

# The Miracle-Working God of Mercy

by Alan Redpath

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*Alan Redpath emphasizes the importance of brokenness, prayer, and reliance on God's mercy and power in the Christian life.*

**Duration:** 55:31

**Scripture:** Psalm 25:4-5, Psalm 86:2, Psalm 86:10-11, Psalm 86:14, Matthew 6:33, Revelation 3:17

**Topics:** "Mercy Of God"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker encourages the audience to reflect on their convictions about God. He suggests that they circle three titles for God mentioned by David in the psalm. These titles express David's deep convictions about God's role in his life. The speaker emphasizes the importance of taking action based on these convictions and not just praying without follow-through. He shares a story of a man who had a powerful encounter with God and surrendered his heart completely, resulting in a transformed life. The sermon concludes with a reminder to not be afraid of prayer and to allow God to work in and through us.

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## Transcript

The chorus which we sing so brightly, Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me, the first prayer in it is break me. Brokenness is part of God's purpose for all of us and it's costly. It is given unto us, said Paul in Philippians, not only to believe on him but to suffer.

And even Jesus himself was made perfect through suffering. I've never dared preach on that text. But unquestionably, suffering, brokenness, has a tremendous part to play in Christian ministry.

That's why I'm sure that miracles of healing need to be kept in that context. I believe in a God who is able to heal, of course. Of course I do.

In those many cases of people who have been, but he doesn't always do that. That healing anyway lasts only 50 years. The most, whereas brokenness leads to likeness to Jesus forever.

And that is often, very often accomplished through physical suffering. And it's an attitude when the crisis is on and when we're facing brokenness that matters most. And it's with that in mind that the Lord laid on my heart, as I was thinking of today, this 86th Psalm.

Because you see, we think of the cross of Calvary as something we come to to get through. We visit it for forgiveness and then we go on. But we don't really.

We come to Calvary to stay there, to live there all the rest of our lives. Because it's only when we die out to ourselves that then the Holy Spirit does miracles and gets through. And so I want to speak to you on really a life of prayer.

I think within this Psalm there are some tremendous lessons that I'm just beginning to learn on this great theme of prayer, which everyone always needs. I don't quite know when David uttered it. I don't know when he gave utterance to what's in it.

It was possibly when he was being hunted by Saul. Could have been that. It might have been when he was being betrayed by Absalom.

I'm not sure. But I do know there was a time of desperate trouble in his life. Great perplexity, great affliction.

He just didn't know which way to overcome. And he was being sorely tested and tried at a time when it seemed that only a miracle could get him through. Now how do I react in times like that? Because we all have them in all sorts of different ways.

It's our reaction in that time that matters. And at such a time as that he turned to the Lord in prayer. He's a man of great convictions and these convictions are clearly stated in this prayer.

He didn't press the panic button. It wasn't that sense of crisis. But he came to God with his convictions.

Convictions about God, convictions about himself, convictions about his actions that he must take at that moment. And it's not a prayer of intercession for other people. It's a prayer of desperate petition for himself.

No less than 35 times in these 17 verses here you have the little phrase, I, me, my, thy servant. There's a place for prayer like that. Of course we mustn't be selfish in our praying.

But when I get to the place of recognizing what a desperate plight I'm in, and the need is tremendous, this is the kind of prayer to which a man can give reference. I don't know whether any of you are going through some crisis at this time. I've had in the Christian life, you're either going into one or in the middle of one, or coming out of one.

The job is to keep it down to one. And you're constantly, constantly amid all these pressures. And you can't escape them.

And the Lord allows them to happen. How do we react to them? Let me learn. I want you to learn and myself from David tonight.

Notice his convictions about who God was, the person of God. Now I'm going to suggest to you that you do a little work this evening. If you have a pencil, and you don't mind messing up your Bible, you should wreck a Bible about once in 10 years really.

And so I'll help you to wreck it tonight, if you come with me. Because in this psalm, David uses three titles for God, which express his convictions about him. Just look at them with me.

