank you Lord God. There is an abundant and never ending supply.

You're going to open our eyes to it. You're going to show it to us. You're going to break the chains of captivity.

I believe it with all my heart. And I thank you for it in Jesus mighty name. When the wounds of a friend don't seem to be faithful.

Now the book of Proverbs in chapter 27 verse 6 tells us that faithful are the wounds of a friend. Now there are seasons and times where we can be wounded. But the wounds that we receive into our lives are given to us by God's grace through faithful friendship.

The word faithful in the original text means to be trusted, to endure or a reliable friend. The word friend means one who loves as a parent to a child, a husband to a wife or the close ties of friendship. For example, I'll give you an example of what I'm speaking about.

A man may come to you someday or a woman and speak something to you who sees you falling into the sin of pride. Now what he speaks to you may wound your new self image. But the intent of his speaking is not to destroy you but to cause you to reconsider the maintaining of a self image that will ultimately cause you to be at enmity or opposed to God.

Remember James chapter 4 verse 6. The Lord says God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. If pride is getting into your heart and I was your friend and I truly love you. The Holy Spirit may use me to speak a word into your life that will wound you.

But it's a faithful wound. It's a wound that is intended by God to cause you to turn from sin or to attitudes or lifestyle. Something that's getting a hold of your heart that is going to set you at enmity against God Almighty Himself.

I thank God in my life for the wounds that I've received from faithful friends over the years. Yes, my pride trying to rise up has been wounded by faithful friends. Attitudes, ambitions, issues of the heart, places I've attempted to go.

I've had faithful friends come and sit or stand with me and talk and begin to point out issues in my heart that I was not aware of. And sometimes it's difficult to hear these things. But by God's grace, He has given me the ability over the years to walk humbly before Him as He has enabled me to do that.

And to show me the issues of my heart. And I do thank God. I could go into specifics but I don't have time this morning.

But there have been some wounds that have been given to me by some very, very faithful friends. And beloved, I believe that only eternity is going to reveal the lives of those who have been kept by a word that has been skillfully placed in season. Skillfully spoken.

Like a master surgeon, the Holy Ghost will use somebody to come and carve away a cancer as it is that's trying to attach itself to my spiritual life. Faithful are the wounds of a friend. But the Bible tells us that there are other kinds of wounds that we can receive in our walk with Christ for often which the explanations are difficult.

And wounds from which some people who without God's intervention directly into their lives will never recover. Now David, the psalmist, if you'll turn with me to Psalm 55. He speaks about such a wound that was brought into his life.

And what it had done to him for a season. Psalm 55 verse 4, David said, My heart is sore pain within me, and the terrors of death have fallen upon me. Fearfulness, verse 5, and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me.

And I said, O that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away and be at rest. Lo, then would I wander far off and remain in the wilderness. Now David was making a statement I believe that is common to all of humanity.

David said, I've been wounded. And the wound that I've received is an unrighteous wound that's come into my life. And if I could, I would run and hide and I would never come back to be wounded like this again.

David said, I would go off and I would remain in the wilderness. I'd give up on the plan of God. Now you have to understand, this is written by a man whose life has been spoken into by the Holy Spirit.

He's been anointed with oil. He's been set apart by God. He fully well knows it.

But into his life has come a wounding. And it's not the wounding of faithfulness. It is an unfaithful wounding, although God ultimately can use it as well for his own purposes.

David said, it's so wounded me, I want to hide. And beloved, listen to me. Even in this house today, there are people that have received wounds in your life.

They've been unrighteous wounds and they've caused you to do exactly this. You've made a vow as it is. Never again, never again will I let anybody get that close to my life.

Never again will I trust. Never again will I be put into that position. And by virtue of that vow, in a sense, you've locked yourself out of something that God wants to do in your life.

You've put yourself in a self-imposed prison. Because if you want to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, beloved, wounding is part of the walk. You've got to come out of that place of exile as it is and come back into the will of God and say, God, I believe that all things that you allow and come into my life, whether it's righteous or unrighteous, works together for a purpose.

You are doing something in my life. Lord, you said you came to set me free, so I come to meet you today face to face. And I'm asking you to take me out of this place in the wilderness that I've been in for so many years.

A self-imposed exile as it is from ever experiencing pain again. And ironically, that self-imposed exile is one of the most painful places that you could ever be in. It's no escape from pain.

