

# Healing of the Heart

by Todd Atkinson

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of receiving healing and love from God before we can give it to others.*

**Duration:** 28:26

**Scripture:** Matthew 4:17, Matthew 5:3, Matthew 10:8, Matthew 11:28, Matthew 16:24, Matthew 20:28, Mark 10:45, Luke 4:18

**Topics:** "Healing"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal story about meeting a friend after 10 years and discussing their spiritual journeys. The speaker opens up about his struggles and sin, and how he found freedom by surrendering them to Jesus. He emphasizes that God wants us to bring our brokenness to Him and that He will not condemn or accuse us. The sermon also highlights the importance of receiving from God before freely giving to others, and encourages listeners to embrace their brokenness and seek the kingdom of God.

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## Transcript

In 1992 through 96, Sherry and I, we've lived in the UK most of our adult life, but we were living in southern England at that time, and I was attending university, and when we moved into married students accommodation, we met numbers of other married students, many of whom were from the US, and one couple in particular became very dear friends of ours, and it's Ron and Susie Kuykendall. And we kept up contact over those 10 years, but we never got a chance to see one another, just to afford flights to fly all the way down to Florida. It just never seemed very possible, but they phoned us this summer and said we're having holidays on the west coast of Canada, and we were having holidays out there, so would you like to come see us? I said, would we? And so we did a few ferries, and we traveled, and just got two hours, but those two hours were so precious.

We hadn't seen each other for 10 years, but you'd think we'd be walking together daily, wouldn't you, Ron? All the conclusions we'd come to, and the things the Lord had taught us, it was unbelievable, and I've shared with you my story, how this summer I was just some things I was wanting the Lord to do in my heart, and I was taking weeks to go pray, but there were some things I just felt I wasn't unraveling very well. So I met Ron, and after a little bit of preamble, I said, hey, can I tell you my sin? That's always a nice way to begin a conversation. I said, I just feel inside, I don't know, there's some things I just can't figure out, and maybe you could help me, and well, the Lord just used him greatly, and that's what friends are

for.

And then him and his church, on their own dime, flew me to Florida, all expenses paid, simply to come, and they could pray for me for a week, and give a bit of support, and it was just wonderful. In fact, they did it twice. And I felt coming that the Lord had that for our congregation, and I said, well, if I don't go first, and say, well, Lord, heal me up, what right do I have to speak on that, and encourage other people to do that? And so part of our own healing thrust of the church, and desire to see Jesus heal our bodies and our hearts, we extended a reciprocal invitation, asked Ron if he would come up as a representative of his congregation, and come and share with us this morning, and we have had a ripping weekend.

I mean, it's been great. I mean, the stories we could already tell, just the Lord beautifully applying his healing presence to our hearts, has been so wonderful, and so needed, and I just have to compliment you so well as a congregation, because you have been a safe place for people to be able to say, I could use some healing. You've been a safe place for people to press in and believe for some, and a safe place for people to get some healing.

And for people to know that whatever happens I'm being prayed for, if I cry a little bit or something, nobody is looking down and thinking, what's wrong with you? You must be a mess. Or maybe we all are a bit. And we all stand in need of Jesus' healing touch.

And you have been a wonderful, safe place for people to be touched by the Lord. And just one more compliment that I really must pay you. Jesus said, come unto me, all you that are weary and are heavy laden.

Ever feel like that? Every second day? He said, and I will give you rest for your souls, a deep rest. And then he says, learn of me, for I am gentle and humble. Implicitly we're supposed to be like Jesus in every way, but I can only find one instance where Jesus ever explicitly said, be like me in this way.

And it's that. So there is a significance to that. He says, for I'm gentle and humble.

And the healing that we've seen the Lord do through his days and through Ron and other people, it's just been very gentle and very humble and very courteous. And I think that as a congregation, we just see Jesus in that. He said, learn of me, because I'm like that.

So when we see people that he's using like that, it warms our hearts. So I want to invite Ron to come and just share this morning whatever the Lord has given you. Thank you.

Well, good morning. We've had some firsts here in Lethbridge. My first T-bone steak for breakfast.

Now, looking at me, you might not believe that. You know, some of these guys, they talk about having a six-pack. Well, I have a pony keg.