Are you ready? Notice in verse two, David says, Thou art my God. Put a circle around that word, God. In verse 10, he says, Thou alone art God.

Another circle there. In verse 14, O God, insolent men have risen up against me. Another circle there.

In verse 15, But Thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion. Circle around that word, God. And in each case where we have that word, God, it's the word Elohim, the Almighty One, the Great One, the Powerful One.

It was by that name which God introduced himself to mankind. In the beginning, God, Elohim. And in the hour of David's crisis and deep need, he could turn to a God he knew who was absolutely omnipotent, who never lost a battle, all-powerful.

How wonderful to be able to turn to a God like that, when we're at the end of a self. Now look again with me at the first verse. David says, O Lord, answer me.

Put a triangle around that word, Lord. In verse 3, Be gracious to me, O Lord. Another one there.

Verse 5, But Thou, O Lord, art good. Another one there. Verse 6, Give ear, O Lord.

Another one there. Verse 9, All nations shall come and bow down before Thee, O Lord. Another triangle there.

In verse 12, I give thanks to Thee, O Lord. Another one there. And in verse 15, But Thou, O Lord.

Another one there. And in each case, he's using the word Jehovah. A covenant-keeping God who's never broken a promise.

Jehovah. He's absolutely dependable. I suppose you've found, uh, so have I, that some people build up a reputation for being a bit unreliable.

For some people say to me, I'll give you a helping hand with that job tomorrow. I don't get excited until I see them. And somebody else will say, goodbye, see you again next week.

I don't get thrilled about it. I wait till I come, and then I believe them. You see, there are some people whose word you have to take with a bit of reservation.

But God has never broken one word of any of his promises to any of his people. He's absolutely dependable. How wonderful, therefore, in prayer, to come to a covenant-keeping God like that, upon whom you can rely.

Then again, this will be your third and last little bit, which you have to do. David says in verse 8, There is none like unto Thee among the gods, O Lord. Put a square around that word, Lord.

It's the word Adonai. A-d-o-n-a-i. Adonai.

Sovereign. In verse 11, Teach me thy way, O Lord. Another square there.

In verse 12, My God with my whole heart. Another square there. Verse 17, Because thou, Lord, has helped me.

Square there. Adonai. I shall hope to say just a word about that at the conclusion of my message tonight, and his claim on that title.

But just notice, in this hour of tremendous crisis, he uses these three titles about God. You've never lost a battle, you've never broken a promise, and you're sovereign, Lord. And notice the language of 8, verse 8, when David says, There is none like unto Thee, O Lord.

None like unto Thee. Lord, you're absolutely unrivaled in your deity. None like you.

In verse 9, All the nations thou hast made shall come and bow down before thee, O Lord, and shall glorify thy name, Lord. You're unmatched in your sovereignty. Now just get the picture and see this man at the end of his rope, absolutely in despair, doesn't know what to do.

In a terrific crisis, and he comes to a God, who is almighty, never broken a promise, who's sovereign, Lord, unmatched in his sovereignty and deity. His convictions concerning God. Look at his convictions concerning the mercy of God.

Verse 5, For thou, Lord, I'm finished with asking you to write squares and so on. Let's follow this. Verse 5, For thou, Lord, art good, forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all that call upon thee.

Verse 13, For great is thy mercy, O steadfast love toward me, and thou hast delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol. Verse 15, For thou, Lord, art a God, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. You see, that tells me that as David went to God in this terrific crisis he was facing, he knew he hadn't a single argument to bring to God from himself.

He'd nothing, absolutely at the end. No claim upon God at all. He needed, if he needed anything in his life, he needed at that time desperately a God who was full of mercy and whose patience was absolutely unlimited.

Just recently I heard about a young convert who, the Christian faith, who at one moment was failing and the next moment confessing his sin, and one moment on the mountaintop and the next moment down in the valley and going on falling and confessing and sinning and getting back and so on, and went on for years until one day his pastor met him in the street and said to him, My dear brother, God gave me a bucket full of patience for you, but believe me it's almost empty. But I know a God whose patience is limited, limitless. That's the kind of God I need.

