

The Discipline of Receiving

by Todd Atkinson

Todd Atkinson's sermon emphasizes the discipline of receiving from God through prayer and the importance of discipleship in the Christian journey.

Duration: 45:01

Scripture: Luke 4:42, Luke 5:12-16

Topics: "Spiritual Disciplines"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker poses a hypothetical scenario where the Lord visits the congregation in a powerful way, revealing His immense love and desire to bless them abundantly. The speaker emphasizes the importance of prayer as a means to receive these blessings and to be filled with God's presence. Drawing from the example of Jesus, who prioritized his prayer time to be refueled by God, the speaker encourages the audience to carve out space for personal communion with God. The message highlights the need to consistently seek God's presence and not neglect this vital aspect of the Christian faith.

Transcript

I really want to underscore the African service that's coming up. It's our way of trying to send a welcome to Canada message to people who have immigrated here from Africa. It's a way of saying we'd like to at least learn how to become a healthy home for you.

I really appreciate those who have been helping to make that a possibility, especially Bill and Heather Alls who have been doing so much work in preparation for that. And so it's one you're not going to miss, particularly if you're coming from Africa. There's a special blessing that night.

I've not had a chance to ask them yet, but I was hoping that Bob and Mona McGregor would come, who have been just like a spiritual mom and dad to Sophie and others. And so I'm going to bring one of our best spiritual moms and dads, that if they have a tough time, I'm asking them to come. And to everybody that's come from Africa, for them to lay hands on and give a blessing that only a mom can impart and what a dad can impart, because you've left your moms and dads and many of your families.

So I know I should have asked them this. It just came to me by revelation this morning. Or at least I'll blame that on the Lord and thanks.

And so it's going to be a really special time. I'm expecting that watch. Three, four, five months into that, I really think our African immigrants will turn and you'll watch how they will say the same message to immigrants that are coming here from other countries.

So I think it'll take on a strong international flavor. But when you've been welcomed and when you've been well-received and when you've been honored, and when someone has made a home for you, then the natural thing is to turn and do that for other people. And so if you've got any time to come to that, I think it'll be really meaningful.

Well, I want to turn our attention to the Scriptures this morning. If you're new here this morning, we are looking at the relationship that existed between Jesus and his closest followers. There were plenty of people that were interested in Jesus.

Call them the crowds, the Gospels refer to them as the multitudes, people in mass who had an interest in Jesus at one level or another. But those who walked closest with Jesus, those who walked closest and knew his heart best, those with whom he had the deepest union, were the people that we know as the disciples. And they didn't just become disciples overnight.

There was a process that he used to teach them. There's a process that he used to train them. And that process we call discipleship.

The process whereby people become disciples. And there is much to learn from their discipleship to apply to our discipleship and how the Lord teaches and trains us. There's been a healing component to it.

We understand that there are things which impede our discipleship and get in the way of our relationship with Jesus, in particular our woundedness. And so there's been a strong kind of healing overtone to what we've been doing. I want to just bring a little word of encouragement from you.

Your heart may go, Oh great, since this healing thing I feel worse than I ever did. That's not uncommon. Because sometimes on the journey of healing of the heart, you will feel worse before you feel better.

Why? Because we've spent a lifetime, not of getting healed, we have spent a lifetime of repression. A lifetime of repressing pain, denying pain, ignoring pain. So all of a sudden you begin to walk into that journey and everything that you have been repressing, denying, ignoring, hiding starts to come up.

It doesn't feel all that good at first. But sometimes even the Lord will allow a cap, as it were, to be lifted off and some of those things to come to the surface so that you can say, Lord, I acknowledge this. Lord, I acknowledge the realness of this.

I'm not going to repress it anymore. I want some healing. And what a joy it is that you're going to apply that to my heart.

So just a little word in case some of you think, This isn't such a great theme. I feel horrible. Yeah.