It's deeper pain. It's a place of wounding. It's a place of separation.

It's a place of being cut off from the deepest grace of God as it is that He wants to give into your life. Now, what caused David to say this? What caused David to run in such a manner? What causes so many of God's people, even in his house, to be found in places? And I've heard it. I know the pastors on this platform have heard it over and over again in counseling sessions.

The same words. Never again. Never again will I trust.

Never again will I be put in that position. By virtue of that statement, persons are identifying that in reality they are in a prison. Their eyes are shut to the grace of God.

They're not even aware of times of where they are. David says in verse 12, Here's the source of this kind of a wounding that can happen even in God's house. David said, It was not an enemy that reproached me.

Then I could have borne it. David says, Let the Philistines say to me whatever they want. Let Goliath tell the world what he's going to do with my carcass as it is after he's slain me.

That doesn't bother me at all. David said, It wasn't an enemy. Nor was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me.

Then I would have hid myself from him. But it was thou, a man my equal, my guide and my acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together and walked into the house of God in company.

And David says basically this. And this is the testimony of many, many people today. And it's simply this.

I trusted and my trust was betrayed. I trusted. I became vulnerable.

In a relationship. Irrespective of what type of relationship it was. In or outside of the house or the kingdom of God.

I became vulnerable and my vulnerability was betrayed. The psalmist says in Psalm 77 verse 2, My sore or my pain ran in the night and ceased not and my soul refused to be comforted. There was a pain that came into my life that day and night was always there.

The memory never went away. As hard and far as I tried to run from it, it was always there. And every time it seems that I tried to get close to God, that thing would come back again.

And that's what happens with many people. They say, Lord, oh, I want to get back again. I want to walk with you the way I used to walk with you.

And they come to the altar and they close their eyes and raise their hands. And there's that circumstance. Fifteen years ago sometimes.

Twenty years ago. There it is again. And in their heart there's a cry.

They say, God, oh yeah, I'll live for you. I will serve you, but never again. And God says, no, that's not the way it's going to work.

If you're going to live for me, there's got to be a healing come into your life. There's got to be wholeness and you've got to begin to believe that I can open your eyes to something that you may not have been aware of for a long, long time now. Now, most people are wounded when a trust is broken.

It's a trust over which they seemingly have no control. They're not a casual trust. There are casual trusts that can be broken that don't affect me at all.

I trust that if I'm crossing the road and a police officer is directing traffic, that he's going to stop the oncoming car so that I'll not be in peril. But if that trust should be broken and I had a near miss, I can live with that. Assumedly, if the car didn't hit me, that is, I could live with it.

For example, if you go out on the street today and someone meets you and says an unkind word to you, that happens in New York City all the time, doesn't it? It's a person you've never met before, and they say, you're thus and thus and thus, and it's an unkind thing that they say to your heart. You just look at them and say, I wonder what his or her problem is, and just keep on walking. It doesn't affect you at all.

But go home today and have the same word spoken to your heart from someone you've learned to love and trust, and then that's a different story altogether. You see, when a love and a trust and a vulnerability is in your heart, in relationship, and then that is betrayed, that's where this kind of a wounding quite often gets into your heart. And that's where this festering wound, as it is, that refuses to be comforted, stops many wonderful saints of God from their growth in his kingdom.

If you'll go with me in the Old Testament to the book of Genesis, please, chapter 16, I want to speak for a couple of moments about a lady that was in a situation something like this. Now, her name was Hagar. Now, I'm only assuming that she had a servant's heart, because she was a woman who was Sarah's handmaid.

She was an Egyptian. And you know that God made a promise to Abraham, that promise that he would be given a seed, and through the seed he would be blessed, and through that seed the whole world would be blessed. It was an incredible promise that was given to Abraham.

Abraham's wife, Sarah, was unable to conceive, and so she came up with an idea, I have a handmaid, she's an Egyptian, you take her to be your wife as well, and she will bear a child, and that child will be as if it was mine. Now, there were cultural laws in those days that made that acceptable. This child will be born as it is upon my knees, and this child will be mine, and this will be the fulfillment of the promise that God

made to us.

