

Why God Wounds His People

by Michael Durham

In 'Why God Wounds His People', Michael Durham explores the necessity of God's discipline in leading us to true submission and transformation.

Duration: 1:07:00

Scripture: Genesis 32:24-31, Proverbs 3:5-6, Matthew 6:33, John 12:24, Romans 8:28, Hebrews 12:6, James 4:10

Topics: "Wounds"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of dying to oneself in order to experience true spiritual growth. He uses the example of a woman named Karen who had been hearing the same truth for 16 years but only truly understood it when God touched her heart. The preacher emphasizes that it is not our abilities or efforts that bring about transformation, but rather our willingness to depend on God. He also highlights the story of Jacob, who was physically wounded by God to prevent him from running away, and how this marked him as a champion walking with the mark of God in his life.

Transcript

Father, you're so good. It's a great joy to be in your presence. I'm manifesting in a glimmer of your glory.

Good. Yet Lord, I'm almost frightened. I want to be hid.

Hide me. Please Lord, hide me. Strike the rock.

Let there be waters of refreshment here for us. Give drink to the thirsty and meat to the hungry. Do your work and make our souls satisfied in thee.

For the glory and the reward of your Son. Amen. Next we pray the Lord be pleased to speak to us from this evening.

Genesis chapter 32 verses 24-31. As you're turning, I encourage you to open up your heart to the King of Glory. We have a Heavenly Father above.

With eyes full of mercy. Jesus has suffered your anger for you. He's not angry.

He's been propitiated. Nine. His hands are open.

He's approachable. He's approachable. Today, the day of salvation.

Open your heart and be approachable. Let the Holy Spirit approach you. His weapons have been laid down.

He aimed them at the Son. He unleashed them on Him. And then He laid them down.

His bow is not aimed at you. The sword has been sheathed. And He says, come.

The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. Come. You will find Him good.

Sinner, He's good. He will satisfy and then some. Come.

Saint, aren't you tired from trying to get water from cisterns that are broken? Come. Be refreshed tonight. Is there grit in your teeth because you've been in the wilderness where He hasn't been? He didn't send you there? Wash out the teeth and the grit of the sand.

Wash your face. Be refreshed tonight. Come.

He's not angry. He will not chide. Just open your heart.

I don't know what He has for you. But He's here. He's here.

Genesis 32, verse 24. Then Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until the breaking of day. Now when he saw that he did not prevail against him, he touched the socket of his hip.

Socket. Jacob's hip was out of joint as he wrestled with him. And he said, God speaking, let me go for the day breaks.

But Jacob said, I will not let you go lest you bless me. What a prayer. We'll deal with that tomorrow night.

So he said to him, what is your name? He said, Jacob. And he said, your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have struggled with God and with men and have prevailed. Then Jacob asked, saying, tell me your name, I pray.

And he said, why is it that you ask about my name? And he blessed him there. So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved. Just as he crossed over Penuel, the sun rose on him, and he limped on his hip.

We all want God to show up when we're in trouble. When there's problems and distress, we really know how to cry. Jacob was in trouble.

So he thought, for his brother Esau, armed with 400 men, were fastly approaching and making their way towards Jacob. Because this man, Jacob, had 20 years earlier cheated his brother, and Esau had sworn, the next time I see your face, I will kill you. And so the meeting was to take place on the morrow, and Jacob did not know whether it was going to be a meeting or a massacre.

And naturally, he was worried. Earlier in chapter 32, we'll look at it in just a moment, there Jacob formulated a strategy and a plan for a hopeful deliverance, and then he prayed. Jacob prayed, but not until he first implemented his idea of defense.

And here's what he says in verse 11 of the same 32nd chapter. Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I fear him, lest he come and attack me and the mother with the

children. For you said, this guy is amazing, you promised me, you said, I will surely preach you well and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.

I'm not for sure that I don't hear more wrestling than resting right here. I certainly hear a great deal of frustration and not faith. And maybe I'm a little wrong there, but at least I can say that in this case, Jacob was almost accusatory.