As the Lord healed my heart, I certainly felt worse before I felt better. So maybe that will bring you a little bit of encouragement. So we're looking at discipleship.

We're looking at the process of discipleship. And we're looking at them as it's found in the Gospel according to Luke. So I want to turn my attention this morning to Gospel according to Luke, chapter 5. And then we'll take a look at some of its contents.

Luke 5. We'll begin our reading at verse 12. While Jesus was in one of the towns, a man came along who was covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he fell with his face to the ground and begged him, Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.

Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. I am willing, he said. Be clean.

And immediately the leprosy left him. Then Jesus ordered him, Don't tell anyone, but go and show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing as a testimony to them. Yet the news, despite his asking to keep it quiet, the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses.

But Jesus often withdrew to ninety-one lonely places. Does it say that on yours? I think that indicates a child probably. Number ninety-one, bingo.

So Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and he prayed. We'll come back to that text later. One of the most dominant features of Luke's Gospel by anyone, even at a cursory reading of the Gospels, is the fact that Luke covers one part of Jesus' life in a much more thorough way than any of the other Gospels, and that's Jesus' prayer life.

It doesn't have to be long into reading Luke's Gospel until you find that references to prayer come up again and again and again, and in a way that doesn't happen in any of the other Gospels. Other Gospels describe Jesus' baptism. You remember his baptism at the Jordan? But it's only Luke who adds these words.

And as Jesus was praying, the heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon him. The other Gospels talk about the heaven's opening, him being baptized, the Holy Spirit descending, but only Luke says it happened as he was praying. Don't forget that.

As you pray, the heavens are opened. The Holy Spirit comes. Other Gospels describe Jesus selecting his inner circle, his 12 apostles.

But only Luke says this. Jesus went up to a mountainside to pray, and he spent the night praying to God. When morning came, he called his disciples to him, and he chose 12 of them, who he also designated apostles.

So the other Gospels record this selection, but only Luke says that he spent a night on prayer, receiving revelation from God, so he would know who to choose. So don't forget revelation, direction from the Lord to make critical life decisions. It happens in prayer.

Other Gospels record Peter's famous confession, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God. But only Luke tells some of the context in which that happens. Chapter 9 says this.

Once when Jesus was praying, in private, and his disciples were with him, he said, Who did the crowd say that I am? So he's actually in prayer. And in prayer, he opens his eyes, he asks this question, and Peter gets the right answer. So it's in prayer that revelation of the true nature of God comes.

Other Gospels record the transfiguration incident, when Jesus was up on a mountain, Elijah and Moses, and this whole kind of glorious story. But only Luke explains the reason why Jesus ascended the mountain in the first place. It says he took Peter, James and John with him, and he went up on a mountain to pray.

None of the other Gospels say that. And it says this. And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was changed, and his clothes become as bright as a flash of lightning.

And you know the rest of the transfiguration story. But Luke says, Don't forget, it happened as he was praying. Don't forget, the reason he's on the mountaintop in the first place is he is there to pray.

Matthew's Gospel, like Luke's, has a record of the Lord's Prayer, but only Luke tells the context in which it was given. He says this. One day, as Jesus was praying, in a certain place, when he was finished, one of his disciples said, Lord, teach us to pray.

And that's the context in which he taught them the Lord's Prayer. So it's beautiful. They didn't just out of the blue teach the Lord's Prayer.

The disciples watched the prayer life of Jesus. They watched it consistently, and they watched it regularly, and they said, Lord, can you teach us to do that? I don't think they said, teach us to pray. I think what they meant is, teach us to pray like you pray.

Because when he prayed, it was obvious something beautiful was happening. It was obvious that there was a transaction of heavenly proportions that was taking place. They could just see it on the look in his face.

And so what they really meant is, teach us to pray like you pray. Because we say prayers, but there's something in the way that you pray that we want to learn. So in reading Luke, we are struck by this truth.