Now, we know from study that that is essentially man's effort to try to make God's promises, to try to give God a hand, as if he needs a hand to make his promises come to pass. But into this place of really its unbelief on Abraham's part, and Sarah's part, enters this servant woman, Hagar, and she's talked into a confidence, or taken into a confidence, and I feel undoubtedly told that she was going to play a very important part in a great plan of God to bless Abraham's family, and ultimately to bless the whole world. Now, the Scripture tells us that Genesis chapter 16, Now Sarah, Abraham's wife, beared unto him no children, and she had a handmaid that was an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar.

And Sarah said to Abraham, Behold now, the Lord has restrained me from bearing, I pray thee, go into my maid, it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abraham hearkened to the voice of Sarah. And Sarah, Abraham's wife, took Hagar, her maid, the Egyptian, after Abraham had dwelt in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband, Abraham, to be his wife.

Now, you have to understand that there was a relationship, a husband-wife relationship involved here. And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.

Now, Genesis again, chapter 16, verse 7. The Bible tells us that she fled because she had some early misgivings, I believe, about even her own security in this relationship. In Genesis 16, 7, it says, The angel of the Lord found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by a fountain in the way to shore. And he said to Hagar, Sarah's maid, whence comest thou? Now, she's by a fountain of water.

Now, that's significant. You're going to understand that. Just mark that in your spirit, if you will.

And where are you going? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarah. And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Return to thy mistress and submit thyself unto her hands. The angel of the Lord said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, and it shall not be numbered for multitude.

And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shall bear a son, and shall call his name Ishmael, because the Lord has heard thy affliction. Now, the word Ishmael, the name Israel, means God hears. God said, you are going to have a child, and you're going to call his name God hears, because I have seen your affliction.

Now, it's only my interpretation. And so you have to take that for what it's worth. But as I read the Scripture, I can't help but feel that Abraham had spoken something into Hagar's life that he shouldn't have.

Perhaps made her feel like her involvement in the fulfillment of the promise was greater than it actually was. I'll explain that. Sarah, all she wanted Hagar for was to have a child, because she considered the promise, the fulfillment was going to come through Abraham and Sarah.

And so she spoke to Hagar. Hagar becomes Abraham's wife. And he went into her.

She conceived. And then Sarah says to Abraham later on when she found out that the moment Hagar found out she was going to have a child, she despised Sarah because she knew that child was going to be Sarah's and not her own. Now, we take a look at it.

If she was honestly dealt with in this relationship, if she honestly knew that's what her purpose was, then why to despise it? And Sarah said to Abraham when she found out, she basically said, The Lord judge in chapter 16, verse 5. And Sarah said to Abraham, My wrong be upon thee. I have given my maiden to thy bosom. And when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes.

The Lord judge between me and thee. And actually, the other translation says it this way. Sarah said to Abraham, The Lord judge you for the wrong that you have done to me.

Abraham, I feel that Sarah was saying to Abraham, Abraham, you have made her more. You have sown into her heart more than she was intended to be. You have spoken something to this woman.

And Sarah said, The Lord forgive you as if Abraham had done a wrong for what you have done. Because the moment she was with child, she began to despise me, which means there's a strong indication here that Hagar was made to trust in something that was not to be. Perhaps a promise was spoken to her that was not going to be fulfilled in her life.

And so she ran away into the wilderness, bewildered, perhaps a little bit confused about what was really going on in her own life. And the Lord spoke to her and said, Now, go back and submit yourself to your mistress. And I have seen your affliction, Hagar.

I see your confusion. I understand that maybe some things were promised to you that are not going to be fulfilled in your life. But you're going to have a child.

There's a seed in you. And I'm going to give that child a name which is speaking something into Hagar's life that she may not be aware of at this point in her life. But that name is God Hears.

Hagar, I see your affliction and I hear. And I'm going to do more than just hear. You're going to understand this not too far down the road.

And we see Ishmael now, this child that is birthed in the womb of the Egyptian servant Hagar. You see, this child now is Hagar's hope. Ishmael, I can see Hagar saying, This is God's purpose now for my life.

Ishmael, through whom the blessing is going to come for my master's, my husband's house as it is and for all these future generations. The promise of God is going to come through my womb as it is. Ishmael is my part that I'm going to play towards the hope and the future of others.

Ishmael is the fruit of my trust in those that I find in authority over my life. I have to trust you, God, for the situation that I'm in right now, even if I don't fully understand it. That somehow through this seed that's been conceived within me, there's going to be life.