A God who is full of mercy and there's no end to his patience. I'm going to say something that you might disagree with. I'll risk it.

I'm going home tomorrow, so are you. But I somehow feel, though I haven't any authority in the Word of God to say this, that God's love and mercy to the sinner out of Christ who doesn't know the Lord is only matched and even outmatched by his patience with the children who want to know better. You can think that through.

I'm sure it won't keep you awake. His convictions about God's mercy and then look at his convictions concerning God's power. Verse 10.

Thou art great and those wondrous things thou alone art God. And he came out of the depths of his need to a God whom he knew could work a miracle. It needed a miracle to save him.

It needed a miracle to deliver him. And I honestly believe that there is nothing that the Church of Jesus Christ needs more today, and we Christians need personally, than a new conception of his ability to work miracles. We need desperately these days a miracle-working God.

Nothing less than a miracle can deliver us. We're far too prone to tie him up to our little programs and ask him to bless them, forget that he works miracles. I need a God who can work a miracle.

It's wonderful to be shut up to a miracle. Many methods have failed, hundreds of them, but God never fails. Therefore you have David's convictions concerning God in this crisis, in his desperate need.

He turns to a God who's omnipotent, who's dependable, who's sovereign, whose mercy is endless, a miracle-working God. But listen, do you notice David's conviction about himself? Verse 1. I am poor and needy. I like the Living Bible paraphrase there.

It says, Lord, I'm deep in trouble. I can identify with that. I'm deep in trouble.

There's a hackneyed phrase that goes around which says, God helps those who help themselves. I want to tell you that God helps those who are absolutely helpless and desperate, destitute. Psalm 102, verse 17.

He will regard the prayer of the destitute and not despise their prayer. What an awful thing it must be to be destitute. Well, homeless, friendless, penniless, absolutely at the end.

May I honestly say to you that one of the curses of 20th century fundamental evangelical Christianity is that we're not destitute. We have become desperately self-sufficient. And indeed, so great is the craze, if I may use such a word, for higher education, that we train young people to be self-sufficient.

Of course, I'm not saying a thing about education. Get the best you can. But I remind you, I remind you, that Paul's a great man of outstanding education.

And he said, our sufficiency is of God. And 2,000 years have gone by since then, and the situation is no different. Our sufficiency, our help, our hope is not in a church program.

It's not in a theological degree. It's in God, a living God. I happened to pick up recently a copy of Reader's Digest, and I noticed an article, the leading article for the month was headed, Ten Ways to Get Rid of Fear.

I happened to be sitting in a dentist's waiting room at the time, so I thought that that was an appropriate moment to see what he had to say. And I guessed pretty well what he would say. Better to have a look.

And it was the usual sort of thing written by a psychiatrist, and the last reason of the ten he had was, have faith. For a moment, I pricked up my mental ears and turned over the page, and he said, I read, have faith in yourself. You've got through before.

You've struggled through in the past. You'll get through again. My brother and sister, that's the tragedy of modern philosophy.

The fact is that we are desperately poor and desperately needy, and there's a sense in which I want to ask the Lord never to take me from the place where he can work a miracle. Because if he does, I'm destitute. I said to you, dear folks, this morning, something that I'll just repeat.

You think by now I ought to have learned some of these lessons, but I'm beginning to learn, but I'm in kindergarten. That means in practice that I never allow myself to do more work for him than I can cover in believing prayer. No, I can't apply that to you.

Can't play it God for you, but I'm beginning to learn to apply it myself. And that means before I accept anything on the last minute or any time, I'm very careful to say, can I cover that in believing prayer? If not, the answer is no. People may say I'm getting lazy.

Well, David's conviction about himself was, I'm poor and needy, and therefore, Lord, I'm not risking anything on my own. But something clear here, isn't it? Verse two, I am godly. David, now take it easy.