Jesus prayed continuously, and he taught his disciples to do likewise. So I'm tempted therefore to call this the discipline of prayer. And I'm sure that you'd probably go with me to some lengthy degree that prayer is a worthy discipline.

I'm certain that prayer is a practice that probably all of us aspire to. And almost intuitively, somehow people have this respect for prayer. We see it as a very spiritual activity that we would love to be good at.

But the problem is this. If I call it a discipline of prayer, it can also put all the wrong ideas in your mind. Because to some people it sounds rigorous.

To some people it sounds kind of austere, the discipline of prayer. In other words, if I use those words, my fear is this. That what will go through your mind or your heart is, yeah, that's something I really should do.

But I really don't do enough of it. And I really don't feel confident in it. And I really don't know what I'm doing.

So it's hard to feel inspired to do more. And so in this service, if the need and desire for prayer grows on you, but you know full well in your heart you don't really understand it, you don't really get it, and you're not likely to go home and do a whole lot more, what have I done but heap guilt on you? It's just one more time to tell you, here's something you're not doing enough, and you probably should be doing a whole lot more. And you say, thanks a lot for that, Todd.

And we're supposed to leave church feeling better? No, I think there's a reason why there's all this stuff in our heart. It sounds like such a wonderful thing. I don't quite get it.

I would love to do it, but I don't feel confident in it. I'm not getting out of it what I'd like to get out of it. I think it's because of this, that we really don't understand what prayer is all about.

I don't really think we understand its essence. We think of it as an activity, even a spiritual activity, but we really don't understand the heart of what it's all about. So let me ask you a couple questions.

Question number one. What happens if someone who lives on the far side of town from you just phoned you up this week and just said that they were in prayer and felt they're supposed to give you a check for \$10,000? All they'd ask is you'd come pick it up. Now, what might go through your head? Well, it could be everything from this has got to be a gag to you can't be serious to what happens if I get there and find out that there's strings attached? What kind of message would you send to them if just day after day you're just like, I don't know, I just ran out of time today.

I just don't have time to do that. And if day after day rolled on and just life was a little busy and just hold that for me for another week and I'll get around to it, you might accidentally send them the message, I guess they don't really need this because all they have to do is one thing, come around and collect it. And they can't, for whatever reason, seem to be able to do that.

Let me ask you another question. What happens if this morning the Lord was to visit us in such a dramatic way that you were able to see as though for the very first time and to see it more clearly than you ever imagined possible. You were able to see how great is the love of the Father for you.

You were able to see that He really desperately wanted to lavish generous blessing on you and you just could feel it, the heavens opened, you were gazed as it were right into the very face of God and as though you'd never heard those words before, you absolutely realized that He loves you and He wants to lavish more on you than you could ever ask Him for. How would that make you feel? How would that change your life? But all that He required of you is that you come and receive that. And that in Christianity where you come and receive it is what we call prayer.

And I think that if we had that understanding of prayer and it does take revelation, if we had that understanding of prayer it would change the whole way we look at prayer. And that's why I'm going to refer to this as the discipline of receiving from God. Now one side of us might be tempted to say receiving doesn't sound like much of a discipline.

But I think that the opposite is true. That receiving from God is not as easy as it sounds. And that it takes a considerable amount of discipline.

Use myself for an example. I for one, I don't find receiving all that easy. When I first came to Lethbridge, it was the first time I... The Lord told me He was going to give me a house.

I was kind of looking forward to that. I actually felt Him speaking to me. It was the first time in my life I would ever really fully give myself to building the house of the Lord.

And He showed me, I'm going to give you a house. It's all in 1 Samuel chapter 7. It's a promise He gave me. You're going to build my house.

I'll worry about your house. And just like I'm going to... that He's going to make these two things kind of parallel. And just that He's going to raise up people to help build His house.

I actually felt Him say to me that I'm also going to raise up people to help you with your house, knowing how inept I am with that. No sooner did I arrive than Mr. Golem, who's a builder in our church, said, Todd, do you need any help on your house? I was just like the Lord said. But five years later, do you think I can phone him up? Once he came over very briefly, and I felt guilty about it.

