

The Wounding of My Heart

by Ray Greenly

The sermon emphasizes the importance of true repentance and the wounding of the heart as a necessary step towards humility and a recognition of God's power and authority.

Duration: 43:24

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Matthew 16:13-18, Matthew 16:21, Matthew 16:26

Topics: "Heart"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding our purpose as servants of God and being productive in glorifying Jesus. He highlights the need to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Jesus in order to find true life. The speaker also discusses the authority that comes from the shed blood of Jesus and the significance of repentance in truly surrendering our lives to Him. Additionally, he shares a personal story about the importance of true love and acceptance in relationships.

Transcript

The message today is entitled, The Wounding of My Heart. The wounding of my heart. The message of the cross comes with a very high demand.

A demand that I cannot accept unless I've made a decision to do the will of God. As long as I'm determined to do my own will, I cannot become a follower of Jesus Christ. You cannot be forgiven of your sin unless you are willing to be made righteous.

Repentance is the path into God. Repentance is a change of mind. And it's much more than simply a change of mind.

It is a complete change of every part of my life. But it will not prove effective long-term until that repentance becomes a wound. And repentance cannot become effective long-term until it becomes a wound.

A man can one day go north and the next day go south depending on what controls his mind and his heart. How many times have we seen a person or have we ourselves said, I will be a follower of Jesus and the next day something happens that causes us to totally forget about that and begin to take charge of our own life in our own way because our repentance has not yet wounded our heart. And so today, let's at the very beginning just be very clear that entrance into the kingdom of God is not cheap and it's not easy.

The question of your eternal destiny is not a casual matter. We have not truly repented until our repentance becomes life-threatening. Until that wound has captured us, defeated us, taken the moral fight out of us, taken away the self-defense from us and wounded us until we feel like we are at the point of death, repentance will not be effective.

Now, as long as we can reason about our sin, it will remain sin. As long as we can reason about our sin, we have not been wounded enough yet to be able to repent. One man said to me, pastor, can you find anywhere in the scriptures where it says that you should not smoke? No, I can't.

I'm sure that there will be many people in heaven who smoked all their lives. C.S. Lewis loved to smoke his pipe. Yet, I'm sure he'll be in heaven.

Other men drink without question. Will they be in heaven? Will that prevent them from going to heaven? Of course not. But if in your heart you begin to say, it's okay if I smoke, it's okay if I drink.

There's nothing wrong with this. You know immediately that you are reasoning with your conscience. And when a man or woman begins to reason with their conscience, they are not wounded in repentance.

Our sin has to move past our reasoning ability and our conviction must go beyond our reasoning ability to a place where our heart is cut. So that if there's even a question about it in our mind, we won't go there. If there's a question, we won't walk there.

I did something foolish this past week. I'll give you a very specific example that doesn't show me in a very good light. Many times I've been at Wegmans grocery store, usually buying food for the Friday evening young adult group.

Several times I have gone out of the store and the water for the group is in the bottom of my cart and I've not been charged for it. And I get to the car, as I always do, I check my receipt and no charge on the water. And so I've taken my receipt and gone back into the service desk and said, you've made a mistake.

I had water in the bottom of my cart and I was not charged and I would like to pay for it. And they act embarrassed and then say, okay, and I pay them for it. And I finally gotten tired of their mistakes.

So this last week, I picked up a beautiful box of organic, fresh strawberries. That's one of the things that I always bring to the Friday evening group. I get out of the store at my car and I'm parked about a block away from the grocery store and I check my receipt and I was not charged for organic strawberries at \$8 for a big box.

Instead, I was charged 399 for the big box of strawberries. And I said, you know what? Do I have to walk all the way back and pay them for the difference? And I reasoned that I had done enough to cover their mistakes and that this time I was not going back. It was their problem.

They made the mistake. My reasoning, I was convicted of, but not sufficiently convicted that I would walk all the way back and pay them. And so I got back to the house.

I was in a rush. I was late. I had to unload everything.

And as soon as I got there, someone knocked on the door and I invited them in, even though they were early. And they said, is there anything I can do to help? I said, certainly you can help me. You can clean the strawberries.

And so they pulled the strawberries out and said to me, pastor, I thought you always bought organic strawberries. I said, I do. Well, these are not organic strawberries.

Wegmans had been right in charging me what they charged, but my conscience had been tested and I failed the test because I thought I was getting away with good organic strawberries for the price of non-organic. Well, that little bit of reasoning in my mind exposed my heart that yet there is a place in my spirit that gets fed up with incompetence and says, you know what? It's tough luck. It's your problem.

Well, I don't like that. I don't want that in my spirit. I don't want to walk that way.