Anyway, I'm just... It's such an honor. I can't tell you how much I love and enjoy your pastor. Todd and I just had such a wonderful time in Oxford.

And at that time, I didn't know anything about the Holy Spirit. I had been a minister for years, and I didn't quite know how to take him. But I will tell you this.

All those years ago, he's a lot like he was today, and he is today. He was a godly guy. He loved Jesus.

He wasn't perfect, but he loved Jesus. And he was disciplined and diligent in his relationship with the Lord. And of all the people I met in Oxford, he stood out to me in a lot of ways.

And it's just such a privilege to be here in this church. And I just want to pray and look at the Scripture for a moment. And then this morning, I just want to pray for some people who might need a touch from the Lord.

Lord, I'm so thankful for this opportunity. Lord, I'm humbled. Because, Lord, these are the people that you died for, you bled for, Lord, you suffered for them.

And they're so valuable to you. Lord, I pray that everything that's said and everything that's done will be done that would encourage and make clear, Lord, the dignity and the honor that you reserve for them. Because these are your precious children in whom you are well pleased in Christ.

So, Lord, I just give you this time, and I give you every cell of my body, and I ask you to use it for your glory. In Jesus' name, amen. If you would turn with me to Matthew chapter 10.

Now, I'm an Anglican minister, and at home I preach for 45 minutes. And I walk through whole passages, but I'm going to do it a little different here. You know, a lot of us fly, and maybe some of us don't, but a lot of us fly, and I get a chance to fly every now and then, and the seats seem to get smaller and smaller, or I'm getting bigger and bigger, I'm not sure which.

But, you know, you fly, and it's sort of annoying, because they always are up there, and the stewardesses or the flight attendants are up there, and they're giving you the directions. You know, they kind of do that Todd thing. The guns, we hear, they're called.

But you know, they tell you how to do your seatbelt, and I've got to always get it to the end to get it buckled, and the seatbelt thing, and they tell you where the exit doors are, and I'm always trying to get in the exit row for a little bit more room, and I'm always glad to help. You know, one of the things about the exit row, you've got to be willing to get out of the plane first, if that's not a no-brainer, right? Yeah, I'll throw the door out of the way and get out quickly, and say, move away from the plane. All right, I'll do that, I can do that, all right.

But then, there's also this thing about, you know, if the plane is rapidly losing oxygen, because we're jumping or going down or something, this oxygen mask is going to come out of the ceiling. And there's a really important principle, and they tell you this, and they say in all seriousness, they say, put the oxygen mask on yourself first. And yet, you love your wife or your kids, and your wife loves you and the kids, and yet, it seems kind of strange, maybe almost selfish, but put the oxygen mask on yourself first.

But the principle is, if you don't put the oxygen mask on yourself first, you might not be any good for anybody else. And so, it might seem counterintuitive. It's actually a really important thing, and it's really important for the Christian.

And I didn't understand this principle, and I want to show it to you here in the Bible to know that it's not just something for the airplane industry, it's a principle and teaching of Jesus. So in Matthew chapter 10, verse 7 and 8, let's notice this. I mean, it says a little different, but it's the same thing.

As you go, preach, saying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand. The rule and reign of God is right here. It's for the taking, for those who are gain.

You know, the key entry point is, blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are the people who are broken and who know it. See, we're all broken, but we don't all know it.

The poor in spirit know that they're mentally, emotionally, physically, spiritually broken, and they need a Savior. Kingdom's near. It's there for the taking.

Eight. Heal the sick. Raise the dead.

Cleanse the lepers. Cast out demons. And the key is what? Here's the key.

Freely you receive, freely give. Do you know, I was a pastor for years and years and years, and I tried to freely give, but I had never received. Oh, I was saved.

I accepted Jesus as my Savior as a little boy. I mean, I'm a Baptist, or was a Baptist, raised a Baptist, and I got saved about 20 times, and I'm just counting that one of them took. But looking back, I trusted that first one.

I think in some ways, though, I was five years old, and I didn't understand eschatology. I didn't understand the tribulation. I didn't understand lots of things.