And five years later, I have still not been able to phone him up and say that's a very kind offer, because at a fundamental basis, I have a hard time receiving. And maybe you do too. I think, this is a busy man.

He's got a lot of other more important things that he could contend to. Think of all the money that he could make if he did this on the open market. And one reason... How would I ever repay him? One reason after another reason after another reason are all the reasons why I should not receive that gracious offer.

You tell me receiving is an easy thing, that it comes automatic. It doesn't come automatic for all of us. Some of us have a real problem receiving.

And we make up for it by giving lots. Maybe you're the kind of person that you just love to lavish compliments on people. But if someone was to say a true compliment about you, you would find it genuinely hard to receive.

I mean, we socially acknowledge it. Thank you. But there's a difference between acknowledging something kind that's said about you and receiving something kind about you.

Let me tell you the difference. You're in grade 7. For whatever reason, you do horribly on a test. Someone, possibly a teacher, says to you, you did horribly.

You're stupid. And you have remembered it ever since. And do you know what's happened? 10,000 reliable people could tell you, you're very clever.

You'd say, thank you. But you will never receive it. You will never let it go deep.

Because to receive it is to change your mind. To receive it is to say, to throw out what was said about you that long time ago and say it is patently false and instead I choose to believe this. But because we won't, it could be 10,000 people say kind things about you and it will wash like water off a duck's back.

And you will kindly acknowledge it and you will go on your way feeling stupid. And it could be anything else. You're incompetent at this.

You'll never amount to anything. It could be any other numbers of things that were said. And ever since, every time you're paid a compliment to the reverse, you kindly acknowledge it.

It's a social discretion. But you do not receive it to your heart. Because receiving is not always as easy as it sounds.

And if it affects our relationship with people, this stuff happens all the time. You see it in your life. I see it in mine.

I see it in my marriage. I see it in the counseling. I've got people in my life and I'm one of them.

In certain areas, which are areas of tenderness to me, people could pay me 10,000 compliments, but if they say one thing about that area of tenderness, it's like all the compliments and nice things go out the

world and I just think, that person hurt me. Well, no they didn't. They did 10,000 nice things.

They've been wonderful to me. But you get a little close to that area of pain? Of course receiving is not so easy. How much more does it not affect our relationship with God? Let's take a look at our text again.

If I could ask that the second slide be put up first. Luke chapter 5. Because there's two truths here and I'd like to do them in the reverse order. Thanks guys.

So Jesus orders him, don't tell anyone. Yet the news about him spread all the more. So that crowds of people came to hear Jesus.

Crowds of people came to be healed of their sicknesses. But then listen to this last sentence. But Jesus, but Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and he prayed.

I think the word lonely is maybe a little unfortunate at the NIV. Probably more literally the Greek means uninhabited places and you could translate it lonely. But to us lonely might mean something different.

It's one thing to be alone and have nobody there. It's another thing to feel lonely there, isn't it? Sometimes all you want is an alone day with nobody there. It doesn't mean you feel lonely in it.

So the word actually means to be alone. It doesn't mean the emotional feeling of being lonely. So in other words, Jesus just wanted a spot where it's just with him and his Father.

But notice the inflection in here. There is news about him. His popularity is spreading.

There's lots of needs. There's lots of people needing to be healed. But Jesus often withdrew.

So in spite of his popularity, he still withdrew. In spite of the massive human reception, he still withdrew. In spite of the heavy demands that were on him, he still withdrew.

In spite of the considerable human need right on his doorstep, he still withdrew. The endless sea of human wants, he still withdrew. In spite of all this, Jesus often withdrew.

And he didn't just do it once in a while. This was his custom. This was his habit.

He did this often. So we could say, well Lord, there's people with all kinds of sicknesses right there. They need you.

