

The Ministry of Women in the Local Church

by Denny Kenaston

Women have a spiritual ministry in the local church, but it is subject to certain boundaries and limitations set by God.

Duration: 1:10:37

Scripture: Joel 2:28

Topics: "Women"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher reflects on the sad reality of mothers in his previous setting who were too busy with church activities to spend time with their children. He emphasizes the importance of prioritizing one's true ministry, which may not always involve public attention or recognition. The preacher also discusses the concept of different roles and offices within the church, using the example of Philip's four daughters who were known for their prophesying. He concludes by referencing Joel 2:28-29, which speaks of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on all flesh, including sons and daughters who will prophesy.

Transcript

I have a subject that I'd like to give attention to this evening. It has nothing to do with the message that was given on Sunday, but in a sense it does flow out from it. But it's a message that I gave out in Ohio.

As you brethren remember, we discussed a little bit in a brother's meeting that there was somewhat of a question in the fellowship out in Ohio about the place of the sisters in the life of the church. And the questions in particular were whether a sister could speak at all in an assembly or whether she was supposed to be totally silent. With those questions in mind, I was asked to bring a message on the ministry of women in the local church, and I did do that out in Ohio, and I wanted to bring that lesson here.

So, I've been planning for about a month to bring the lesson this evening, not realizing what I would be preaching on on Sunday morning, but they do sort of flow out from the one to the other. The ministry of women in the local church is what we'd like to look at this evening, and I'd like us to begin by reading in the book of Joel. Joel chapter 2 and verse 28 and 29.

Joel 2, 28 and 29. We're going to be teaching here a little while and then open it up for discussion. Hopefully, we'll have time for that.

I believe we will. Joel chapter 2, verse 28. The ministry of women.

And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh, A-L-L flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions, and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids, in those days will I pour out My Spirit. Now, I thought that would be a good place for us to start as we're looking at the ministry of women in a local church. We want to start where Jesus did in the book of Acts when He poured out His Spirit on the 120 that were in the upper room.

Some of those that were in the upper room were women. They were there. They received the same mighty baptism that the men received when they were in the upper room.

However, as we begin to follow some of those women from that place on, we see that their ministry is worked out a little bit different than the ministry of some of the men. For example, it was Peter who stood up and preached the sermon. It wasn't Mary, the mother of Jesus, who stood up and preached the sermon at Pentecost.

It was Peter. But we want to begin here. As we look at the ministry of women, we want to recognize that the ministry of women is very clearly, based on these verses, a spiritual ministry, an anointed ministry, and even a very powerful ministry, because the Spirit of God has been poured out upon them just like upon men.

However, we also want to recognize that God, in His wisdom, and we may not understand all of His wisdom, but God, in His wisdom, has placed some boundaries around the ministry of women. Not only women, but in fact, every one of us, God has placed a boundary around every one of our ministries. Let's turn to 2 Corinthians chapter 10, just to look a little bit at this principle.

2 Corinthians 10. I feel that we need to look at the principle of boundaries before we look at the ministry of the sisters in the local church. Paul, the Apostle Paul, had very clear boundaries in his ministry.

He would have made havoc had he crossed over the boundaries that God placed upon him for his ministry, and I believe that every single one of us need to face that same fact. If we get outside of the boundaries that God has placed on our ministry, it will make havoc among the people of God and in the kingdom of God. But notice what Paul says here, and I'd like you to just note as we read this word measure, it means boundary.

2 Corinthians 10, verse 13. But we will not boast of things without our measure, or outside of our own boundaries, but according to the measure of the rule or authority which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you. And Paul is saying there, I'm not going to boast outside of the area of ministry that God has given to me, but in fact, the area of ministry that God has given to me has reached even unto you.

That's what that verse is saying. For we stretch not ourselves beyond our measure as though we reach not unto you. For we are come as far as to you also in preaching the gospel of Christ, not boasting of things without our measure, that is, of other men's labors, but having hope when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly.

And what Paul is saying there is, he's staying within his own boundaries, and as he speaks, he's speaking about things that God has done in his ministry, and through his ministry, and within the boundaries of his ministry. If you could just imagine a little bit this evening, if the Apostle Paul chose to go outside of the

boundaries of the ministry that God gave to him, we can see very clearly in the book of Acts that God sent him away from the Jews, and told him, I'm sending you to the Gentiles. Go out from here.

Imagine what it would have been like if Paul, knowing the things that he knew, having the revelation that he had of the church, and the oneness of the church, and the freedom of Old Testament laws, if Paul would have stayed in Jerusalem preaching those kind of things, it would have wrought havoc in the kingdom of God. Paul stayed within the boundaries of the ministry that God gave him. And we can learn a lesson from that, that God knows what He's doing when He places boundaries on our ministry, and we can also learn another lesson from it, it does not mean our ministry is limited at all.