How on earth can you be poor and needy and the next breath godly? Holy. Surely he's not being spiritually arrogant. He's not guilty of spiritual conceit.

But he knows with absolute conviction that he has obeyed God's way of approach to the throne, and he's come to God by way of a blood sacrifice and the offering of a lamb. And therefore, I'm holy. And I've come to him on the ground of shed blood of an animal.

And therefore, because I've come God's appointed way, I am his purchased possession. I belong to him and I'm holy. And it's such a comfort to me to know that if I come to my God in Jesus, poor and desperate, helpless and needy, I come to him on the only basis upon which a sinner can come, the ground of the blood and faith in the blood.

I can say to him, Lord, Lord, I'm in desperate need. I'm poor and needy, but I'm positionally holy. I'm your purchased possession.

I belong to you. And it's your responsibility to see me through. That rolls off the burden.

Again, in the same verse, David says, save thy servant who trusts in thee. Lord, I'm trusting in you. That's the whole ground, of course, and foundation principle of our relationship to the Lord.

For without faith, it's impossible to please him. And depending upon you, David says, and only you can deliver me. Nobody else.

I've got to live. You've got to live by faith. But if you're as moldy as I am, it's terribly easy to remove yourself from the only trustworthy object, and to realize as you live your Christian life every day, you're not really depending on him.

Now look, my friend, I don't know you, bless you, I wish I did. I'd love to, you would hate it, but I would love just to sit and chat to you one by one. That helpful talk that we had this afternoon was the basis of that thought, that we should just talk like that to each other, personally, individually.

I'd like to be able to do that, because in this smallish group, there might be someone who's in a crisis, broken-hearted, panics, troubles, loneliness, fears, and burdens, and so on. Listen, here's a man who comes out of the very depth to a living God, the same God to whom you and I can come, and he has these deep convictions about his power, his faithfulness, his master, and his owner, and David himself is absolutely destitute. May I say, honestly and frankly, if anybody's coming to God just at the end of your rope, and you're not prepared to take that position, you never touch the throne.

Never. I don't care who you are. If you're trying to get through to the Lord, and you're still not destitute, and you're imagining that your education and your ability and talent will see you through, God has to bring you to the place and me to the place where I cry with David, Lord, I'm poor and needy.

How I wish that the Church would catch that note of destitution. You know, to which our risen Lord spoke to the Church at Laodicea. You think you're rich, increased with goods that are meaner than nothing? I say to you, you're poor and needy.

Desperate. David had that conviction, and yet he says, I'm holy, and by faith in Jesus Christ and his righteousness imputed to me, I can say the same. Lord, don't depend on you.

That's the only approach for a saint, and it's the only approach for an unbeliever. God save you and save me from imagining that we're too big to come that way. After 50 years of Christian service, when I was in Chicago, I remember once I had a phone call from somebody in New Jersey, about 900 miles away, and this man who was the senior elder, I think, or trustee of his church, and he said, Pastor Redbrook, do you happen to know anybody in Chicago area who would consider a move? Might be thinking of leaving and would come to our church.

So a conversation began, which lasted well over three-quarters of an hour. I gave him the names of two or three people who I thought might, and then he asked me the most amazing questions. Now he told me, he said, what school did they attend? And following school, what university did they go to? What theological degrees have they got? And I had to tell him all this information.

And after I'd finished, after he had finished asking me questions, he said, well, thank you so much, but he said, honestly, none of these men are big enough for our pulpit. I said, hi! Just before you go off the phone, are you sure you mean, you don't mean, they're not small enough for your pulpit? Lord, break me. For just a moment, because of these convictions about God and about himself, David came to certain convictions that he had to take action right now.

And of course, we're very guilty of this. There's no use praying unless it leads to action, doing something about it. And convictions in prayer are no use unless I carry them into life.

How many people there are who are blessed in service and even make a response, but they don't do a thing about it. Get outside the building, and we've forgotten it all in five minutes, in conversation about the dinner and children and everything else. And they don't somehow make, take action.