This is not the time to withdraw. This is not the time to go and be by yourself. To which Jesus would say, actually this is just the time.

Because he poured himself out, and he poured himself out, and he knew that if he was going to live to minister one more day, he had to go be with his Father. Because Jesus had to receive too. So sometimes for us, we tend to think, well I'll pray when life is a little less busy.

I'll pray when it's a little bit more convenient. We're not going to pray when the entire city is on our doorstep. Especially he waited for this day for 30 years.

This is what he was born for. Even the things you were born for. You need to withdraw to be in your Father's presence so that you can get refueled, and you can go and do it again the next day.

But Jesus often withdrew to isolated places. Places where there was just him and God. And there he prayed.

Look at the other text. There's Luke chapter 4. Just verses before this. There you go.

Take a look at this text. I think it says so much to us about Jesus. At daybreak, Jesus went out to a solitary place.

There's the word again. Just him and God. The people were looking for him.

They're not content that he's withdrawn. Almost like, can he really do this? The people were looking for him, and when they came to where he was, they tried to keep him from, what? Leaving them. Now this is not a picture of Jesus we normally think of.

A picture of Jesus in flight in order to protect his prayer time. Isn't that what the text says? What was he trying to do? He was trying to leave them. Is it because he didn't love them? Because he didn't care about their needs? Or is it because the Bible says he humbled himself and took on the form of a man, a man that had limitations, and a man that if he doesn't go get filled up with God, will have nothing to offer.

So why is he trying to leave them? Listen to this. Because I've got to go preach the good news of the kingdom in other towns too. If I don't get refueled, if I don't have these times, if I don't get filled with God, what am I going to have to give to those other towns? And I think that there is such a strong message in this for us, carving out the space to be alone with God and just let him fill you.

Now that doesn't sound rigorous. That doesn't sound austere. It's just giving God the time and space to do what he's longing to do, is just love you.

In the story about the guy cutting the \$10,000 check, prayer is just going to pick up the check. It's free. An offer made to you is just going to pick it up and saying thanks, I'll have that please, and sitting under his healing presence.

I'd like to say that that was a really easy thing to do. It's not. How many of you find that easy to do? Let's ask this question.

How many of you actually do it? It'll tell us how many of us find it easy to do. And why don't we do that? Well, it's because of the other reason in Luke chapter 5. So the first truth is the truth of creating the space to receive. The other one is about the faith to believe.

Luke chapter 5, verse 12. This is a familiar story. Here's the reason why we don't do the first part.

While Jesus was in one of the towns, a man came along who was covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he fell with his face to the ground and begged him, Lord, if you're willing, you can make me clean. So here's a man who's heard about Jesus healing.

Here's a man who's possibly seen healing firsthand. So he has no doubt that Jesus is able to heal, and he has no doubt that Jesus wants to heal other people. Where is his doubt? That Jesus wants to heal him.

There's a reason why I reversed these truths, because I'm convinced if you had all the time in the world, if life wasn't busy, if it didn't have all the demands that it does, if at our hearts of hearts, if we are not convinced that what he is able to do and what he wants to do, that he wants to do in us just as much as

anybody else in the world, you will never make time to pray, whether you're loads of time or no time, because it's touching on some deeper and fundamental part of us. If at our heart of hearts we don't think he wants to, he'd like to bless everybody else, and God would love to be alone with everybody else in our church. And you can just imagine all the things God would lavish upon them.

But if you don't think he wants to do it for you, then prayer will never be something that we run to. When I had someone praying for me this summer in August, I can't recall the issue we were even praying over. I just remember the question.

The person said to me, do you believe that you're worthy of God answering this prayer? The first thought that popped into my head was, I often start my prayers saying, Lord, I'm not really worthy of this, but please. So the fact I start so many of my prayers like that probably is a fairly solid indication that I don't feel worthy at all. And yet my doctrine tells me that I'm worthy, I've been made worthy by Jesus Christ and by his sacrificial death on a cross.