I did seem to get that Jesus loved me, and something in its precious and the simplicity of that five-year-old heart of mine seemed to get the message of the gospel. And I don't know, and we'll find out in heaven, but it seems to me that that really was that day of decision for me. But I grew up in a family that had lots of issues, and my father was raised in an alcoholic family.

His father was an ex-Marine, had been in China, and seen a lot of atrocities in China, and he had been the son of a preacher. But he rebelled, and he became one of the biggest sinners in the town where he lived. And he loved to fight, and he loved to get drunk, and he loved to chase women.

And so he would chase women, and he was so crazy, he would bring women to the house. And my grandmother hated him. They were so poor, she had no place to go, and so she stuck with him, but she hated him.

And she hated the kids that he gave her. In fact, she told my father every day, I wish you had never been born. When my grandfather was 39, he was lying drunk in the floor of a truck, and his dad was a Baptist preacher, and he had heard the gospel hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of times.

But he wakes up drunk in the radio of his truck in like 1956. He's turned to a Christian station, and he didn't put it there. And he wakes up, and he hears the gospel again for the first time, and he asks Jesus to come to his heart.

He wasn't looking for Jesus. He'd been thumbing his nose at Jesus for 39 years. From that day, God saved him.

My dad was 14, but so much damage had already been done. And my grandfather, until his 82nd year when I did his funeral, he did everything he could to follow Jesus with all of his heart. And he died a godly and a holy man.

In fact, I told some stories about him as a young man at his funeral, and people looked at me like I was crazy. You don't tell a story about a guy chasing women, all these crazy at his funeral. But if you didn't

know where my grandfather came from, you just can't imagine.

But God did. So my father sees this change in his dad, and he gets saved. And, I mean, it was easy for him to see the change, the love of Jesus and his family.

The brothers get saved, and the mom gets saved, but they hear the gospel, and they go to church to preach the gospel, and preach the gospel, but all they heard about was that Jesus saved them to take them to heaven. And that's true. Jesus did die to take us to heaven.

But Jesus says in Luke chapter 4, verses 17 to 19, He said, He anointed me to preach the good news, to preach the gospel of salvation, that we could have a relationship with God. Our sins can be forgiven, and we can go to heaven. But not only that, He says, to heal the broken heart, He said, I came to heal the emotional wounds.

My grandmother never got her emotional wounds healed in this life. Yet Jesus was anointed for that. My father, until he was 48 years of age, never had his emotional wounds healed.

And so though he was a Christian and sincere, he had sort of a dual life. He had been in those years that his father was a drunk and alcoholic, that there was a neighbor who sexually molested him, and he said, it's sad to say, but you know what he told me one time? He said, Ron, as crazy as it sounds, that man loved me more than my parents. So he gets saved at 14.

Goes to the Bible, believe in churches. But he doesn't know that Jesus can set him free from sexual temptation and from tormenting thoughts and perversions and defilements. And so God blesses him, and then he becomes a very successful businessman, but he just lives in shame and self-hatred and bondage, and no matter what he does, he doesn't seem to get free.

He marries a woman equally broken. My mother, at two years old, was left to be tenanted to and raised by her six-year-old sister because they were so poor in Chicago that her mother and father owned a little shop, and they had to work delayed hours, and so she was there and raised by a sister just four years older than her. Never nurtured, never loved, no attention, except for that of her sister.

She didn't know how to nurture, she didn't know how to raise kids, she didn't know how to love a husband. She'd never been loved. My parents loved me a lot, but they didn't love me well.

But at 48 years of age, at 48 years of age, my father went to a national prayer breakfast. He's a very important businessman. Tortured.

No one ever knew, never heard of him. Never got caught, never got found out. Sits next to a guy who, for whatever reason, decides to tell him his testimony of how God had healed him, of perversion and pornography and affairs and all these different things, the same things my dad struggled with.

And for some reason, at a national prayer breakfast, you're kind of there with your nice suit and looking good. You don't normally just tell everybody your sins. But the Holy Spirit led this guy to share what God had done in his life.

And he released our family. Because at 48, God healed my dad. I'm the young minister driving.

My dad rejected me. All this self-hatred, all this shame, he put on me as the oldest son. And he hated himself, and he kind of, in a sense, hated me.

I couldn't please him. I couldn't get his approval. But not only that, he loved my older sister, and he loved my little brother.