Notice, will you, what action David took. First to preserve my life, for I am godly, save thy servant who trusts in thee. Thou art my God, be merciful to me, O Lord, for I cry unto thee all the day.

In other words, to put it simply, obviously, he's just throwing himself on the mercy of God, completely, absolutely. I wonder if I could just bring to you an Old Testament character, an illustration of one who did exactly that thing. Do you remember the story of Hannah in 1 Samuel, in the first chapter? How she longed for a child.

How she was taunted and rebuked by others for her barrenness. One day, you remember, she came to the only place where she thought her prayer might be answered, to Shiloh, and there she poured out her soul to the Lord. In fact, so desperately, that wretched old backslidden Eli thought she was drunk.

How extraordinary. That's exactly how people reacted at Pentecost. When the Holy Spirit fell on the church, they thought they were drunk.

As I say, it was only nine o'clock in the morning. David cried, and Hannah cried, and she was so desperate in prayer, and so unusual to see somebody like that. They thought she was drunk.

Ten times in this psalm, David says, O Lord, O Lord, ten times. Isaiah cried, O that thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down. Hannah, in bitterness of the soul, prayed to the Lord and wept sore, O Lord.

Am I being hypercritical? I hope not. I direct it to my own heart. The O has gone out of our praying.

The desperation has left us. The cry from the depths of our heart, O Lord, has gone. The average church prayer meeting is a deadly thing.

A few prayer requests, and then Mr. So-and-so will lead us in prayer, and brother, does he? He'll pray for about twenty minutes, kills the whole thing. Has the Lord ever taunted you for your barrenness in spiritual living? Has he? Has he ever spoken to you about it? The fruitlessness of your testimony? The barrenness of your ministry? The trouble is that we lie down to it. Hannah refused to do that and pleaded, O Lord.

If you had a church, say, well, I think of St. John's Harbour, the church that I attend. I say to myself sometimes well, say, there are four hundred members, probably more. Supposing every one of those four hundred members, one person a year to Christ, one a year.

And supposing the people who are added, having been one, themselves added one a year. How many members do you think they'd have in ten years' time? Eight hundred and nineteen thousand two hundred. Please don't start working on your computer.

Take my word for it. Why doesn't that happen? I've no answer to that. One person a year to Jesus? Is that too much to ask? Well, if revival hits the country, that would happen.

Here's what David Watson says. What do you do when what you have been taught to believe no longer rings a bell in your experience? You either change your theology to fit your experience and say God is dead because your experience of him is dead, or you keep your Bible theology first for the living God. Psalm 42.

O thou who camest from above the pure celestial fire to impart kindle a flame of sacred love on the main altar of my heart. The language of Wesley. Wesley had, says David Watson, a strange combination of a warm heart and a cool head.

A cool head alone will mean I always play everything safe, never run risks. I arrange for all sorts of open-ended discussions and dialogues and fill up my time with things that are secondary. Anything, in fact, I'm ready to do anything except getting drunk with the Spirit and going out where the action is.

I think we need really, in these days, to think about and pray about it. I have so many, you know, so many churches. I didn't wish to be unkind or speak of any.

Well, some are wonderful, but no prayer meeting on a Lord's Day. Too busy. I've had nearly 50 years in the ministry now, in fact, actually 50.

And I think back into days when I was an apostate in Edinburgh and in Chicago and London. And all the ministry I had in those days, the tremendous sense of grip and spiritual authority that came through it was entirely due to people who never came to the service at all, but went away to a room and prayed for me. Prayed right through from beginning to end.

They did that for C. H. Spurgeon. I've done that for many in other picture. If I really have a burden that the Lord will come down and break the windows of heaven, that would happen.

The only thing near a revival or that was revival that I know in this country was in the Hebrides, some, I suppose, about 20 years ago, Duncan Campbell's ministry. When fishermen went out in boats and suddenly felt the tremendous authority of the presence of God, the public houses were closed and just God swept down in that place. It all ended because some folk came over from the United States to write it up.