I don't understand it, but this is my trust. Ishmael, Hagar would say, this is my personal hope and my dreams. This is what I'm hoping to look back on with gratitude and satisfaction in my old age, saying this was my part.

It was given to me in a great plan, which I've been promised that I would be part of. Oh, beloved, that's in everyone's heart. That's in your heart.

That's in my heart. We all have the need to be part of something larger than ourselves, and especially in the kingdom of God. There's something that God has planted in our hearts.

Hagar could say, I was needed. I responded. I was told that I could meet the need and satisfy the longing of those that I trusted.

I was valuable. I can see Hagar, because the Bible tells us when Ishmael was 13 years old, both he and Abraham were circumcised, along with the other males in Abraham's household. And that circumcision meant that they were set apart for God, and the promises and power of God was going to come through that lineage.

It had been 13 years she's holding that promise, and how she must have felt in her heart seeing that covenant circumcision that happened, knowing that she had contributed, knowing that she was valuable, feeling like she was playing an integral part in something much greater than herself until one day, with little warning, the bond of that trust was broken. I can't help but think as I was preparing this message of the wife or the husband who comes home to read the note left on the table that says there's no longer any place for you in my life. I've never had to go through that, but I can only imagine the wounding.

I can only imagine the scar that must come into the heart. I can only imagine the vows that are made, new vows, not wedding vows anymore, but a new vow that says never again, never again will I be this vulnerable to another person on this earth. I think about the person who trusted or entrusted his or her love to someone only to be put away when someone else came along.

That's got to be how Hagar must have felt. All these years of yielding myself and giving myself to something that I was told I was meeting a need. I was told that I was filling a void that nobody else could fill.

I was told I'm in the right place at the right time and through my life is going to come great promises, great fulfillment, and all of a sudden someone else has come along and I'm not expendable. I couldn't help but think of the child who hears criticism so deep that he wants to flee or comes home to be made to feel that both he and his family are worthless and expendable. I've never experienced the pain of a father walking out the door, a mother walking out the door.

I can only begin to understand what that is all about. The betrayal, the wounding that is not righteous, it's not faithful, and the vows that become because of that wounding. Never again will I be placed in that situation of vulnerability.

I couldn't help but think about the house of God as well. Over so many years, so many people have given their trust to men's plans and men's visions. They turned on the television, they were lonely, and somebody on the television said, you and I are integral partners in reaching perhaps a certain section of society or a certain part of the world.

That's always the key word. I need you. You're useful.

This is your time to get involved. And so they committed themselves to some type of a work, some type of a plan, only to find that the plan and vision came to nothing. And they're left to recover and to find their own way.

And even in the house of God, there are people who say, never again, never again will I trust spiritual leadership. Never again will I trust the plans, visions, and directions of any man or woman in the house of God. I've been burnt once too often.

Never again. I'm going to go to church, but in my heart, I'm going to live in the wilderness. And I'm never coming back to that place of vulnerability again to fall for somebody's statement that only through my life can the need be met.

Genesis, now in chapter 21, if you'll go there with me. Genesis 21-14. Abraham rose up early in the morning and took bread and a bottle of water and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away.

And she departed and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba. Beersheba is a place where Abraham later on had a covenant contract with another tribal leader, another king, where he had legal water rights. Think about that for a moment because we're going to get back there again.

And here is Hagar wandering around in this wilderness where Abraham will eventually possess water rights. But she herself is dying of thirst. Chapter 21, verse 15, the Scripture tells us the water was spent in the bottle and she cast the child under one of the shrubs.

Hagar was brought to a place where that which had been given to her by another was exhausted. And folks, if we are living off of somebody else's revelation, that's exactly what's going to happen. If we're only living because somebody else is telling us what our part and purpose is, whether it be in life in general or in the family of God, irrespective of which place, if all we are getting is our direction from somebody else, there's going to come a time when that is going to run out.

It's not sufficient. We can't live our lives based on somebody else's vision. And I dread for the church today, for so many people, that's how they're living.

They don't even have a reason to be in the kingdom of God. They're following some man's vision somewhere. And as far as that may take you, it will eventually leave you in the wilderness and you will be exhausted.

You can't live that way. That's not the way the Christian life was intended to be lived. God had another purpose and another plan for your life.