So I hadn't even answered him yet, but I see in myself this incredibly dangerous division, this enormous chasm between what I believe and what I feel, between my doctrine and my practice, that I don't feel actually my fundamental ace. No, I don't feel worthy at all. In fact, I pray out of unworthiness.

I don't even know if I expect God to do this. Or I tell him all the reasons in advance why he shouldn't do, and then wonder why it doesn't happen. How would you feel if your child came to you and said, Father, Mother, I'd like this, and then told you all about their unworthiness, and all the reasons why you shouldn't do it? How would that make your heart feel like as a parent? Especially if you absolutely love that child, and you do.

But how would it make your heart feel if... How wounded must they be? They're trying to talk me out of this before I can even do it. What a chasm. Am I the only one that's seen that? Does that chasm exist in your heart? And what might God do to bring that, to narrow that, and remove that? So I chose to believe what God was saying about me.

I chose to believe that my feelings are out of whack, not my doctrine. And it was very strange the first few times to say, Lord, I'm worthy of, and I feel like a dork saying those words, and I... It just felt so awkward. But when you're being healed, what the Bible says about you has to be trusted far about what you've thought about you for so long.

And it's hard to do it. There is a discipline involved. I just began praying that way.

I don't know if it's the right place to tell this, but... I'm really this year wanting to have people over at our home, a lot of people. And so I said, Lord, I'd like a little bigger house so I could have people over. We've had a wonderful family home, starter home, and I just wanted to be able to... I saw myself this year as having groups of people over, so I'm on the flight home, and I said, Lord, because of Jesus Christ, I'm worthy.

I'd like to ask you for a little bigger house. I knew the exact one. I said, you may say no, because it's untimely, but not because I'm unworthy.

You don't have to say yes. You may say no because it's not the right thing. It's unhelpful, but not because I'm unworthy.

Because if God says no, we hear in it you're unworthy. And I chose I'm not going to hear that in that. On the Monday I flew back, I knew exactly what house.

I said, Lord, I don't have a long time. I don't have time to go house hunting. I just showed me one.

He showed me one, and I prayed for it. On Tuesday, that man approached me. He said, hey, I got a house for sale.

Really? Went over a few days later, over a cup of tea, he says, yeah, I was praying about what to do with my house. I feel like the Lord told me to sell it to you. I said, you don't get texts, do you? He said, why do you ask? I said, two months ago, I felt the Lord put your house on my heart.

I sent you a little text. Go look at it. And he never got it.

So he figured out how to get texts off his phone. He said, if you ever think about selling your house, contact me. I wrote that to him.

He never got it. I'm like, you know what? I've been praying about that for months, but guess what? When you pray out of a wrong place, if you pray out of, Lord, I'm so unworthy, do you think the Lord's going to answer that? Because all he does is reinforce that untruth in your heart. And he will never do that.

He'd say, I'll tell you what, I won't answer that now, but I'm going to do something more important. I'm going to heal your heart so that you don't feel unworthy, that you actually feel my love, and that you anticipate my blessing. And when you can stand in that place, then there's nothing that's impossible.

I'm just getting warmed up, and it's communion time. Let me finish, and we'll have communion tonight. That's probably a very stupid call, but I can feel the Lord is tweaking your heart.

I want you to think of the call of Abraham, Genesis chapter 12. Just think of it there. This is what God said to Abraham the first time God ever spoke to him.

And this is what God said to Abraham. Abraham, I'm going to bless you. And you will be a blessing to all the families.

The first time God ever spoke to him, what did he want him to get? Abraham, I want to bless you. Two, you will be a blessing to all the families in the world. And Abraham, there's a divine order there.

If you can understand the first one, if you can make space for the other one, if you can just let me bless you, then the second one will be true. And that blessing will flow through you and will go to all the families of the earth. But here's the father of all who believe.

