

Better is open rebuke Than love that is concealed. Faithful are the wounds of a friend, But deceitful are the kisses of an enemy.

**Proverbs 27:5-6**

## Store In My Heart

### Ezra 1:2-3

Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, 'The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and He has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all His people, may his God be with him! Let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah and rebuild the house of the Lord, the God of Israel; He is the God who is in Jerusalem.

As God promised, Cyrus sent Jews back to Jerusalem after their exile to rebuild the temple by this decree. Though not introduced until later the book, Ezra is the scribe recording these events. Ezra's part in this story deals with the spiritual rebuilding of the people of God thru reading and application of the Law. Without this, building the physical temple would have been for naught. God's people must be a spiritual people or we are nothing.



# Faithful Wounds

## Zeke Flores

*"Faithful are the wounds of a friend..."* **Proverbs 27:6**

I enjoy being in the company of insightful people with a lighthearted sense of humor. Who doesn't like a jovial conversation just for the sake of having a few laughs?

I also like serious discussions about current events, politics, moral issues, and spiritual things even when those with a different viewpoint express their opinions with intensity and passion.

But, usually I don't like conversations where I am being rebuked, scolded, or otherwise called to the carpet for my attitude or actions. Most people are like that: It's just hard to face shortcomings, failings, and sins.

But, when I look back on my life, some of my most significant, life changing moments were when I was being admonished by someone who genuinely wanted me to be a better person. Certainly, some of those reprimands were of high spiritual and moral benefit. There was the time my 6th grade English teacher let me know how much I'd let her down for things I said in class. It was then I really understood the impact of the poster that adorned the wall of our classroom which announced, "I am master of my unspoken word, yet slave to those which should have remained unspoken." Thirty-four years later, I still recall the words on that poster. Then there was the time when I was 16 and one of my cousins expressed his disappointment in me for some bad decisions I'd made that could carry long-term consequences. I don't see him very often, but whenever I do,

## Contact Us

We want opportunities to speak with others about the Lord's Kingdom.

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## For Our Information

Annette Gray has knee replacement surgery this week.

JoBeth Henderson received word that the latest strips had no melanoma. She was referred to the surgeon that will do the repair surgery. This should be scheduled in the next week or so.

Tonight we start our study in 1Samuel 9:3 at 5 pm.

Wednesday we will begin our study in 2Corinthians 11:16.

**Pray for safety, courage & healing.**

I always think of that chat we had on a cloudy Sunday afternoon. Another time, as a relatively new Christian in my 30's, I was scolded by a brother in Christ for some of the outfits I allowed my daughters to wear. I realized that these people cared enough about me to point out things that others wouldn't. These conversations were anything but lighthearted, yet the lessons learned have stayed with me even to this day.

The book of Ecclesiastes reminds that *"there is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven..." (Ecclesiastes 3:1)* There is a time when *"it is better to listen to the rebuke of a wise man than for one to listen to the song of fools."* (Ecclesiastes 7:5)

When the apostle Paul wrote to the Galatian churches, he scolded them severely in very strong language for a number of faults they had, yet he asked, *"Have I become your enemy by telling you the truth?" (Galatians 4:16)* The evident answer was that no, he was not an enemy but a dear friend for pointing out things that would have the greater benefit and longer lasting advantage to them. He expected that when they heard the truth, they would be eager to change, knowing that their souls were at stake.

Rebuke hurts, but it's helpful when we must correct a course of action or else face undesirable consequences. Preachers and faithful Christians understand this and they attend to the need, sometimes with a toe-stepping sermon or a well-meaning phone call. Unfortunately, too often, loving reproaches are met with "It's none of your business!" or "Why doesn't the preacher ever preach on anything uplifting?" Surely, the old adage is true: The kicked dog howls the loudest!

One poet wrote:

When others give us compliments, They are so easy to believe;  
But it is hard to take rebukes, Though they are helpful to receive.

Remember that when you're being scolded, either by the preacher in a sermon, or by a concerned Christian, the aim is not to embarrass or harass you, but to help you see your error and change before you lose your soul. Truly, *"Faithful are the wounds of a friend."* (Proverbs 27:6)



We seek only to serve God according to His Will!