And you're going to see that in a moment. She took her son, the son of promise, the son that was her hope, the son that had been born to her so long ago, the son that was cherished, and she cast him under a shrub. Now the word for shrub in the Hebrew text means a shoot, or like a small word that had gone forth.

All of a sudden the promise that had been given many years ago was a dim hope. And in this wilderness, it's like the Christian who's received something from God for his life. And all of a sudden in this wilderness where there's no more water, it's like that promise of what my destiny is, of what God's purpose for my life is, is so small I just take it and I cast it under a dim hope.

I throw it away from me. And then she ran away into another place because she couldn't bear to watch it die. She couldn't bear to hear the moans and the groans.

You know, folks, you can run all your life, but God created you for a purpose. God created you for something very specific that He had ordained for you from before you were formed in your mother's womb. And yes, woundings come into your life.

And yes, you'll want to run away into another place and say, it could never happen. And many, many, many today are doing that very same thing even in the house of God. They're trying to run their greatest fear.

And the greatest fear they have is that all hope is lost. I'll go to church, but I don't believe that God's promises for my life will ever become a reality. That was 15 years ago that God spoke that thing into my heart.

And I just don't believe anymore that it'll ever happen. I can't trust. I have no power to get out of this prison.

I've been wounded all the way along. When I did reach out and trust, it was betrayed. How could I ever become what God has destined my life to be? Sorry, I'll take this and throw it under a shrub and I'll run and I'll die in another place.

I'll answer every altar call in Times Square Church, but I will not believe in my heart that God will ever fulfill His promise to my life. Hagar would say, God, Your promise is such a distant memory. It's such a faint hope in the light of my present situation.

And there are many, many sitting here today who are just like that because of woundings that came into your life. And as I'm speaking now, the promises that God made to you, especially those when you first came to Christ, they're all coming back to you. But then you think of the times you reached out and you trusted and you thought maybe this was the way.

And all that came into your heart were woundings and betrayals. Some were righteous and others were unrighteous. And it left you in a place of casting your hope.

And the Word of God, which should be all-encompassing and over-covering, as it is, your present and your future, is now just a little shrub in the wilderness. And you take what was once your hope and cast it under that shrub. Now in verse 16, in Genesis 21, she went and sat down over against him a good way off as it were a bow shot.

And she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against him and lifted up her voice and wept. And God heard the voice of the lad and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven and said to her, What aileth thee, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is.

Hagar, when you set out to give yourself and you wanted me so long ago, you may have forgotten, but I haven't. God says, I heard you and I gave you a child of promise. And do you remember what his name is? His name is God Hears.

That's an incredible thing when you begin to think about it. Let me just read to you a scripture. God Hears, Hagar.

This is the name of my promise to you. Here's what the Lord would say to you today. Fear not, for thou shalt not be ashamed.

Neither be thou confounded, for thou shalt not be put to shame. For thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. For thy maker is thy husband.

The Lord of hosts is his name and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, the God of the whole earth, shall He be called. Verse 6, Isaiah 54. Let me read it to you.

For the Lord has called thee. God says, I called you. I heard you when you first called out to Me and I called you for a purpose.

He says, I called you as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit and a wife of youth when thou hast refused. Sayeth thy God. God says, when I called you, here's what you were.

You considered yourself forsaken. You were grieved in your heart. You were fleeing, in some cases, even from truth.

And you were like a young bride who had been refused by all of those who had once proclaimed to love her and she had placed her trust in. And God says, when I saw you in that condition, when I saw you forsaken, when I saw you grieved, when I saw you as a wife without anyone to trust in anymore, God says, I called you then. I called to you when there was nobody else.

You talk about humility. God says, I've waited all these years until there was nobody else. No other trust.

No other plan. No other ambition. No other relationship.

Until finally I could get you alone where you could hear My voice and I called you. I called you. The incredible humility of God.

It's as if He stands in line waiting for all the other relationships to fail. I'm awestruck. I'm dumbfounded at the humility and the love of God.

He will let us run our course. He will let us do our thing even in His own kingdom while He stands at the door and knocks. He has every right to demand our affection, but He is an absolute and perfect gentleman.

He stands and waits. And He says, I'll wait until you have nobody else. I'll wait until nobody wants you.

I'll wait until everybody has broken your heart. And then I call you. Hallelujah.