It just means that God uses us within the boundaries of the ministry that He gives us. And He can spread you very far within those boundaries, just like He did the Apostle Paul. Also, in Romans, chapter 12, and verse 3 and 4, we see this principle again.

Only this time, Paul is not speaking about his own ministry, but he's giving direction to the church at Rome. He says in chapter 12, verse 3, For I say through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

And then he goes on into discussion about gifts. And what Paul is saying is, stay within the boundary of your own ministry. If God has given you a gift of prophecy, then you give yourself to prophecy.

Don't be over here trying to be a teacher if you're given over to prophecy. If God has given you a gift of teaching, then don't you try to be a prophet if God has given you a gift of teaching. Stay within the boundaries of your own ministry.

And there's some real wisdom in that. I'm sure we would all agree. Okay.

Boundaries does not mean that one is better than another. We need to recognize that. Because God has placed some boundaries around sisters that is different than brothers, that does not mean that God is saying that brothers are better than sisters, that brothers are smarter than sisters, that brothers are more highly honored than sisters.

It just simply means that God, in His wisdom, placed different boundaries. We all have boundaries. You just have different boundaries.

Different measures of faith, even as the Scripture says. Now, there are reasons for the boundaries that God has placed around women. And I'll give you three.

And if you think of some others, just jot it down and we can hear that at the end of the lesson here. Number one reason for these boundaries, because of God's order. Even before the fall, God placed man at the place of authority.

God placed man in the place of responsibility. And God placed man in the place over woman. Even before the fall, man was in charge, Adam was in charge, he was the king over all the earth, and Eve was his helper.

So, number one, the boundaries are there simply because of God's order. Number two, the boundaries are there because the Scripture teaches in Peter that the woman is the weaker vessel. Now, that doesn't mean anything bad, it just simply means you are a weaker vessel.

And because you are a weaker vessel, God, in His wisdom, placed a boundary around you in the ministry that you're able to exercise yourself in. And thirdly, 1 Timothy teaches us that God has placed a boundary there because the woman was deceived and not the man. Those Scriptures are very clear.

Because the woman was easier, because the woman was the weaker vessel, she was more easily deceived, and she was tricked easier, and I believe there's an easier possibility of being tricked into false doctrine if you're a sister than if you're a brother. And because of that, God places boundaries around the sisters. Okay, one thing that I noticed as I studied for this message, that the ministry of women in the local church, for the most part, either directly or indirectly, is a supportive ministry.

It's not a leading ministry, it's not a teaching ministry, it's not a preaching ministry, it's not a forerunner ministry, it's not the kind of ministry that is out in front, it's not a public ministry, it is a supportive ministry. And we'll be able to see that as we go down through these different areas of ministry. You'll see they're all supportive.

The first one we want to look at is simply the ministry of helps. God has given the sisters a ministry of helps. What do I mean by that? Serving in various capacities.

My mind goes to the several illustrations in the Gospels where we can read that there were several women that followed the Lord Jesus wherever they went. Now, I don't see any account of them up preaching or teaching or anything like that, but they seemed to go wherever Jesus went and they ministered to Him. And they ministered to the disciples.

I don't know if they went along and cooked for them and provided food for them. I don't know if they went along to care for their physical needs, wash clothes that needed to be washed or whatever it was, minister to some of the sick that were there, helping them, caring for them. I'm not sure all what it was, but they traveled with Jesus and the Bible says they ministered unto Him.

And I believe it was a supportive ministry that those women had and it was a blessed opportunity for them to be able to travel and go where the Lord Jesus went, but I believe their ministry was supportive with Him. Also, we read in the book of Acts that there were at times certain sisters who traveled in a group with other men with the apostle Paul on different missionary trips and different service endeavors. And again, they were there in a supportive role.

It's very clear to see that when you read in Romans chapter 16, and we're not going to read these verses, but in Romans 16 where Paul is giving a list, giving greeting to quite a list of people, there are several women in that list and you can tell by how he talks about them that those sisters had a supportive role in his life and he wasn't counting them to be second-rate servants of God or anything. He was lifting them up and recognizing the great need that they filled in his life and the lives of those others who traveled with him the way they were able to minister in a supportive way. Turn to 1 Timothy chapter 5. We get a little bit of insight into this supportive ministry in 1 Timothy.

So what are we talking about for the sisters when we speak about a ministry of helps? Visiting sick? Ministering to the poor? Carrying out acts of kindness and mercy? Loving your neighbor? Visiting those in

rest homes? And just simply having a ministry of serving others? These are acts of ministry that are well-pleasing and highly esteemed in the sight of God. Notice what it says in Timothy. Chapter 5, verses 9 and 10.