But I got all the bad. I'd get A's, and I'd try in school, and I'd try in sports, and I'd do this and that, and more and more and more, striving and doing anything to get his love and affirmation. And I didn't get it.

And my sister and brother got it easy. And my heart was filled. I didn't know it until years later, but my heart was filled with all kinds of anger and bitterness and hatred and self-hatred and envy and jealousy.

And yet here I was in the church preaching the gospel, a true believer, sincere. But nothing seemed to work. And like my dad, I only knew that Jesus wanted to take me to heaven.

I didn't know he wanted to heal my heart. I didn't know he wanted to set me free from the bondage of my bitterness and my unforgiveness, and I didn't even know I was angry. My wife would say, you're so angry.

I'd say, I'm not angry, I'm intense. But when my father started to get healed, I started to be open in a whole different way to God. And I began to realize as the years passed, I was in Oxford, I was sort of in an emotional breakdown.

I didn't even know it. But sometimes, all I could do was just to sit there at my desk and sort of read these books on the 19th century and just get out. Because I'd been under so much pain and so much hurt for so long.

And then I came back to the States and the church and still very broken and just didn't know what else to do. But the Lord began to bring healing into my life and to show me that He was a loving Father and that He cared for me. That the same salvation that would take me to heaven would also heal my broken heart.

The same salvation that broke the guilt of sin would break the power of sin in my heart. The same salvation could even heal and touch my body. Look what Jesus says.

Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons, freely you received, free to give. See, I thought that the Father was driving me. He told me to do all these things and I'm trying to do them and try to get the same affirmation my dad didn't give me.

And I'm driving myself and working harder and more hours and doing everything else. But nothing seemed to work because I was trying to give but I hadn't received. See, I had done a serious sin and the sin is to presume to help others until we ourselves first get helped.

See, God's called us and He gives us prophetic words and He tells us I've got a ministry for you. I've got something for you to do and we got all excited. And we assume that means right now and the Lord, see, He tells us where we're heading but then He expects us to understand that we're not supposed to work for it.

His burdens aren't heavy. His burdens aren't, you know, weighing us down. His commands are supposed to be easy.

For me, His commands were very difficult. I was heavy laden and I didn't know how to get any rest because I didn't understand this principle of putting the oxygen mask on myself first. I never had the courage or even the knowledge that God was good and that He loved me like that because I had put upon God sort of the same idea of my dad, a God I thought I could never please.

I thought I had to be perfect. I just hated myself because I couldn't be perfect. Every little thing, I'd speak evil, bad words about myself and in a sense I was speaking curses over my life.

I hated myself for the fact that I had sexual temptation. Even if I didn't give in to it, I hated myself. All this shame.

Our family, we felt so defective. All my life, I just felt like everyone had to be careful just so that no one could see how defective, as if everyone could just look at me and see that I was defective. I lived under incredible weight of shame.

I spent so much time trying to hold all the pain in that I had very little energy to love my wife and my children. And after 10 years of a very difficult marriage, my wife and I loved each other but we didn't like each other. I was just impossible.

But the Lord loved me enough like He loved my granddad. I wasn't looking for healing. But Jesus was looking to heal me.

And He began to teach me what it means to receive. And to show me that a lot of the hurt and the bitterness and the anger that I carried against Him was because I thought He was asking me to do the impossible. And it's as if God was saying, Ron, I never asked you to do these things in your own energy and your own strength.

I always intended to love you first. See, I thought I was just a shovel. Once I got saved, I was there for everybody else.

I was there to love everybody else, serve everybody else, do all of it. But I wasn't ever going to get it for myself. I never believed I would be truly listened to and truly loved.

In fact, I thought there was something so wrong with me it just was impossible. I just want to pray. I just want to pray because this morning there's those of us who are just hurting.

We love Jesus with all of our heart. There's those of us we used to but now we're so angry because life has turned out different than we thought and we just don't know. We're confused and we have a mixture.

There's a love for Jesus but now we can't pray. We can't have devotions. Do you know how hard it was for me to pray to a father when my dad always told me no? Everything my father ever asked him, he always said no.