I am absolutely committed to walking with integrity in the smallest details of my life. Anytime we begin to reason about an issue, we know we're in trouble. I am justified in doing this because, no, we're not ever justified in cheating or sinning or lusting or thoughts of anger or bitterness.

You know, they deserve that. Look how they treated me. And immediately your conscience begins to go into motion and you say, conscience, be quiet.

Look how they've treated me. I have a right to be angry. Well, no, I don't ever have a right to be angry.

I don't ever have a right to be judgmental. So when the reasoning begins in the heart, it's a sign that the heart has not been wounded sufficiently and unfortunately, in the Christian walk, it is a constant, creasingly deep wounding of our heart that takes place. And when we push it away from us and we say, I don't want to pay that price.

I don't want to be inconvenienced by this. We know we're in trouble because it reminds us that self is still rising up and still taking charge. And when that occurs, we know we are out of step with the Holy Spirit.

Our awareness of sin must get us past this reasoning. And we have to begin to recognize in a deeper and deeper way that it was my sin that put Jesus on the cross. It was my sin.

That my sin has to burrow so deeply into my soul that it begins to bite me, that it begins to be a horrible thing to me, that sin is not neutral. Sin of any kind brings absolute destruction. It brings brokenness.

As long as we are dodging, ducking, looking for a place to hide, in reality, we're looking for some way to enjoy our sin. We live in a day when everyone wants to be happy. I remember a young couple that came to me for marriage counseling in preparation for their wedding day.

And I said to the couple, what is it that prompts you to want to get married? And the man said, I want to marry her because I love her. I enjoy being with her. And I turned to her and I said, and why do you want to get married? And she said, because I want a house with a happy fence around it.

I laughed and I said, you don't want to get married to this man. This man is going to just create all kinds of trouble in your life. He's not going to hang his clothes up.

He's going to dump them on the floor sometimes. He's going to come in the house and say, where's dinner? What have you been doing all day? This man's going to cause you such heartache. There will be no happy fence around your house.

And she looked at him and she said, is that true? He said, yes, I'm a troublemaker. I said, now, do you still want to get married? Do you love this man enough to marry him in spite of all of his warts? She said, he

doesn't have any warts. I said, you're not close enough yet to see them.

And I said to them, true love does not back away because of problems. True love begins to cover over the other person's faults with your love so that no one else will see the brokenness that you are and the mess you are. She said, I need to think about this deal of getting married.

I'll tell you next week. And next week came and she said, we've been fighting all week. We've had no happiness.

He's a mess, but I want to marry him. And I said, why? For some crazy reason, I love him. I said, okay, now we can start talking about the real deal.

It's not fantasy time. You know what, with Jesus Christ, it's the same deal. Jesus is going to ask you to do things and to go places and to be something that right now you might not want at all.

I know Debbie was sent down a road of education to get ready to teach young children, hopefully not kindergarten, right? Never kindergarten. God has a plan for her life to use her in service for the kingdom of heaven. Is that going to be a wonderful, happy fence around her life? Are you kidding me? It's going to require sacrifice and commitment and pouring out her life for other people.

It's going to mean giving to others for almost no money. See, when we decide to follow Jesus, we begin to cast away the whole idea of being happy and we begin to focus instead on being holy. Now, pastor, can't we be holy and happy? Yes, but you can't be happy and holy.

If your focus is to grab your dream and go for your gusto and make a life where you can be happy, you will not be holy. You're going to have to decide to be holy. A pagan man just recently said to me, you're a pastor, let me ask you a question.

All right, make it easy. He said, how can I be happy? I said, what do you mean? Aren't you happy now? No, I'm not happy. And he began to recount for me all the things in the last week that had happened to him that made him utterly miserable.

And I said to him, happiness is a byproduct. It's not something you can go and buy. It's not something you can go and grab a hold of.

Happiness is a byproduct of holiness. If I'm going to tell you how to get happiness, I'm going to have to talk to you about Jesus Christ. Do you want to have that conversation? No, I don't.

And that ended the conversation. We'd like to find happiness because it's comfortable. But without holiness, it's an illusion.

It won't last. So repentance is the road to holiness. But to travel that road, you must have suffered a deep, life-threatening wound.

And the wounding comes in many different ways. It can come through a painful divorce. It can come through the loss of a loved one.

It can come through the loss of a friend. It can come by being fired from a job. It can come from being evicted from a house.

Many times, the wounding needs to happen time after time after time. Because it's in the wounding that we begin to lose our self-confidence. And we begin to recognize that there is something beyond us.

There is a power far mightier than we are. Those blows come from the devil, but they are used by God to cause us to humble our hearts down. And then it usually doesn't take very much success.