Now this is speaking about widows and giving qualifications for widows but you can see God's heart about ministry for women in these verses. Verse 9. Let not a woman be taken into the number under threescore years old having been the wife of one man, well reported of for good works, if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work. So that's quite a list of qualifications for the widow who is a widow indeed.

But we can see from that the supportive role that is there. In other words, what God is saying is if she's had a ministry of helps, serving, ministering to people's needs, washing the saints' feet, care for the strangers, giving them lodging, feeding them their food, taking care of them, relieving those that are afflicted, if she's had this kind of a ministry, she's worthy, she should be held in high esteem, she should be placed among the widows in the church, take care of her, feed her, clothe her, make sure she has an apartment to live in, bless her all the rest of the days of her life. She's to be held in high esteem in the congregation because she had a ministry of serving and support while she was younger.

Also, in this area, a ministry of helps comes along those lines also, that of being a wife and serving your husbands. The Scriptures teach that the wife was given to the husband to be a helpmeet. And it's interesting to study the word helpmeet.

The word comforter comes right out of the word helpmeet. And the reason for that is the word comforter means to come alongside. And a helpmeet, when God gave Adam a helpmeet, He gave Adam Eve so she could come alongside of Him and be there to be His support and to be His helper in whatever He was doing.

Before the fall, He was ruling over the world. And she was His helpmeet to come alongside and encourage Him in those things. So, we want to recognize the tremendous ministry that every wife has when she comes alongside of her husband and becomes a support to Him and a help to Him and, yea, washes His hands and takes care of His children and prepares food for Him to eat and keeps His house so that it's orderly.

We want to lift that way up high. That is a ministry. And if you're a sister here this evening and God has given you a husband, you have a ministry that God wants to pour out His Holy Spirit on.

That you can carry it out under the anointing of God's Spirit. It is no little ministry. If you think it is, just ponder for a moment with me what kind of a war there would be if there were no support unit behind the front lines.

There would be no war. There would be no winning of any war if the support unit behind the scenes all of a sudden decided, we're the second-rate soldiers and we have to stay in the back and all we have to do is stay back here and make sure they have fuel and fix their equipment and make sure they have food to eat and all those things. If that support unit all of a sudden developed that kind of an attitude and said, we're done with this stuff and headed for the hills, that would be the end of that battle right there.

They would lose the war. No support unit, no winning of the war. So it's not a little ministry.

But it is a different ministry than what your husband has. It's not a public ministry. It's not out in the front.

You're not up there preaching. You're not out on the street corner hollering about the gospel to all the people that are out there. But nevertheless, you take away that support unit and there'll be no front line ministry at all.

So it's a very important ministry. A ministry of helps. Whether you be married or whether you be a single sister here this evening, you have a tremendous opportunity to get underneath the anointing of God's Spirit in this area right here.

A ministry of helps. I do believe it's so that God gifts more sisters in the area of helps than He does brothers. You'll find the brothers, the preachers, the teachers, the pastors, the leaders, you'll find those gifts flowing in the brothers, not in the sisters.

Because God gifts the sisters in a supportive role. Okay? Second of all, we want to look at the ministry of motherhood. That is a ministry it's very clearly brought out in the New Testament that it's God's will that mothers give themselves to the ministry of rearing godly children.

That is very clear. And I would encourage all of you mothers that are here this evening again, there is a channel of anointing for you from heaven for this very area right here. To rear up those children.

To rear up godly children. And we're not saying anything on purpose about the responsibility of fathers in the home, but I don't believe that God planned for the wife to be the cook and the one who washes the floor and the one who washes the clothes and then just the father, he teaches the children the things of God. I believe every day is a whole new day of opportunity for a mother to pour her life into the guiding of those children in the holy ways of God.

It's a ministry. I think of Timothy's mother and his grandmother. Lois and Eunice, I believe that is the order, they had a very effective ministry.

I think we would all agree here this evening. As they poured the Scriptures into young Timothy, teaching him the ways of God, filling his heart full of the Word of God, that from a child he knew the Holy Scriptures, that were able to make him wise unto salvation. And I believe it was all the efforts that they had that they poured into that boy when he was growing up that made him so usable when he became an adult that when Paul met him, he noticed right away, there is a valuable young man, I want him to go with me.

And he took him with him and made a disciple out of him and later he was one of the strong leaders in the churches. That didn't just happen. It was because there was two women who saw a ministry open for them to put into this little boy the Word of God.

My mind also goes to Susanna Wesley and we could mention many, many others. You think of the men that God had used. Well, it wasn't just a man that God used.

Back there, many years back, there was a godly woman who lived under the anointing of God's Spirit who rocked a little cradle when there was a little baby in there, a little boy or a little girl in there, rocking that cradle back and forth. But it wasn't just a regular woman rocking a cradle. It was a sister who saw that she had a ministry, that she had a call on her life, that there was something that God wanted her to do in the life of this child that was inside that cradle.