I really believe that. He reminds God of Bethel 20 years earlier and says, you made a promise to me that you're going to bring me back to the land of my father and that you would take care of me. What's going on here God? Basically.

I think what he's doing is once again trying to use God to make his plan work. His plan is found in verses 7 and 8. Same chapter. Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed and he divided the people that were with him and the flocks and herds and camels into two companies.

He said, if Esau comes to the one company and attacks it, then the other company which is left will escape. So he was certain that he had come up with the best alternative and then he prayed. Isn't that just like us? Strategize and plan how our problems can be addressed and then we pray asking God to bless this solution that we have arrived at.

And rest and peace eludes you. You lie on your pillow at night. You can't go to sleep because the wheels are spinning trying to come up with an answer.

Why can't we just lay our heads on our pillows at night resting in this fact that the judge of all the earth will do right? Why can't we just trust God that His way is always best? Why can't we come to this conclusion? If He gets me through this, fine. But if I go down, fine. You want to know the answer why we can't always come to that conclusion? Because we often don't really want God's way.

We want God to bless our ways. So here we find a little Jacob in all of us. But what Jacob didn't know was that he had a much greater adversary that he was to be confronted with that evening than even his brother Esau.

Verse 24, God comes to Jacob and tackles him to the ground and a wrestling match begins. We talked about this very unusual occurrence last evening. Jacob had been a contender, a striver, a supplanter, if you please, a wrestler all of his life.

Nothing had he gained but that he had to be in some kind of competition with somebody where he used his often underhand tactics to gain the primacy. And so God confronts Jacob in a style that Jacob should be very familiar with. In a competition, in a wrestling match, striving with him.

And in that event, as I said last night, Jacob is made to learn that in his manipulating and self-planting others, he's really rejected a life of faith. And so have we. I love Proverbs 3 verses 5 and 6. Trust in the Lord and lean not unto thine own understanding, but in all of thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy path.

When you and I lean to our own understanding, we have immediately said no to faith. At least faith in God. And we've said yes to faith in us.

It appears, though, it appears, though, that Jacob triumphs over God and prevails. But God only lets Jacob think he wins. Do you want to know the truth? Who won? God won by transforming Jacob from a supplanter into a submitter.

God was the winner here. And so was Jacob. Now watch this.

I love what God does with me and you, His children. God will come to us, discipline us, chastise us, wound us in such a way that we walk away thinking we won. Thank You, Father, for such love and mercy that You can wound my life and I think I am the winner.

Tonight I want to show you another first time for God. This is another first for God. God wrestled Jacob physically for the first time.

Secondly, God touched Jacob's hip while wrestling, forever crippling the man. And that's the only time we ever see something like this happening in Scripture where God touches a man and he's physically wounded. At least that obvious and plain.

We often pray for the touch of God on our lives and I wonder if we really know what we're asking for. Because the touch of God always wounds. Always.

Folks, if you want to be used by God, first plan on being wounded by God. The question tonight I want to try to answer. I don't know, except God help us.

Why? Why that way? Why must God wound Jacob? Why must He wound you and I if we're to be useful to Him? Well, let me attempt to answer by directing your attention for your consideration tonight that God wounds and He wounded Jacob to rebuke a stubborn refusal to submit to Him. The wound of God is God's rebuke and correction to a stubborn refusal to submit. Moses, the author of the book of Genesis, in verse 25 writes, Now when he that is God saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched the socket of his hip and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint as he wrestled with him.

Although it was God who was wrestling with Jacob, Jacob of course could not beat God in a wrestling match. God allowed Jacob to prevail or in this case at least seem to hold his own. But we know God could have cleaned His clock as the expression goes at any time.

But God allows the wrestling match to endure all night long until daybreak. A lengthy time. At first, I have to believe that Jacob did not realize with whom he was scuffling.

He thinks somebody has ambushed him out of the dark of night, tackled him and sent him to the ground and he's fighting for his life for he does not know that his assailant is but nothing but another human being. And Jacob's tenacity, you know what tenacity means? This stubborn perseverance. The word our brother used this morning.

This unwillingness to quit took over and Jacob would not quit in this wrestling match. He would not stop because as far as he was concerned, if he did, it could mean his life. He didn't know that his wrestling partner was divine.