I remember one man many years ago. He was the most arrogant man I've ever met. He built out a beautiful new office.

And he put his desk on a platform on one wall. So that when you came into the room, his desk was several feet higher than you would be when you walk into the room. And he had chairs where you would sit and you could barely see him above the desk.

This man was arrogant beyond anything I've ever seen. It was a software company. And his software company went bankrupt.

And he went to the office one day and the office door was locked. They'd locked him out for not paying his rent. That man came to see me.

He was the humblest man I think I've ever met. He was absolutely broken to the point of tears. He had lost everything.

His wife was supporting him. He was utterly broken. But it didn't take too long until he had a new idea.

And he opened a new company. And he became very successful. And the cash was flowing.

He once more was the most arrogant man I've ever met. He went bankrupt again. I finally sat down with him this time and I said, I can stand you when you're bankrupt.

I cannot stand you when you have money. So right now, I can stand to be with you because you're humble. But next time you get money, don't call me.

Don't come see me. Don't even darken the door of the church. I only want to know you when you have no money.

He sat back in his chair and he said, okay, I'm getting it. And his life was over. His life was totally changed.

He'd gone through enough wounding that he finally recognized. He wasn't going to make it on his own. And then sometime later, I lost track of him.

Sometime later, he called me. And he said, pastor, the FBI is going to be calling you. I said, why? Well, I was in trouble with a printing business I owned.

And so I did a receivables to you and to the church. I said, why would you do that? Well, because if I have enough receivables, I could get money from the bank and I thought I could carry it through and everything would be okay. Well, it wasn't okay.

He was arrested. He was charged with defrauding the bank. And I went with him to court the day he was sentenced for almost a million dollars in fraud.

He'd lost it all. And he went to jail for a year. I never heard from him again.

I've tried many times to reach him. I'm praying that finally he has become a new man, a new person. I pray that the wounding of his heart has been sufficient, that he will walk humbly before God.

Some of you have been blessed because you've not had any major wounding in your life. You will before you get out of this. And as I look around this room, I'd be hard pressed to find anyone but the youngest who have not been wounded.

It is a part of life. And as we're wounded and we humble our heart before God, it leads us into repentance. And the story of one man is so painful that I almost didn't want to share it with you today.

It's found in Matthew, the sixth chapter. Jesus led the disciples to an area called Caesarea Philippi. Now, just outside of Caesarea Philippi, if you went there today, you would find a mountain sheer cliff.

And out of that cliff, a large opening with a small stream of water today. It was a larger stream in the past, but a stream of water ushering out of that cliff. Nobody knows where it comes from.

It's an underground source. It flows out. And right beside that is a huge flat stone, probably as big as this room.

Everyone in Caesarea Philippi believed that this entrance into the rock was the gateway to hell. And they'd set up an altar, numerous altars. They had carved out the stone and they placed idols in the carved out places around the flowing water.

They believed that that flowing water was brought to them by Baal, who every December 25th went underground and fought with the demons of darkness in hell and made them bring the water out of the rock so that it would irrigate their crops and bring forth prosperity. So there was the goat God and other gods ensconced in these openings in the rock. And they would come there on this big rock facing the gateway to hell.

They would come there and hold religious ceremonies. They would offer sacrifices. It was a place of pagan worship.

Many scholars believe that this is where Jesus led the disciples. And this is the conversation that took place there. When Jesus came to the region, this is verse 13 of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, who do men say the Son of Man is? They replied, some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.

But what about you? He asked, who do you say I am? Simon Peter answered, you are the Christ, you are the Messiah, the Son of the living God. Jesus replied, blessed are you Simon, son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter.

And on this rock, I will build my church. Now, there's so much confusion about this until you look at the Greek. And in the Greek, there's no confusion.

Peter, meaning Petros, means one small sliver of stone. There is a different word in the Greek for rock. So he is not saying, Peter, on you, this tiny little sliver of rock or stone, I'm going to build my kingdom.

Instead, he's saying rock. And a rock is huge, not a piece of gravel. So he's saying, Peter, you're a piece of gravel.

But on this rock, and I'm sure he pointed down on this rock, I'm going to build my church. Right at the gateway to hell, to the underworld. And it will not withstand me.

He says, on this rock, I will build my church and the gates of Hades or hell will not overcome it. So the church, we are the church, are going to be brought right to the face of evil. And it will not overcome us.

There is no reason in scripture for temptation to ever overcome God's people. We are made victorious by the blood of Jesus. No temptation can come against you, but what you are given a way of escape.