And the hand that rocked that cradle ruled the world. And I dare say that many a woman has ruled the world through the cradle because she poured her life into some children, raising them up to be godly. The Catholics know that the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.

Hitler knows, or Hitler knew, that the hand that rocked the cradle ruled the world. And the Communists knew that the hand that rocked the cradle could rule the world. They poured all their attention into little ones.

And I think it behooves us this evening, you sisters, to just recognize the awesome calling, the awesome ministry that God has for you, just with these little ones that are under your care each and every day. Susanna Wesley blessed England with two well-trained, well-disciplined, Bible-filled children. And this is an anointed ministry that God has for women.

And I might say, it's not a little one. It'll take up most of your days and nights for many years. What a sad thing.

And I know we don't face these things as much in the setting that we're in, but what a sad thing as I look back into the setting where I came from. The mothers were, they didn't have time for their children. They were the Sunday school teachers, the Sunday school superintendents, the church secretaries.

They had the women's soul winning clubs and they had all these things and they were very busy in all those things. But they didn't have time to rock that cradle. What a sad thing.

They missed their real ministry. They missed it. Oh, they got to win some souls, that's true.

Oh, they got to teach a Sunday school class, that's true. They got a lot of public attention, that's true. But they lost their children too.

I wonder how many more souls that son could have won who would have been raised right for God. Number three, an area of ministry is the ministry of prayer and prophesying. This also is a ministry that we clearly see in the Scriptures for women.

First of all, a ministry of prayer. Again, we see a supported ministry here. Praying.

Not out in the public, not out up front, but a ministry of praying. Nobody knows you're praying. Nobody hears you praying.

Nobody knows you got up at 4 o'clock to pray. Nobody knows while you're up at 2 o'clock with your baby till 3 o'clock that you prayed while you were awake. Nobody knows those things.

It's a supportive role, but take away all the praying sisters, I wonder what would happen to the church of Jesus Christ if you pull them all away and stop their prayers. So you have a ministry of prayer. And that is a powerful ministry.

You can have, I think sometimes, more effect on the Kingdom of God than the one who stands up and does the preaching. If you're behind the scenes and you found an open avenue of prayer before God, and you bring your prayers up before Him, sometimes I wonder, many times I wonder, when we stand in that day, in that day when God hands out the rewards, who's going to get more rewards? The warrior who prayed behind the scenes or the preacher who got up front and did all the hollering and all the shouting and got all the public attention. I wonder, who will get the more rewards? So you have a ministry of prayer.

It's not a little one. It's very important. Many, many sisters miss this beautiful avenue of ministry and they're unfulfilled because of it.

Many sisters chafe. They chafe in the fellowship that they're in because maybe they see something that isn't going quite the way they think it should go, and in reality, God is revealing it that they might give themselves to prayer over that need. And they go unfulfilled in their life, chafing over this problem or this problem, when God is only revealing it that they may have a ministry of prayer in the church.

My mind goes to Anna. There in the book of Luke, that old prophetess who prayed and fasted as an old woman, an old sister. The Bible says she ministered or she served the Lord with prayer and fasting.

I don't know if you sisters have ever seen that as a vital ministry or not. But the Bible says she ministered unto the Lord and served the Lord with prayer and fasting. That's all she did.

And God thought it was important enough to put it in the Bible and let millions and millions of people read about her. And all she did was pray and fast. That was her ministry.

It's not a little one. It's a very big one. May the Lord open up our eyes and help us to see how things do get done upon this earth.

It's not all by the activity of the men, but it's much by the prayers of the women in the church that things get done. Alright, then also in the area of prophesying. What do I mean by prophesying? I mean speaking forth under the anointing of God's Spirit.

Now here in this area is the area where the controversy comes and we want to look at both of the verses, both of the set of verses that bring some question in people's mind and recognize them both this evening. And I want to give some explanation to it. However, I want to begin by saying I don't feel like I'm an authority on this subject.

I just want to give you some thoughts about it. First of all, we know that 1 Corinthians 11 mentions sisters being veiled and it mentions them being veiled in the context of praying and prophesying. Now, no one here has a problem with the praying part.

But the question comes on the prophesying part. What does that mean? Well, it does mean what it says. Speaking forth under the anointing.

A woman who's going to speak forth under the anointing must have her head veiled otherwise she brings shame to her husband. If she speaks forth under the anointing and her head is not veiled, she brings shame unto her husband. If she speaks forth under the anointing and is not under her husband's authority, she brings shame unto her husband.

I believe both of those are true. Not just a physical covering but the spiritual covering of the authority of your husband. So, this ministry of prophesying is no little ministry and God takes it very seriously.