I don't think so. I think you'll see this as I go through this this evening. I believe that's how the words in verse 25, now when he saw that he did not prevail against him, I don't see how you can interpret it any other way.

In other words, I think what Moses is saying is this. God knew that Jacob was not going to cry uncle as long as he didn't realize who this was. Do you see my point? In other words, it's not that God couldn't pin and win.

We know He could. But God saw, knowing Jacob better than Jacob, that Jacob wasn't going to surrender until he knew who he was wrestling with. In one sense, the word Jacob reminds me of my youngest son.

I told you last night that I used to wrestle with my boys and that's natural for a father to wrestle with his sons when they're young. My oldest son, the moment I would pin Shelby, he'd say uncle. He was done.

He was ready to quit. He didn't like getting beat and so he was done. But my youngest son Joseph, just the opposite.

I'd take this little fella, let him play for a while and we'd wrestle and make him think he had maybe a sliver of a hope of chance to beat his dad. And then when I was done with it, I would pin him and say to him, now son, say uncle and I'll get up. That little kid would never, ever say uncle.

He never did. I've never gotten him to say uncle. I won't wrestle him now.

He outweighs me. He would turn beat red in the face trying to overcome somebody that outweighed him a hundred or some odd pounds. He would never say uncle.

I think that's exactly what's happening in our story. Jacob was a man that had learned to survive the hard way. The moment you do, they will have you.

Never show your weakness to someone because they will exploit it. He is stubborn to refuse to admit defeat. There was a stubbornness to submit to God.

Some of you are tenaciously stubborn in your refusal to submit to God. You refuse to say to God, uncle, surrender, submit. Nothing more, and I don't mean to be offensive, but I really want to be plain spoken with you.

Quite foolish. Quite foolish to think that you can refuse to submit to God and somehow thereby best God. Stop and consider with me for a few moments.

You and God do not enter the arena as equal combatants. God made you. He is your creator.

Your heart is now beating because He causes it to beat. The lungs that you are now breathing in air are breathing because He has commanded those lungs to breathe. And at any moment, He can shut that down.

In fact, dear sinner, you are allowed to live another minute in defiance of Him simply because He chooses to allow you to do so. You are allowed by His mercy to continue in your rebellion the next minute. You couldn't do so if He would not allow it.

And Jacob was only able to wrestle with God because God allowed it. And you are in your sins tonight enjoying a fake autonomy, a fake independence, a fake will to do whatever you want to do only because God refuses to pin you. But what makes you think that a moment from now, another minute from now, He won't do so? What is it that stops His hand from touching your heart right now and you having heart disease? What's to stop the finger of God touching the pancreas and you come down with pancreatic

cancer? You? No, sir.

No, sir. The only thing that stands between you and hell tonight is the mercy of God. Your defiance of God is but a thread.

God holds the scissors, and at any moment, He can sever that thread and you will drop into hell. I want you to hear me. The only thing that's keeping you out of hell right now, my young person, is not your youthfulness.

It's not your health. It is the very mercy of God that you continue to defy. Again, I say I'm not angry at you.

But on the other hand, I'm not very apathetic either. I do care. There's not a one of you that I want to see that misery and destruction, although you deserve it.

You've rebelled against the one that I love the most. You have rejected His overtures, His invitations and proposals of love. Young lady, that guy that you want to give you that blessed, hopeful proposal, that young man that you're rejecting God for, when you could have love itself, for God is love, you could know someone who can love you like no one else shall ever love you, better than you love yourself.

You're rejecting that. That's why I'm saying what I'm saying to you and the way I'm saying it to you. My prayer is that in my pleading, the voice of God is speaking to you.

If God wanted to toy with you, He could. And what could you do in retaliation? What could you do to get back to God? Not surrender to Him? Keep fighting? Do you think that you not surrendering to Him will cause Him to suffer? You think way too highly of yourself. Do you think your eternal misery in hell will make God unhappy because He had to send you to hell? My friends, that is a lie.

Listen to me, please. It's true God loves you. I don't have to be a cannibal of the love of God to all people, the whole world.