In a little raft, He says, I hid My face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer. God says, O thou afflicted and tossed with tempest and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colors and lay thy foundations with sapphires. He says, I'm going to take you.

I'm going to take you that have been betrayed. I'm going to take you that have been wounded. I'm going to take you that have been harked.

I'm going to take you that have been bruised. I'm going to take you that have been cast into a prison. I'm going to take you that have run into the wilderness.

And I'm going to set you in a permanent place on the most beautiful foundation you've ever seen in your entire life. Hallelujah. And I will make you windows of agates.

That means, I will give you a future. You'll look out, and there will be beauty in what you see. You'll no longer be looking into despair and hope and betrayal.

No longer making vows that you cannot keep. I'll make your gates of carbuncles and all your borders of pleasant stones. In other words, He says, I'm going to hem you in.

I'm going to bring you into My love, and it will be so divine and lovely you will never again want to leave My presence. All your children will be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children. You are not going to be bringing them false promises.

You're not going to bring them into a false hope. You're not going to tell them they're there to meet the need in your life. No, no, no.

You're going to introduce them to the one only everlasting living God. You're going to introduce them to the source of life. Oh yes, He says, your enemies shall gather, but you will be established in righteousness, and you will be far from oppression, and you will not fear, and terror will not come near you.

Behold, they will gather together, God says. Yes, your enemies will gather. Your old fears will try to come back on you.

Your old vows will try to come back and take precedence over what I'm about to do in your life. But He said, I created them. I made the smith that blows the coals in the fire.

I made the ones that brings forth an instrument for the work. I even created the waster who destroys. And then He says, but no weapon formed against you shall prosper.

And every tongue, every tongue, every tongue that rises against you in judgment, you will condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of Me, says the Lord. God said to His people through the prophet Hosea in chapter 2, verses 19 and 20, I will betroth thee unto Me forever.

I will betroth thee unto Me in righteousness and in judgment and in loving kindness and in mercy. And I will even betroth thee unto Me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord. That doesn't mean, God says, you will be faithful to Me.

He says, no. I will be faithful to you. I will not break your trust that you place in Me.

I will not disappoint you. I will not send you away when it's not convenient. God says, I will not be looking for another to take your place.

You are Mine. Forever you are Mine. You are My beloved bride.

Hallelujah. Even those wounds that I have allowed into your life have had a purpose. I have been a faithful friend to you, says the Lord.

Yes, you have been wounded. And yes, I could have stopped some of them, but I didn't, because I was waiting in line for you to get finished with all those other relationships, so that you could be introduced to your husband. You could be introduced to the one that you were betrothed to for all of eternity.

And those wounds which have not come from My hand, I have taken upon Myself. He says, I was wounded for your transgressions, and by My stripes you are healed. I took them upon Myself.

That's how you're going to be free. You take those unrighteous wounds that were brought into your life, and Jesus said, you throw them upon Me. Cast them upon Me.

I took them upon Calvary, and that's how I set you free. Hallelujah! He says in Genesis to Hagar, verse 18, chapter 21, Arise now, lift up the lad, hold him in your hand, for I will make him a great nation. The Lord says to you today, Now get up and pick up that which I have spoken to you about.

Pick up that which you have spoken to Me about, and I will do it for you. I will make a great nation beyond your greatest hope. And you can see Hagar out in the midst of the wilderness, her source of supply virtually gone because it came from someone other than God.

Do you understand? Her supply is almost gone. Jesus said, I came to give sight to those that are blind. I came to heal those that have been wounded and bruised in their heart.

And you can see and hear Hagar saying, God, how is this thing going to happen? How are you going to make something great out of what I have cast out under a shrub? Out of what I have given up for dead? How are you going to take that? And how are you going to bring about the change in this situation? And verse 19 says, And God opened her eyes. This is exactly what the Holy Ghost is doing right now for many who have lived under a wounding and lived under vows of never again reaching out and being vulnerable. And God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water.

Hallelujah! And she went and filled the bottle with water and gave the lad drink. And God was with the lad, and he grew and became an archer. Now listen to me.

God said to Hagar, I have a well. I have a well just for you. I have a well of living water.

And Hagar, whether or not you can understand this, your wounds have brought you here. Your wounds have brought you to a place where now I can open your eyes and you can begin to see that no one else has to be your source of hope any longer. I have been faithful to you.

Nobody has the water rights to heaven. God says, I have them. They're mine.