It is a high honor that God would allow you to open up your mouth and speak forth under the anointing but the direction is clearly given. You must be in God's order if you're going to do that. And that is underneath male authority and with a veiling on your head if you're going to do it.

Otherwise, you bring shame. And it is a shame. Okay? Okay? Now, turn to 1 Corinthians 12.

Let's see, I believe it's 1 Corinthians 14. I'm sorry. 1 Corinthians 14 and verse 34.

We want to read these verses also concerning women speaking. In 1 Corinthians, Paul was giving direction to the church, giving order to the church, and in verse 34 we break in on what he has to say about the sisters. He says, Let your women keep silence in the churches for it is not permitted unto them to speak.

But they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home for it is a shame for women to speak in the church. What? Came the word of God out from you or came it unto you only? If any man think himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.

But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant. Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. Let all things be done decently and in order.

Now, these verses, some, and I would say some, through the church age, the church has... ..side to... ..and forth on this thing, carrying it to extremes. Through the church age, there have been times when these verses were interpreted, this means silence means silence, and women say nothing at all. Personally, I don't believe that's what Paul was saying here.

If you could view the context of an assembly there at Corinth, Paul was saying, let the prophets speak, one by one, and let the other prophets judge. And in those days, a meeting was a lot freer, it was more like our Wednesday night Bible study is when we have an open discussion. Somebody will get up and say a few things, and then the brothers will speak up.

What about this? What about this? What do you think about this? And they'll raise questions, and challenge what was said, and all of these kind of things. That was typical in one of their assemblies. Women were not supposed to do that.

They're supposed to be quiet. And the reason why I believe that's what Paul was saying was because he said that the women were supposed to learn at home, and they were to ask their husbands. Well now, if he meant that they weren't supposed to learn anything at church, that wouldn't make sense.

The context there doesn't make sense if it means they're not supposed to learn anything at church, they're supposed to learn it at home. No, it means if they have any questions, they're not supposed to pipe up and say, but brother, what about this verse? No. That's out of order.

That wouldn't be right. That's shameful. And in that sense, I think every one of us here would say, let not the women speak out in the assembly.

I think we would all agree with that. That would be out of order, and I think most of the sisters in this room would feel out of order to do that. To say, brother Denny, what about this verse? I don't understand that.

What about this verse? And challenge. Now, it's okay for the brethren to do that. Nobody feels uncomfortable with that.

What about this verse? What about this verse? Well, good. What about it? Everything's free that way. But if a sister began doing that, wait a minute.

Something's out of order. That's not being under authority. You go home, and you ask your husband if you have a question.

I believe that's what Paul was saying there. Now, let's turn over also to 1 Timothy 2. And again, I say, I'm not being real dogmatic about this. In 1 Timothy 2, and verse 11.

We want to read from verse 11 through 15. Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression, notwithstanding, she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety. Now here, I believe what Paul is saying is, I believe he's also addressing this whole matter of the women bringing forth questions, but he goes into more detail there and says, don't let a woman teach.

And don't let her speak with any kind of authority to a man. That's out of order. She's not supposed to be in authority over a man.

And I know that most of us here believe that, but it shocks me still when I hear of women who pastor churches with their husbands. And one Sunday, he preaches, and the next Sunday, she preaches. And to imagine a woman getting up behind the pulpit and preaching to the men and telling them what they should be doing and exhorting them and even rebuking them is so far out of line of what God's order is for women.

And that's what Paul was dealing with here. Women are not supposed to teach because the woman was deceived. And she can be deceived again.

And she's not supposed to be handling doctrines and teaching doctrine to the congregation. There's a weakness there. Don't let her teach.

And by the way, don't let her usurp or exercise authority over a man. That's out of God's order. She's to be under subjection and learn from the men.

That's what the Scripture teaches. Okay. In Acts, I can't quote the chapter, but in Acts it says of Philip the evangelist that he had four daughters who prophesied.

Now, how can this be? What were they doing? These four daughters prophesied. In fact, it was such a blessing that God put it in the Bible so that millions of people could read it that Philip had four daughters, not one, but four, and all four of them prophesied or they spoke forth under the anointing of the Spirit and it was so known that it was known. Well, I'm not sure what all that means.

But I know that it was known that these four daughters did prophesy. Why? At the same time, in that very chapter where it mentions that, Paul went to Philip's house and while he was there with Philip the evangelist and these four daughters, Agabus came from Jerusalem and there was a prophecy that God wanted to give to Paul. Who do you suppose God used to give it? Agabus.

I don't understand all those things. God used the man there to give the prophecy to warn Paul about going to Jerusalem. There were four daughters there that prophesied.

Why did God bring Agabus from Jerusalem to prophesy when there were four daughters there that prophesied? I don't know. But I know they prophesied. And Joel says they will prophesy.