My Bible says, and your Bible says, God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. Yes, He loves you more than you can ever imagine, more than you can experience in a lifetime. You will have to be with Him forever for you to know the love of God.

Even begin to comprehend and experience it. I know God loves you, but you're forgetting there's one person that He loves more than you. It's His only begotten Son.

If you reject His Son, Father will reject you. The psalmist has said it best, Kiss the Son, lest He be angry with you, and ye perish from the way whom His wrath is kindled but a little. His wrath is kindled but a little.

In other words, in a moment's time, the wrath of God can be unleashed upon you. Find one moment, the next moment, the next second, the next wink of an eyelash, you're confronted with the God of all ages having rejected the only way of life. Now listen, no God loves you, but if you ask Him, choose between you and Christ.

If you ask Him, you call His love for you and say, it's He or me, you will lose. You want the love of the Father, and I mean a Father. Young ladies, true Father that will not harm you, or abuse you, but who will treat you.

A daughter ought to be treated. You want the love of a Father like that. Love His Son, the object of His delight.

Your tenacity in refusing to surrender does not hurt God. He has His Son. He's complete in Him, and the Son's complete in the Father.

He is merely being merciful and asking you to be a part of it. Come. Come.

Well, God wounds Jacob. Touches him. And I say to you that He does that.

And the moment He does that, a dislocation occurs in the muscle or tendon in the hip. It shrank, leaving Jacob forever a cripple. And why did He do that? To open Jacob's eyes to whom and with whom He was wrestling.

Up to this point again, I say I do not believe Jacob realized that this was God until God touched his hip. And immediately, the muscle shrank. And Jacob realized at that moment this could not be another human being.

This is not an ordinary man because just touching somebody does not wound them like that. Now, did he know it was God yet? I don't know. I do know this.

At this moment, he knew this was no ordinary wrestling match, nor was this just another human being. He knew he had a hold of somebody that was far stronger than he. Now, beloved, listen to me this evening.

God touches and wounds Jacob to let Jacob know that he didn't have hold of a mere man. God's here tonight grabbing your heart. Some of you have already felt the love of God.

When they were singing, did you not sense it? Could you not experience the pervasive power and love of God? Yet, I'm not chastening. You just don't understand me. You think I'm really chastening here.

I'm not. But I was grieved. And our brother began to lead us in songs and I heard frivolity flip through this room like somebody turning the pages of a book.

We lost immediately the sense of God and His love for us and it began to be chatter and talking and this. And we say we know God. No, we don't.

Where the presence of God really is, there's a sense of the glory and the magnitude and majesty and the holiness of God. We can't be flipping in the presence. God needs to wound some of us this evening.

Now here's my question again. I'm only partly answering. Why did God wound Jacob? I say to cause him to know that this is not a mere man.

But secondly, I have a question that immediately I want to follow up with this. Why do it this way? Why cripple the man? Why couldn't He have done it like He had done it 20 years ago when He appeared to him in a dream? Why not just do it that way? A little safer. A little easier.

Why did He have to reveal who He was by crippling a man? Well, I want to direct your attention and consideration to my, I think the next reason why. And that is to expose the insufficiency of human strength. This is critical to those of you who need Jesus Christ tonight and the new birth.

But it's just as critical for me. It's as critical that I understand my insufficiencies. Jacob's weapon.

Now watch this. Jacob's weapon was nothing other than his brute strength. That's it.

You're wrestling with what you think as a man. All you have, no other weapon but brute strength. And what does God do? He went for the strongest muscle in the man's body.

Now any wrestler, amateur or pro will tell you that the greatest tool for wrestling is not the upper body. The lower body. That's where you get your leverage.

Watch Olympic style wrestling, not this tomfoolery called professional wrestling. And watch real wrestling. It's all in the legs.

What did God do? Listen. He touched Jacob at the strongest point, not the weakest. I used to box.

And I was taught to expose a man's weakness in the ring. And there's ways to do that. Any type of competition like that, you are trained, especially in hand-to-hand combat.

You want to find your opponent's weakness and there expose it and manipulate it. Use it to your advantage. God does the opposite.