My mother on some things would talk him into it but I don't ever remember my father ever saying yes unless I said, can I get you a Diet Coke with lots of ice? I didn't realize how much that had influenced my relationship with God. Do I want to pray and ask God things when I'm sure deep down He's going to tell me no just like my dad? Am I going to want to read the Scripture? When I read the Scripture all I can hear were the verses that said I was bad. Every verse, everything that looked that in any way could be turned into condemnation of my life.

That's how... You know, you get tired of having devotion but that's all you can get out of it. But I was so broken and hurting on the inside and here I am, a pastor. I love Jesus and as best as I could is I love those people.

But I couldn't really help Him much, could I? Because I hadn't received what I had to give but the same dysfunctional Christianity that I was living in and walking in. I wish you could know how sincerely I repented for those years of my sincerest and hardest efforts but sinful, misguided because I was trying to help everybody else but I'd never let Jesus get a hold to love me. I hope that you'll remember for the rest of your life the principle when Jesus says freely you receive, freely give.

The moment we violate that principle we get burnt out, angry, frustrated, jealous, envious, etc., etc., etc. Everything we do is supposed to come from a full cup and sometimes we need to sit down and we need to begin to rest and say I'm going to pursue this thing. Lord, how do I just receive? For so many years I had no clue.

How would I receive? It was a journey of learning to open up my heart and let Jesus touch it. So many parts of my heart were dead. You know the heart attack, different parts of your heart die.

So many parts of my heart were dead and Jesus began just to come and just touch different pieces and different parts and then I had a lot of forgiving to do. The biggest block to God's grace and to healing is unforgiveness and I had to learn to forgive and I was a bitter, angry, jealous, hateful person and I stood behind the pulpit every Sunday trying my best to talk about God's love without seeing the hypocrisy of what existed in my own soul. I'm just going to pray and I'm just going to ask if the Lord would want to touch something this morning.

Maybe you're just stuck. Maybe things went well for years but all of a sudden now some of this other stuff is popping up. There was a time several years ago when I had three weeks where all I had is these terrible sexual thoughts tormenting me and I couldn't get them to stop.

I hadn't done any sinful thing to open up any door that I was aware of and I just had these terrible thoughts and I went to my bishop, I'm an Anglican, and I went to my bishop and I had him pray for me and I went to my accountability partner and I had him pray for me. Nothing would work. Tormenting thoughts.

I do deliverance ministry. I try to cast them out. Didn't work.

And Jesus told me, He said, Bring me those thoughts. I said, No, Lord. There's no way I could bring that to you.

But it kept going on. I couldn't get it to stop. Couldn't get it to stop.

And finally, out of such desperation and fatigue, I sat down and just imagined Jesus on the cross and I just took all these evil terrible thoughts and I handed them to Jesus, sort of expecting Him to beat me. And the moment I brought them into Jesus' presence, they began to die. And I began to get set free.

And I learned something. That God doesn't just want us to bring the good parts. Even especially, He wants us to bring the broken, the worn out, the hurt parts.

And He's a God who will not condemn us. He will not accuse us. He won't say, I told you so.

He simply wants to set us free. Lord Jesus, we just ask you to come. Lord, your people, they love you, but they're tired.

Lord, they think they're the only one. They want so much to please you. And they can't figure out why it won't work for them.

Lord, this morning we pray that you would come and just begin to heal broken hearts. That the wounds and the issues of the past that are robbing them of life and joy and peace in your presence today. Lord, that you would come and heal each of those places.

Lord, this is a congregation that you have put your hand upon. Lord, they're here to spread your kingdom. And yet, Lord, you just wanted to get filled up with you and all the love and the peace and the joy first, filling them up because you love them too.

You never asked this church to serve anybody else, to do anything without first loving them. And so, Lord, this morning, would you pour out your love? Lord, every broken thing, would you mend it this morning, Lord? And Lord, would you supply everything that's missing? Lord, there's been so much missing in my heart that you've put back in me affirmation and blessing and delight. Lord, the pride that you take in me that I never felt from my parents.

Lord, I pray this morning that you would let us as a prayer team and just to pray and to bless. And Lord, that you would do for these precious children what you've begun to do in my life. So we just invite your presence and we ask you to come and Lord, touch these precious people.

We ask it and we receive it in Jesus' name. Please come.

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