Why? The Scriptures teach us in Titus that the older ladies are to teach the younger ladies to be keepers at home, to love their husbands, to love their children, etc., etc. There, God gives a ministry, a preaching ministry, if I can use that term. God gives a preaching or a teaching ministry to the older women that the younger women can also learn from the older women.

David said, I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord.

The humble shall hear thereof and be glad. Oh, magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt His name together. Heavenly Father, we thank You for the victory that we have in Jesus.

We thank You for this psalm of deliverance, this psalm of victory that David has given us. And we pray that today, You'd open up our hearts and our minds to understand the power that there is in being in Christ. And we pray for those that do not know Jesus Christ, maybe driving down the road or just tuning in, or maybe listen regularly, but yet have not received Christ as their Savior, that You would burn into their heart a longing and a desire for the Savior, the lovely Savior, that they would know Him, that they would know Him, that they might have eternal life, that they might be fulfilled and find the purpose in life that You so want us to have.

You want us to have fellowship with You. And Father, we thank You for the precious blood of Christ that was shed for our sins. Thank You that You were crucified, buried, and rose again the third day for us.

And now we commit this time to You. We pray that You would minister to those that are wounded, those that are weary, those that are battle-worn, those that are discouraged, oppressed, and whatever the need, that You would lift them up on wings of eagles. Thank You, Father, in Jesus' name.

Amen. I was meditating earlier this week. Actually, I started on Wednesday morning meditating on this psalm.

And then Thursday, I came back to it again. And Friday, I just came back to it again. And God just began to burn a message into my spirit with this psalm.

And as I meditated on it, actually, I think I took a lot of time Friday and meditated upon it. And God just opened up my spirit to see what a powerful thing it is to have victory. And I want to share this with you.

You can take it. And I believe this will cause you, if you're not living in consistent victory, this will cause you to see more of where consistent victory is, no matter what the circumstances that you're in. There are at least three or four key things in this psalm.

One is the word ALL, which is mentioned several times. And then the other word is DELIVER. Delivered, delivereth, and so forth.

And then the other is CRIED. These are mentioned several times. And then there's one other phrase that's mentioned 16 times, and that is the LORD.

The LORD. I will bless the LORD at all times. 16 times out of 22 times.

So if you want to get your Bible and turn to Psalms 34, I believe God is going to bless you this morning by just meditating on this psalm with me. Now, if you remember, when Moses fought Amalek, this is after they received the water. And, of course, whenever the blessing of God comes, you have to watch out for the enemy.

This is one of the things that we learned not only before revival, but during revival and after revival was the continual moving in of the enemy to try to counterfeit, to try to discourage, defeat. Of course, he continually does that, but it's the counterfeiting that's the most devastating work of the enemy in the work of revival and in the work of the church or in the work of the Lord anywhere. But if you remember when Moses was fighting Amalek, whenever he held his hands up, they had the victory.

Whenever he let them down, they began to lose. But here's the perspective. They had the victory as much as they wanted it.

As much as he held his hands up and then finally Aaron and Hur recognized that they had to help Moses. And this is what we have to do with our leaders. We must help them.

They can't do it all alone. As a matter of fact, none of us can function alone in the Christian life. We need each other.

Unless God has called you for some specific prophetic ministry like in Elijah or John the Baptist, but then you're never alone because you have the Lord. But they could have as much victory as they wanted. And I believe this principle is for us.

We can have as much of the victory as we want. And if you remember, this psalm came out of a hardship with David. He was being chased by Saul now.

He had to flee. He went and got some bread from the priest. And then that caused some problems because Doeg, which was fearful, that's what his name means, was there and he went back and told Saul.

And so as he's fleeing, he gets before the king Abimelech and finds out, well, he's in trouble here. He's in real danger. And so he pretends to be a madman.

And the king says, we don't need any more crazy guys around here. Let's get rid of them. And so he escaped.

And out of that came this psalm as he recognized God's hand in delivering him. I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise shall continually be in my mouth.

Why bless the Lord at all times? Why do it continually? I want to take you back over for a second. I'm going to do this every now and then to different verses. In 2 Corinthians 2, verse 14, Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, said, Now thanks be unto God which always causes us to triumph in Christ and make it manifest the savor of His knowledge by us in every place.

Did you know that this came immediately after there seemed to be some kind of confusion or conflict because he came to Troas to preach Christ and to preach the gospel there. And he said, A door was opened unto me of the Lord. But yet he comes along in the next verse and he says, I had no rest in my spirit because I found not Titus my brother.

But taking my leave of them, I went forth from thence into Macedonia. And then he said, Now thanks be unto God which always causes us to triumph in Christ and maketh manifest the savor of His knowledge by us in every place. Have you ever thought about that? I believe that that was one of those situations where he realized that God wanted him to do something there, but he didn't have peace in his heart at that time, so he moved on.