He goes for his strength. It's not a good way to say it, but I don't know how else to say it. God is not weak, but if there was such a thing as the weakness of God, the weakness of God is far stronger than the strength of men.

God went for the most fortified, strongest point in Jacob's body. And I say to all of us, that's what He will do to you. What He will do.

He always does. Whatever your greatest strength, your most admirable quality, your strongest guarded area, that's where He will set His sights on. It's where the Lord's kindness will always attack.

Where you're the strongest, not the weakest. Why? It's quite simple. It's that we can learn the inability of our own power.

If my strongest power is proven to be weak, what else do I have? You and I have got to learn the words of the prophet. If I have one message tonight for Grace Camp, it's this. Let's go back to this truth.

Let's revive it within our own theologies and beliefs. It's not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord. We have put all of our eggs into our theological baskets.

We have become scholars and we're devoid of the power of God because we believe our intellect can move the intellect and hearts of men. I've been preaching way too long. I know better.

Eloquence might move your emotions, but it will never move your spirit. Beloved, if the sermon writes absolutely that your soul writes full of the power of God, not by might, not by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord. You and I cannot serve the Lord by the strength of human power alone.

There's a weakness in our pulpits. The weakness today in our pulpits is not theological weakness. It's spiritual weakness.

Now, I realize that God uses human strength. He uses human vessels, but not until He strikes them. You want to be used of God, you need to listen and pay attention.

You need to be wounded first. At the end of the day, we are absolutely nothing but unprofitable servants simply doing what we are commanded to do. And we would not be able to do what He commands us if it were not for the fact that He empowers us.

Thus, Jacob is shown this by the wounding that he was able to wrestle with God and he was able to prevail only because it was God who was helping him to do so. And God will help you tonight to prevail with Him. Again, may I repeat, for the sake of emphasis and the hope that if you didn't get it last night, you will tonight, God is not against you or He wants you to win with Him.

We have it entirely wrong. We believe in order for a man or a woman or a young person to be ready to do the work of God, they have to be given certain human skills. Human skills produces after its own kind.

Flesh. What we need is men and women who know their God, have been wounded by Him and been healed by Him. There's yet one more reason why I think the Lord wounded Jacob with this touch.

I want to direct your attention to it. My final point or reason for the wounding of Jacob by the loving hand of God, it is for the elimination of self-dependence. To eradicate your depending upon yourself so that you can truly depend upon Him.

This is the goal. This is God's aim in your life. Not to save you from just your sins, but to conform you to the image of Christ by the life of Christ living through you.

But there's one thing that damns that life, hinders that life, and that is self-reliance, self-dependence. The way to which victory is achieved and the walk of faith is practiced is by total desperate dependency. Two words you should never forget.

Desperate dependency. I believe, maybe I'm wrong, but my life bears this out. I am never really truly dependent until I'm really truly desperate.

As long as I think I might have the solution, I will not totally depend upon God. I need to be proven absolutely worthless and without ability in and of myself. I want to thank my friend Wyman Steptoe who taught me this a couple years ago.

I heard him preach from this very text. He said that day that there was one thing other than wrestling or striving that Jacob was good at. And it was running.

If he couldn't beat you, he'd run. Never would he give in and say, Uncle, he turns and runs. You see this.

Immediately after stealing Esau's blessing, his immediate decision was, and encouraged by his mother, to run. Go back to your uncle. And then we find out when Laban, his father-in-law, is being terribly aggressive and harsh, what does he do? Genesis 31-20, and Jacob stole away, unknown to Laban, the Syrian, and that he did not tell him that he intended to flee, so he fled with all that he had.

He arose and crossed the river and headed toward the mountains of Gilead. And when Laban discovered what Jacob had done, that he had snuck away under the cover of subterfuge and deception and taken advantage of a situation, and he overtakes Jacob, this is Jacob's answer to why he ran. Genesis 32 and verse 7. Verse 31, Because I was afraid, for I said, perhaps you would take your daughters from Me by force.