And what's the first thing God wants to say to him? I want to bless you. What one good thing had Abraham ever done? Nothing. That's the point.

Before he could do anything, before he could believe anything. Abraham, you don't have to do anything. I'm going to bless you and lots of good stuff will come out of that.

Just let me bless you. And if you can let me bless you, blessing will come out and affect all the families of the earth. Last week, Ron preached the same thing.

Freely you've received, that's this truth, receive. Freely you give. There's another divine order there.

Receive from the Lord. If we could just understand what he wants to do, understand how much he wants to bless you, how much he wants to be close to you. If they can't understand that, that he's freely given it to them, if they can receive from him and freely, guess what they're going to do when they give it out? They will only give out what he's given them to people who they deem worthy.

If they feel like they have to be worthy to receive this, then guess what? That's the only people they will give it out to. They will go across the earth and they will make judgments and they will deem who they think is worthy of receiving Christ's blessing and who they think isn't. Because that's the way that their relationship with God is predicated.

So he says, none of that. You freely receive this. Guess what? Then you can give it away to everybody.

I'll tell you the truth. I believe these things on my good days. You believe God's love for you on your good days.

You believe God wants to be good to you on your good days when there's nothing militating against you that would make you feel the reverse. And I do the same. But when a belief is really deep in the heart, when we really, truly believe something at its deepest level, then all hell can break loose against us and tell us the lie and tell us the reverse and we will not believe it.

We don't just believe it on our good days. We don't believe it on our bad days. We don't believe it on both.

And so, when the wind's blowing just right and we're in a service and we're in worship and God is saying stuff, there's something in our heart that rises to believe it. But when something else happens in life, particularly something that wounds us or raises the memory of an old wound, and when we're wounded, it's at that point that it doesn't seem very easy to believe at all. God loves me.

I'm his beloved son and daughter. He wants me to sit at his right hand and just enjoy his favor and acceptance. Do you say that on your bad days? And I bet he can't wait to find a way today to bless me and show his love for me.

Do you say that on your bad days? It's so important to me with my children. And I am such an imperfect father. Oh, my goodness.

But the one thing I want to impress on them is this. My love for you is not for you just when you're being good. It's not just for your good days, kids.

Because it's taken me all the years to try to learn that about him. And I find that when my woundings come into play, I can look for comfort in so many ways. Why is it in those days? Why is it when I'm wounded that I don't run into his presence? And when my hurts are flared up, why is it on those days that I don't think that these things are true? And that there's goodness for me and gracious and I can run to his presence and he'll understand and he'll love me and be good to me.

Had a few of those happen this week. Good for the Lord to do that to me. Pressing my buttons and saying, Todd, do you believe it under these circumstances? I'm trying to learn to, Lord.

I'd like you to join me in prayer. Let's seek the Lord about this. And Joe sang this gorgeous song, the second verse of that version of Amazing Grace was so beautiful.

I don't know if he's going to come and do that again. But can we spend a few minutes in prayer together? Come Holy Spirit. Let's practice this discipline, the discipline of receiving.

Okay. Just let the Lord wash over you now. And as he does, watch the way in which it presses your buttons.

Watch the parts of your heart that are almost resistant to it. It's out of our woundedness we think, well, is anything really going to happen? It's out of woundedness that when we go to prayer, the first thing to come to mind is our shortcomings. First thing.

Lord, come Holy Spirit. From the length and the breadth of this large room, come Holy Spirit and sweep over our hearts now with revelation, the spirit of wisdom and revelation that would open our eyes to see that if we would but receive, that you have so much to give. And Holy Spirit, would you reveal to our hearts that Jesus Christ, by his sacrificial death, has truly made us worthy.

In him to be sitting at the right hand of God the Father, the place of ultimate favor, where prayer is a whisper. At the right hand of the Lord, all you have to do is lean over and whisper. Let's take a moment, let the Lord minister to you.

Come Lord.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/28/SID28740.mp3>

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