And many times God will reveal to you something He wants to do, but you do not have the peace of the Lord yet to do that, so you have to move on and wait for His timing. And then the perspective then of Paul was, no matter what, I have the victory. Now thanks be unto God which always causes us to triumph in Christ and maketh manifest the savor of His knowledge by us in every place.

So no matter what the circumstance, you have the victory, even though it doesn't look like you have it. You have it. This is the perspective.

Now I've got two questions to ask you. One, is there any time a believer is not in Jesus Christ? Is there ever any time a believer is not in Jesus Christ? This is a doctrinal thing. The answer, of course, is no.

There's never any time when a believer is not in Jesus Christ. If you go over to Ephesians in chapter 1, verse 3, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. If you're in Christ, is there ever a time that you are not blessed with these spiritual blessings? Well, of course, the answer is no.

Verse 6, To the praise of the glory of His grace wherein He hath made us accepted in the gloved. As a believer, is there ever a time when God has not accepted you? Well, the answer is no. Even if you're in sin, God still accepts you because your acceptance is not based on your performance.

It's based on the performance of Christ on the cross and the blood of Christ was shed. We're accepted by the performance of Christ. Now, let me flip this over, and there's more verses of being in Christ.

Verse 10 is another one in verse Christ. But let me ask you another question. Now, you think about this one.

Since we're in Christ, we're blessed in Christ, we're always accepted in the Lord, is there any time a believer is not in victory? Is there ever any time that a believer is not in victory? Well, the answer is yes and no. The answer is yes in the aspect that like Moses, they had the victory. But the answer is no.

They only had the victory as long as they applied their authority. And as Moses applied his authority, lifted up the rod, he had it. And this is the principle of Psalms 34.

And as we go through here, I believe God's going to bless you as you begin to see this in whatever situation you are in, no matter how bad it looks or maybe how insignificant it looks. We are to continually bless the Lord at all times and claim our victory. Claim the victory that Christ has secured for us at the cross.

As we go through the passage, I believe God's just going to open up to you to see this. And whatever you're struggling with, God wants to move you from the position of struggle to the position of rest. No matter how bad a situation maybe you've got yourself into, and most of the times we have problems, we've got ourselves in there because we wouldn't listen to God.

We wouldn't obey Him. Now, if you remember in Acts 7 when Stephen was stoned, did he have the victory? Yeah, he had the victory. It didn't look like he was having the victory.

It looked like he had the defeat. But he had the countenance of Christ on his face. He had the glory and the power of the Lord in his life.

And so he had the victory. It didn't look like he was having the victory, but he has the victory. And this is the position of blessing the Lord at all times.

Once we cease to bless the Lord, then we begin to agree with the enemy that he has the victory. The key, I believe, to this whole psalm is at all times. Whatever time we don't praise, whatever time we don't believe, whatever time we don't give God the glory, that's the time that we give Satan ground to come in.

So it's all times. If you'll notice, we read up to verse 3. I'm going to continue on in verse 4. I sought the Lord, and he heard me and delivered me from all my fears. Actually, there are several major breakdowns of deliverance here.

Here's the one from your fears, from all your fears. Any fears you still got, you need to get rid of them and come and commit that area to the Lord because the Bible says that he delivers us from all our fears. I sought the Lord.

That's the key. Seeking Him. I sought the Lord, and He heard me.

And then believe that He hears you. Like it says in 1 John, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. Believe that He hears you.

It's like Hebrews. He that comes to God must believe that He is and that He's the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. So you seek Him, and then you believe that He hears you.

I sought the Lord, and He heard me. Verse 4 is where we're at. And then what? And delivered me from all my fears.

We seek Him. He hears. He delivers.

Look at verse 5. They looked unto Him and were lighted, and their faces were not ashamed. We look unto Him. Like Peter, walking on the water.

It's the same. He could walk on water as much as He wanted to. But when He decided that He wasn't going to keep His eyes on the Lord, He lost the victory of walking on the water.

This principle is all throughout Scripture. We have as much victory as we want. But we can have all of it if we want.

Like Stephen. They may have ruined his clothes. They may have ruined his body and whatever.

But he had the victory. There wasn't anything they could do to stop him from having the victory. And because of his death, it just brought tremendous power in the church.

Now, look at... There's a little thing here I noticed this morning. How it said that they were lighted. This poor man cried unto the Lord, heard Him, and saved him out of his troubles.

Verse 5. They looked unto Him and were lighted, their faces were not ashamed. That was over in 36 this morning. And verse 9. Where it talked about, For with thee is the fountain of life.

In thy light shall we see light. Why is it some people seem to have a darkness on their countenance? It's because they're not living in the presence of the Lord. Those that live in the presence of the Lord will see light and they will have light.