It was written up and man began to take a bit of credit for himself. I don't know that I know the answer, but I do know that the answer lies in a disciplined walk with God in a prayer life. David cast himself on the mercy of God.

And then we notice in the next place, then in the third verse, he called upon the Lord in the day of trouble, be merciful, gracious to me, Lord, for to thee do I cry all the day. Now, now, just notice David wasn't content to seek the help of other people. He called personally on the Lord.

Alone with God, he called on him. How often we go to others for counsel and others for help, but how seldom in our real desperate need do we go to the Lord himself. But notice this too.

In this situation of desperate need, as he prayed and made known his decisions and actions, etc., he saw his own heart need. Verse 11. Teach me thy way, O Lord, I will walk in thy truth, unite my heart to fear thy name.

If any of you got the living Bible, it puts it this way. May every fiber of my being unite in reverence to thy name. Oh, I find that very wonderful.

See, in verses 1 through 10, David has been asking God to do something for him. But now, he asked God to do something in him. First it was for him, desperate need.

And as he prayed, then, he says, unite my heart to fear thy name. See what's happened. It always does happen when you pray like David did.

As he sought the Lord and cried to him, God began to speak to him and say, well, David, wait a minute. I want to talk to you about this in your life and about that. I want to talk to you about the place where you haven't been wholehearted in your surrender.

The place where you felt the pull of other things. David, if you want my help, my power, if you want heaven to open upon you and answer, I have to do something in you. First, Lord, unite my heart to fear thy name.

And when I come to the throne in a sense of desperate need, and I turn to the Lord, that covenant-keeping God, and recognize my own position before him, he begins to talk to me. And he begins to say, my child, what about this? What about that? Do you want a miracle? Right. But I only work through clean channels.

Are you prepared for that? Do you want deliverance in your own life? I only meet in power those who have been dealt with by my loving, chastening hand. Years ago now, a very well-known preacher, you'll know his name, I'm sure, Dr. F.P. Meyer, he was a great pastor and minister down in London. And one year, he was invited to speak at Keswick.

And he gave his testimony that year at Keswick. He said, when I received the invitation, there was something in my life that I knew was utterly wrong. Actually, it had to do with his jealousy of C. H. Spurgeon, who was getting most of his congregation.

But there were other things too. And he said, I couldn't accept the invitation. So I decided I'd go up to Keswick in March or April.

And I went up there. And I climbed up one of the mountains, right to the very top. And amazing to say, the night was a full moon, beautiful night, but once a year it would come like that.

And he was there. And he fell down on his face before the Lord, and he prayed all night. And in giving his testimony, he said, you know, I asked the Lord, I said to the Lord, Lord, you've had every key to my heart, except one.

Lord, take the last key. And with a face, I'm told, by Keswick people there, that beamed, absolutely shone the glory. And I said, the Lord never took that key.

Do you know what he did? He took the door out. And instead of the door, ever since there's been a window. And through that window, there shone into my heart the light of the knowledge of the glorious God in the face of Jesus Christ.

That's it. That's it. Lord, take the key.

But more than that, takes the door out. And sends the glory. The glory that I had with my Father, I have given them.

And the Spirit of God is real. You've got the glory. Yes, David was asking now that something should be done in him.

Then you notice, may I just say, don't be afraid of prayer. But remember when you begin to get desperate, that's the kind of thing God does, to bring you into identification with his will. And then David started praying.

Verse 12. I give thanks to thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart. I will glorify thy name forever.

That's tremendous. Up to that point in the prayer, he'd been in agony of need. Now, with the same predicament, and yet with that wonderful relationship in his heart, that God would hear him, and the assurance that God would hear him.

He uses this word now with an ecstasy of praise. Before there's been the least sign of an answer, he began to praise the Lord for victory. Stopped calling and began praising.

Rejoicing in the assurance that the Lord never breaks a promise. Before he calls, we call, he will answer. And David began to praise the Lord before the answer comes.

You see that? I used to be known, I think, as someone who went around saying hallelujah anyway. I thought it was so spiritual. You know, sort of in any situation, well, hallelujah anyway.