Now he says, I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven. And whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

He's saying, I will give you my full authority. Why? Because you're going to stand at the gateway of hell and it is not going to overcome you. You have authority in the blood of Jesus to resist every demonic attack that comes against you.

Now verse 21, from that time on, Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests, and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. They don't understand this authority he's speaking of to bind and to loose. This authority does not come cheaply.

This authority comes from the shed blood of Jesus. A person can't go out and just say, I bind that in the name of Jesus, and it's bound. Nothing will happen.

A person must be living the holy life, not the demon life. There must be integrity. There must be a wounding of that man's heart that has removed all self-confidence, all ability in myself to create my own reality.

There must be absolute confidence in Jesus, and the blood of Jesus now comes. And Peter, and this is the painful part, Peter's the one who said, you are Messiah. He knew the right theological answer, but Peter took him aside, and he began to rebuke him.

Never, Lord. This shall never happen to you. See, Peter had not yet been wounded enough to have lost his self-confidence and his assurance that he knows what is right and what is wrong.

So here he is, forgetting himself, telling Jesus what is right and what is wrong. And you say, I would never do that. Oh? Have you addressed the circumstances of your life and said, Jesus, this is wrong.

This can't happen. Well, yes, it can. Because my will is not Jesus' will, and my way is not Jesus' way.

Jesus turned and said to Peter, get behind me, Satan. You are a stumbling block to me. You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.

See, the wounding that I'm speaking about removes all of this inner assurance that God has to do it my way. It removes all of this inner pride that says, I'm on my way. I've got it going.

Now I'm going to be a winner. No, it's Jesus who is the winner. We follow Jesus.

And to some, he will give great success. And to others, he will take down a very, very narrow, hard road until he accomplishes in that person's heart what he desires to accomplish. Remember, what we're doing

here is only the preparation for what we will do through eternity.

I'm not on a timeline here of 90 years, and I have to scramble to get everything I want in those 90 years. Those 90 years, if I'm granted that long, are just the introduction that enables me to go into the kingdom of heaven and begin to walk through eternity in the productivity of Jesus Christ. Jesus said to his disciples in verse 24, if anyone would come after me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.

For whoever wants to save his life will lose it. But whoever loses his life for me will find it. It's absolutely essential that we begin to understand in a very deep way that we are placed here as servants of the living God of heaven.

And we are placed here to be productive, to glorify the name of Jesus. And so it means I'm going to do all I can in my power to help others on the journey. I'm going to encourage.

I'm going to lift up. I'm going to confront. I'm going to be absolutely transparent and honest.

I'm not going to reason with my sin. I'm going to say, Jesus, remove it from my heart. I don't want anything to do with it.

And when we begin to find it rising up in our hearts once more, we come to Jesus. If the wounding has been sufficient, we come to Jesus and say, please remove this from us. Or the wounding will deepen.

What good will it be for a man, verse 26, if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? For the son of man is going to give, is going to come in his father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done. I'm not one who enjoys being wounded. I've had some very deep and abiding wounds in my life.

They continue to dwell in my heart. I ask the Lord to use those wounds inflicted by Satan, inflicted by my own pride, inflicted by others where I had nothing to do with it. But woundings, I've asked Jesus to use the wounding of my heart to humble me, to totally remove from my heart all of self, so that I have the courage and the strength to allow him to do in my life all that he wants to do.

He had no desire to hurt Peter, but he had to speak in a very forthright way and say, Satan, get behind me. I can't think of a more painful rebuke than that. I mean, could you hear Jesus saying to you, get behind me, Satan? I would not want Jesus to call me Satan because that would mean I am in total opposition to what he's trying to accomplish, that I've set myself up against his direction and his will, and I'm too short to box with God.

He's much greater than we are. So I don't try to pretend that I've not been wounded deeply in my journey, but I've asked the Lord if he would use that wounding to humble my heart and cause me to be totally submissive to what he wants to accomplish in my life and in other people's lives. Some things we try to push away from us at our own detriment, or to forget things because they're just too painful.

We need to draw close the wounding of our heart and allow that wounding to call us into complete repentance before God and a humbling of our heart before God so that no longer will pride rule in us. You know when someone approaches you with a prideful spirit to help you, you know it's about them and not about you. When Jesus approaches, he never comes with a prideful heart.

He said, I am meek and lowly. My yoke is easy. My burden is light.

Jesus has no desire to create pain or anguish in our hearts. He wants us to be holy. He wants us to be happy.

But you don't get there without dealing with the wounding of your heart. Lord Jesus, we come today to the communion table to the symbols of your wounding for us. I pray, Lord, as we come, you will speak to our hearts.

I pray as we come. You will heal our wounds in the name of Jesus. Amen.

In Matthew, the 26th chapter.

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