Now back to Genesis 32. In verses 7 and 8, I said that's the plan. You remember the plan? I'll divide My company in two, and if Esau gets this one, maybe the other company will escape.

What is that? Running. It all figured out, didn't it? But God touched Jacob's hip so that he could not run. In fact, he would never run again.

For the remainder of his days, he could at best walk, and that with a limp. And you say, oh poor Jacob. No, not hardly.

Now you're walking, now you're watching a champion walk with the mark of God on his life. You're watching a man poor in spirit no source of life. No sir, don't sympathize and feel sorry for old Jacob.

Feel sorry for yourself that you run too well and walk without a limp tonight. Oh, but God would show us mercy by coming into this room and touching us all so that we would be utterly dependent upon God. And all that we do be desperately dependent upon God.

How quick we are to rely on ourselves rather than God. I think we'd rather run than rest. We'd rather struggle with all of our might and trust with all of our heart.

Why? Because we really struggle in believing that God's best is really that. You're right, brother. It really comes back to belief.

We really struggle. Every time. You're tempted.

That's the essence of the temptation. Who knows best for me, God? Me. Eve is tempted with the fruit.

What does it say? He looked on it and saw that it was pleasant and good for food. At that moment, she made a decision. But God didn't really know what was best for her.

She could make that decision. Friends, that's always the substance of your temptations. Always.

We're more apt to trust in our legs and run than to trust in God's hand to carry us through. But God came to Jacob and He wounded him so that He could bless him. Tomorrow night, we'll talk about Jacob's desire to be blessed when he finally realizes this is God.

But let me say this evening that when God wounded Jacob, God had already blessed him in one sense of the word. He'd already been blessed. It was a blessing to be wounded by God.

And it isn't until the man of God has been broken is the man of God ready to be used. This is the way of God. There are no other ways.

He'll not have you or me in our own strength. Not only will He not have us trying to do our will in our own strength, He will not have you doing His will in your own strength. Why? Because it would dishonor Him.

The world out there thinks God's got a problem as it is. And I'm not for sure they didn't get that from us when we say things like, He needs my service. He needs my worship.

He needs my prayers. They already think God needs us. How much more would they believe that or you believe that if He allowed you to serve Him in your own strength? How laughable to think that God depends upon human might.

God's playing a joke on you right now. He really is. You all are looking at me, thinking I might say something that might just trigger something.

He doesn't need me. I'm a cracked pot. He's put what? Glory? In earthen vessels? Why? Why? That the excellency of the power, God.

Him. Him. Not me.

Him. God is saying, Listen to this guy and see that I don't really need him, but I want to use him to encourage you that He can use you. I don't need you, but I want you.

Which proves that He really does love us. If He needed me, I would never know if it's out of need or love. Now I know.

He wants me. Being me, He desires me because He delights over me. He dances over me.

He sings over me. If you don't know that, then you're wounded. All of that's just theory.

All of this sounds like good sermonizing to some of you because it's all in the intellect. What you need is God to come and touch you and wound you tonight. There's a young lady in our church who's been saved a few months after we got there 16 years ago at our church.

Two weeks ago, Friday night, Karen was conducting a women's Bible study teaching something she has heard me preach. In fact, she told me this the Sunday after it happened. A hundred times, maybe more, to say the same thing.

But that Friday night after 16 years of hearing the same truth, God showed up and wounded that heart so that it moved from the intellect to the affection. And it became real. So real that she had to call her husband who was a fireman who was at the station that evening and break before Him in humble repentance.

What happened? Was it Karen's abilities? Karen will tell you. She's not gifted to teach. Oh, it was God showing that we are absolutely nothing, but when we allow Him to wound our self-reliance to the point that we are willing to depend upon Him, then He can move in with power.

Not by my power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord. God wounds His servants so that they are reminded that they need Him. Listen, I think it was in the 70s, maybe early 80s, maybe for a time span, that a lot of churches got sucked up into the spiritual gift movement.

I'm not talking about Pentecostalism or charismatic stuff. I'm talking about just the gifts. 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, Ephesians 4, where the Bible talks about the gifts.

And everybody was trying to find out what their gift was or gifts where they were taking surveys and tests. It was the craze. Remember that? What foolishness.