You know. And my son-in-law, who perhaps some of you know, has been killed recently, and was a missionary. One day I remember he came up to me and he said to me, Dad, you oughtn't to say that.

I said, why not? I've been saying it for 40 years. Oh, he said, no, you shouldn't say that. What should I say? Oh, you should say, hallelujah, because.

I've got it. Hallelujah. Not in spite of it.

Not to sort of grit your teeth, and sway your shoulders, and put on a brave show. And all the time there's a panic going on inside. Not that.

But Lord, thank you for this that I can't understand, and can't do a thing about. Hallelujah, because. That's a lesson to learn.

To stop crawling, and begin praising. And if you'll allow me just one more moment. Maybe two.

I promise not to be too long. But I must leave you with this, to notice at the finish. Do you notice how he claims his sort of throne rights here? Notice the last verse.

Verse 16. Turn to me, and take pity upon me. Give thy strength to thy servant, and save the son of thy handmaid.

Why did David say that? I puzzled over that quite a while, as I thought about this psalm. Then I turned back in my mind, into Exodus 21, and verse 4. And I read, concerning the slave, this law, if his master has given him a wife, and she has borne him sons or daughters, the wife and the children shall be her masters. And he shall go out by himself.

The wife and the children of the slave shall belong, not to the slave, but to the master. So David says here, Lord, save the son of thy handmaid. I'm only the child of a slave.

Therefore I belong to you. I'm yours. You're my master.

You're my sovereign. You're my Lord. And therefore, humbly, I can boldly claim throne rights.

And I say, Lord, it's your responsibility to protect me, and to get me through, and to deliver me. I don't know how. But I believe in coming to the throne humbly, poor, needy, desperate.

But in claiming boldly, for I belong to Jesus, and he belongs to me. It's his responsibility in any crisis, in any situation, to take me right through and deliver me. It's up to him.

And have I got a God like that, that I can turn to with confidence in any situation? And I can say, Lord, you're mine. I'm yours. You're my owner.

You're my master. Then I can come to him daily as someone who's absolutely helpless and destitute. In fact, as someone whose heart has been broken.

If you come to Jesus like that, I wonder, with that conviction that makes you holy, with simple dependence upon the Lord to see you through, and to pray you through, to bring you through, his responsibility. When I

was in Chicago, I had this. I want to read it to you.

It was given to me by someone, I think, well, no, you're not quite old enough, Gerald Gregson, who used to be a vicar in this country, but who became the leader of Scripture Union in Canada. And we had arranged at Moody Church, the Mid-America Keswick Convention, for a week, and he was one of the speakers. And I knew him well, so we had a good time together, and we talked a lot.

He had a shining face, a wonderful face that just shone with the presence of Christ. But at the end of the week, having been there, he was about to leave and go back to Canada, and he gave me this bit of paper. He said, take this out, and it might help you.

So I read it. I didn't think, I thought it was all right, but I didn't see anything special in it. And then I lost it.

Lost it for years, and suddenly it turned up among piles of sermon notes and so on. And I read it. And I thought, my, I wonder if he meant that for me.

This is what it says. It's words by Amy Carmichael to my dear friend, Ellen. Hast thou no scar? No hidden scar on foot or side or hand? I hear thee sung as mighty in the land.

I hear them hail thee, bright ascendant star. Hast thou no scar? No wound? No scar? Yet, as the master is, shall the servant be. And pierced are the feet that follow thee.

But thane aho, can he have followed far, who has no wound, no scar? God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Jesus Christ, by whom I am crucified to the world and the world unto me. Henceforth, let no man trouble me. I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

I ask you lovingly, you got any marks? I'm not here to speak personally on such a subject. All I know is that for the last year or two, the Lord has put his marks on our family. That has been the biggest test of our lives ever.

Sometimes you're almost apt to say, Lord, that's enough. When we lived at Capenry Hall, we lived in a little wooden cottage, and very nice right now. Ian Thomas, the founder, built it for us, and we lived.