They don't belong to Abraham. They belong to Me. Nobody has the water rights to your life, beloved.

Nobody. Nobody can tell you who you are or where you're going or what you're going to be. No man has that right.

God says, you're mine. You belong to Me. If you will allow Me to open your eyes, I will show you a well of living water that has been dug just for you.

It is a source of supply that is clean and pure and never goes dry. And it brings healing and wholeness and life and purpose. It sets free every captive.

And your wounds have brought you here. Your wounds. Faithful are the wounds of a friend.

God says, I've been faithful to you. And even the unrighteous wounds that have come into your life, I've allowed them because it has brought you here. Hallelujah.

I have been here. I have been waiting for you that I may open your eyes and show you what you've never been able to see before. Hallelujah.

Hagar, no one but Me holds the key to your hopes and your dreams, and I will never leave you or forsake you. Hallelujah. Lord, forgive us for our foolish vows.

Today, we get up. We go on. We receive our freedom.

I give an altar call today for those that the Holy Spirit spoke into your life and you have been wounded and you've lived in the wilderness and somewhere in your life you've said, never again. You haven't realized it, but it's stopped your spiritual growth. When you come to God, there has to be a vulnerability, even a willingness to say, I will be wounded perhaps in the future again, but never by God.

Never. And even though I may find myself in the wilderness from time to time, there's a well there now. There's a well.

I don't need someone else's supply. I don't need someone else's provision to keep me. There is a well for me dug by God Himself.

There's a spring of living water. And it's for me. It's for me.

I have now my own source of supply. Hallelujah. And God will speak His life into mine.

Let's all stand. Main Sanctuary Education Annex. The Holy Spirit spoke in you today and you want to be free.

You want to be free from the pain, the vows, the captivity of past experience and betrayal. You come. You come.

Say, Lord, Your wounds have been faithful. You've got to be able to say that when you come. God, You've been faithful to me.

It's hurt. It's been painful. But God, You've been faithful to me.

Faithful are the wounds of a friend. Even the things I don't understand have a purpose. And Lord, I'm going to open my heart and trust again.

I'm going to be vulnerable one more time because You will not betray me. You have a purpose for my life. There's a meaning for my life.

You have a plan. And that which You spoke to me years ago is going to happen by Your grace. It's going to happen.

Hallelujah. There may be a few tears. I'm not even suggesting you do, but you're going to get set free here today.

You're going to get absolutely set free at this altar. Lead us in a song, please, if you will. And we'll wait.

Lo, we found Jesus Cleansed and healing All who behold With clean hearing water New hearts are given Salts made in heaven Sin brings no more With clean hearing water New hearts are given Salts made in heaven Lo, there is a fountain Jesus Cleansed and healing All who behold With clean hearing water New hearts are given Salts made in heaven Sin brings no more With clean hearing water New hearts are given Salts made in heaven It's very important today at this altar that to receive your healing, you have to release the death. You have to let go all of the woundings and the people responsible for them. You have to forgive them.

Let the death go. And say, Lord, even though I don't understand it, your wounds have been faithful because they brought me here. They brought me to a place where you're going to open my eyes now.

You're going to show me life that I've never even dreamt was possible. And you're going to bring to completeness that which you've begun in me. And you're going to do it, God.

It's not going to come from any human vessel. It's going to come from you. Let's pray together.

Lord Jesus, I have been wounded, and it's been a painful experience. Today, I thank you for your Word, which has set me free and given me hope and caused me to want to get up and live anew in living relationship with you. I release those who have wronged me, who have wounded my life.

And I ask you, God, to forgive them, for they don't know what they have done. Today, I am free from any vows I made, and I renounce those vows. When I said the words never again, Lord God, I now understand that life with you is a life of endless new possibility every day.

And even if I am wounded again, I have this knowledge that you will only allow into my life what is faithful to your purposes in me. Because you are a friend that stays closer than a brother. The wounds of a friend are faithful.

I love you, Jesus. I take your promises for me, again in my hand. I pick them up from the places where I have thrown them down.

And today at this altar, I am free that you have promised me. I don't need anyone else just for you and me. Today, I thank you that by God's grace, I am free.

I am free. Old fears will try to come back. But he said, no weapon formed against you is going to prosper.

You've met him today in the wilderness. This is the conclusion of the message.

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