And it's devastating. It's hurt many churches, I am afraid. Why? Because we believed if we could just identify our spiritual gifts and move in that spiritual gift, operate in that spiritual gift, we could do the work of God.

And that's completely opposite of the Holy Spirit. We've got people out... Listen, I am for the spiritual gifts. I believe in them.

I believe He does give you and I certain gifts. But watch this. Listen to me.

Whatever the strongest area in your life is, whether it's a natural talent or an ability or even a spiritual gift, until that thing has been broken, wounded by God, it will destroy your life and usefulness for God. Because you will believe because you're gifted you're now qualified to do that. Now watch.

Somebody told me today, Brother Gilbert Barr was talking about a pastor that he got to hear recently who he said was a naturally gifted orator, dynamic speaker. Just one of those people that is just gifted to get up in front of an audience and talk. There are people like that who were born with that ability that they perfect just like Brother Pete and others who are musicians who have a natural ability who develop it over years and they can get into the pulpit and they can move people emotionally.

All that is is the power of the soul, not the power of the Holy Spirit. That's how we get a lot of false converts. That's how we get a lot of, quote, rededications.

That's how we get a lot of people to do things in our churches. We manipulate their emotions either by fear or guilt or trying to earn something with God. And we can do that through natural giftedness, even corrupting, prostituting the gifts of the Spirit without the Holy Spirit's involvement.

So now we've got people who won't witness because they don't have the gift of evangelism, they say. Or don't give because they don't have the gift of giving. Or don't serve because they don't have the gift of service.

Listen to me. You don't need a gift to be used by God. All you need is God.

You just need the Spirit of the living God. Not by might, not by power, but by My Spirit, sayeth the Lord, so that He can take somebody like my wife who's not gifted to teach and use her to do what her husband who is couldn't do with 16 years with this woman. Why? Because God's wanting to teach us the fundamental basis, premise of the Christian life.

You need Me. I don't need you. But I want you.

Sit. Trust in Me. Just trust in Me.

So, I need to be wounded. Why? Because I'm too apt and too prone to forget my need of God. So, in His loving mercy, He gives me something that will forever remind me of my dire lack and want.

He gives me a wound. What better way to make our weakness known to us than by making it obvious? By making our weakness obvious. Now listen, in the things of God, Jacob was no weaker after the touch of God than he was before.

No weaker in the spiritual realm. Because in the spiritual realm, you can have the strength of ten men, but you're still too weak to operate in that realm. In the realm of the Spirit, human power, human giftedness has no merit.

Brokenness is where it's at. That's for our benefit. May I ask you tonight, how many of you have scars that remind you of your need of God? How many of you have scars that are there and you see it and you

remember, oh yes, God.

Moses had to have 40 years on the backside of the desert. David had to be humiliated as a fugitive from his own homeland. Paul had to have a messenger of Satan to buffet him.

Peter had to go through the denial. Why? All of these men had to learn what you and I have to learn, not by might, not by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord. They all had to be wounded.

There's just something about all of us that unless we're wounded deeply, we refuse to see the inability that was already and always there. Beloved, please watch this and listen. Before God wounded you, you were wounded.

In the garden, we were all wounded mortally. And it left us limping in self-reliance. It takes the wound of God to heal us of sin's wound.

That's what happened to Jacob. And it can happen to you here this evening. Proverbs 27, 6 says, Faithful are the wounds of a friend.

I think Job is right. In 517 of his book, Behold, happy is the man whom God corrects. Therefore, do not despise his chastening, for he bruises, but he binds up, he wounds, but his hands make whole.

Like a surgeon, isn't it? There's an ailment. And the surgeon actually has to create another wound in order to heal of the infirmity. Someone asked me this evening, How do you know that this is why God did all of that? Aren't you taking some liberty with your analogies? Maybe.

I have one that makes me think that I'm not. Listen closely. He was wounded for our transgression.

He was bruised for our iniquity. Isaiah goes on to say, He was smitten of God. It pleased the Father to bruise.

The Hebrew is crush. Sunday morning, I hope God's helped to unpack that, show you that. Let me say it tonight.