And it hadn't been landscaped. It had to be landscaped. And I didn't know a thing about gardens, so we got a man in, a landscaper, and he came and dug it up, you know, and all the rest.

And he put in a tremendous rosebed, and a friend of mine in London, who's got one of these nursery garden things, sent me a hundred roses. So I didn't know what to do with them, but I gave them to this man. So he put these roses in a rosebed.

They, you know, put them right in, and then surprised me rather by covering them all up with manure. That was very smelly, and just covered the roses. I thought, well, there's not much chance of them there.

And I didn't like to say anything. That was about, oh, I suppose about October. And then the springtime came, and some little heads of roses suddenly began to appear.

I thought that's very promising. And I watched them grow, and they got up about three or four inches. And then this man came back again, and I thought, well, now this is good.

And bless me, he cut all those roses and covered them up again with more manure. Disappeared again. Didn't come back at all.

Towards the end of that summer, there were some quite thick, hefty-looking roses coming up, but so far no signs of a bird. And the next winter, nothing happened. And then the spring came, and up there came, and back he came.

By this time, they were just getting into buds, and looking as if they were going to produce some lovely roses. And would you believe, he cut them all off, shut them up again, hid them down, down they went. And I was really getting a bit cross with him.

I thought, well, look here, you know, we want to have roses here. But I didn't like to say anything, because, you know, because I didn't know anything, because I didn't. So they just went away.

And then, the autumn of that year, that was the third year, I remember. By the autumn of that year, they'd begun to come up. And they stayed up in the winter.

And in the springtime, they shot up. Oh, there must be enough, about six inches. And they had all buds on the sides.

And they were beginning, really, to look like roses that would shoot. And he didn't bother about coming back that spring, didn't see him. But in June, one morning, early, when, you know, in that part of the country, the sun begins to shine, very early in the morning, about four or five o'clock.

And I happened to be up early that morning. And I smelled a smell. And I went to the roses, and there was one magnificent rose, just one.

And there it was. And it looked as if it had been crying, because all the dew was on the petal. And I watched it absolutely amazed.

I had to go up that morning, early to breakfast, so I went up to Capenry Hall and had breakfast. Then I came back and told my wife about this. I said, marvellous what's happening in the garden.

Shouldn't have said anything. And I went off again, I was lecturing. And I came back about noon, after my lectures.

And would you believe it, that rose had gone. And I thought, who on earth has done that? Has that man been back again? And I went into the house, ready to express my mind on that, and I smelt something. Well, the smell was the smell of a lovely rose.

And I went right inside the living room, and there was a great big vase, or vase. And on it, there were all the leaves of this rose. Just the leaves, there, on the vase.

And the whole room was filled with the fragrance of that rose. My wife had done it. And I thought to myself, Lord, how often you've cut, you've gone deep.

And you all say, Lord, stop, I can't take any more. And what's the idea behind it all? He wants us to be fragrant. Wants something of the savour of Jesus himself to get through us.

Not cleverness, but godliness. Something that will speak of Jesus there, and will demand an explanation. You see, he does wonderful things with a broken heart, when all the pieces are in his hand.

And so, Spirit of the Living God fall afresh on me, break me. That's very unworthily put to you, but I just open my heart and say it to you. Trust that it will become true in my own life, and true in yours.

And now we feel that these two days have been abundantly worthwhile, in which somebody can write to me and say, well, thank the Lord. It's no more I who live, but Jesus. And the cross is real in my heart.

And therefore, the Holy Spirit is let loose, and I'm praising the Lord. Let's pray together. I wonder if we might quietly sing the chorus which I have mentioned, Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me.

Somebody strike that chorus up. Spirit of the Living God, Spirit of the Living God, Spirit of the Living God. Thank you, Lord.

Before we call, let us answer. May I trust you, that this time together may be greatly to the glory of the Lord Jesus, to the blessing of our own hearts, and to the panic of the devil, and to the panic of the devil. Lord, may each one of us take action.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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