Even Jesus had to be broken and wounded by God. Dear sinner, you will not escape the wounding, healing hand of God if you're to be saved. Go with God tonight.

Be broken tonight. As I began this evening, open up your heart and be approachable by God. Let God approach you.

Go to Him. Don't be afraid. God does not mean evil for you.

He means good. And yes, His hand will crush your heart. But in its place, He will give you a new heart that will be able to experience joy divine and everlasting satisfaction because Jesus was wounded.

You. I want to close. I want to say to me and to you that we need the touch of God that causes a wound that will make us to crave Him much, much more.

A.W. Tozer wrote this about a lady called Lady Julian who lived about 600 years ago, a devout Christian. And he commented on her prayer that she prayed that God would wound her with a wound of longing for Christ. This was her prayer.

That God would wound her so that she would long for Jesus. Here's what he said. 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.

Today, accepting Christ becomes terminal. That is the end. And all evangelism leads towards one thing, getting increased numbers of people to accept Christ.

And there we put a period. 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.

We want to be happy. But my brethren, if we were what we ought to be, we would seek to know and experience the meaning of the words, except a corn of wheat fall to the ground and die. It abides alone.

But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. You seem alone tonight? I wonder why. You're too self-reliant.

You haven't died for yourself. And it's not a one-time, cataclysmic event. I don't care what you read in biographies.

There's not one experience that you're forever dead to the flesh. If ye by the Spirit do put to death, mortify the deeds of this body, ye shall live continually. I think Tozer is right when he says before God can use a man greatly, He must first wound him deeply.

If you by the Spirit do mortify, the Spirit must bring His hand to wound. What is your wound tonight? What is that scar that shows you have the touch of God on your life? Or can I ask, are you scarless? Do you walk without a limp tonight? Is there no wound? Have you yet been broken? Do you need your heart touched so that it is left lovesick for Him? Is that what you need tonight? Say it. Confess it to Him.

Agree with Him. Agree. What are you afraid of, church? Are you afraid of God? What will it cost you? I'm afraid of what it will cost me if I don't let Him wound me.

That's what's frightening me right now. That's where my struggle is. Faithful are the wounds of a friend.

Would you ask the Lord to meet you right here and right now and put His hand on that very thing you're trusting in the most. Whatever that thing is, that's where He's going to aim all of His omnipotence. Leave here tonight in your flesh limping, but strong in your spirit.

Your heads are bowed and your eyes are closed. I hope I'm not scaring anybody when I'm doing what I'm about to do. I'm just one of these who believe that God can touch somebody in the middle of a sermon and touch them and wound them.

Some of you have been wounded here tonight. I just know it. I know that I know.

You just want to pray. You just want to let God keep touching you tonight. You don't want to be flippant.

You really want to come near Him. I don't know what the leadership here wants to do. I will submit to that.

I want us not for show, not for effect or manipulation. I just want us to wait on God. If that means going back to your room, going somewhere and getting along, that's fine.

Let God go with you. But I just want to offer myself. I can't save.

Help. But I can certainly ask, and I know there's others here that can too, especially if you're not saved and God's wrestling with you about your eternal destiny. I can at least tell you what the devil will do to throw up roadblocks to you and isolate and expose them.

He can't get you saved, of course. But I do believe in evangelists that point pilgrims to the cross. I can be that.

But you obey God right now. Whatever God's telling you to do, you obey Him and may He give you the grace to obey Him. That's the invitation, if I can use that word.

You just obey God. I'm going to pray and then I'll sit down. Father, You are to be heeded.

Help me to heed You right now. You know my heart. There's no pretense between You and I. You know that I stand in need of this as much as anyone.

I'm not here, Father. Pray I'm not. Don't fool anybody.

I want what David preached this afternoon, Lord, to take place here. I don't want these young people saying, well, just another one of those services. The guy was a little bit more dramatic than maybe some others.

God, show Yourself here. Show Yourself here for the sake of the glory and the honor of Jesus. Not me.

Jesus. It's in Your name I pray for the wounding hand to touch us. Amen.

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