Like Moses when he came down from the mount. He had the glory and the glow of God on his face. He didn't recognize it until he began to get all this reaction around him.

But he had one glorious sunburn. Wow! And that's what we're to have, is the sunburn of God on our life. Now notice in verse... We go to the second, in verse 6. We go to the second deliverance.

The first one was the deliverance from fear. Then the next one in verse 6. This poor man cried and the Lord heard him and saved him out of all his troubles. This is the third all, by the way.

The first one was we're to bless the Lord at all times in verse 1. The next one in verse 4. He delivered me from all my fears. Then the third one is all his troubles. What did he do? He cried.

This poor man cried. One of the reasons that many do not have the victory is because they will not be a poor man before God. Will not recognize themselves as needy.

This poor man cried and the Lord heard him. Here again, it's basically the same. We seek him or we cry to him.

This poor man cried and the Lord heard him. The Lord always hears and saved him out of all his troubles. Isn't that neat? You can have it.

You can have it even like David. There he was in a jam and the Lord did something for him. Now look at verse 7. The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him and delivereth them.

Here's another deliverance. The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him and delivereth them. Who does God surround with angels? Those that fear Him.

Those that fear other things are going to be surrounded by other angels and you're not going to like those. That's what they're doing. Actually, the only power they have is the power of suggestion that God's not going to meet your needs.

God is not going to answer you in this situation. God doesn't love you. And all these lies that these demons will throw out to you.

But look to the Lord. The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him and delivereth them. And delivereth them.

Think about that. How many times out of 1,000 will God deliver you when you look to Him, you trust Him? 1,000 times out of 1,000 times. In other words, God bats 1,000.

You know, if you go play ball and you start off with 1,000, it don't take you long to get your average cut way down. Just a couple, three swings and foul balls and strikeouts and your average is way down. But God's average is 1,000% on delivering us.

And you can have as much deliverance as you want. He says, all his troubles, all my fears. So it's up to us to receive if we want it.

You know, you think about Romans 8.28, a tremendous passage. Romans 8.28, actually 32 and 35. The word all is used three times in 28.

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God. There again, there's the perspective. No matter how bad it looks, we know that all this stuff is going to work out for good.

All things work together for good to them that love God. There's a key. Maybe things are not working out good in your life.

You need to look inside, really, and say, do I really love God? Or is it just myself? But all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to His purpose. Then if you go down to verse 32, matter of fact, in 31, there's things again. What shall we say then to these things? What about these things crushing in your life? And maybe there's a big thing that's crushing you and you feel like you're just almost ready to lose your breath.

Well, come back to Psalms 34.1. Begin to bless God and praise Him and thank Him for the victory out of that oppression and that pressure. And He will. Because He says in 31, if God be for us, who can be against us? There is the perspective of victory, of lifting up your rod, taking your authority against the enemy.

Look at verse 32. He that spared not his own son but delivered him up for us all. Did it look like Jesus had the victory on the cross? No.

And when you go to the cross, I guarantee you, it won't look like you have the victory from outward appearance. But you will have the victory if you will go to the cross and die. Jesus will live His life through you and He will get the victory.

What shall we say to these things if God be for us in 31? Who can be against you? Nobody. 32. He that spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all.

How shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? There's the all things. And if you go down to 35, who shall separate us from the love of Christ? And this doesn't say, God's not saying that you're not going to have problems. Actually, it's saying that through the problems, we have the victory.

Because He says in 35, who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long. We are counted as sheep for the slaughter. Then verse 37.

Nay, in all these things we are what? We are more than a conqueror. Let me tell you something. In the battles, the conqueror, he got the victory.

He was the winner. He got the spoil. He got the glory.

But listen, God says that we are more than a conqueror. That means that we are exceedingly beyond the conquering. This is why Stephen had the glow and the glory and the power of God on his life, because he was more than a conqueror.

They thought they were getting the victory. No. They wasn't getting anywhere.

It may have looked like it. But it comes down to in Christ, in 30, nor hieth nor death nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord. It's all a matter of recognizing your position.

Do you recognize your position? If you don't recognize your position, and position, by the way, my friends, in battle is everything. I spent almost a year and a half of my life in Turkey for this one thing of position. We had to have a military position that was necessary in that part of the country, and my whole 18 months of my life was on this one thing, position.

And they told us what was going on. And position is key. Your position in Christ is vital.

You are there. But to recognize it's there, you know, if you give me \$100 and you go stick it somewhere and you never tell me about it, I'll never enjoy it. You tell me about it, I'll go get it and enjoy it.

Have it spent up pretty quick too. And this is what it is. God has given us the blessing.

He's given us the victory. He's given it all and He's taught us about it. But if you won't go get it, it's your problem.

You can sit and sulk. You can be oppressed and discouraged and defeated, but you don't have to be. You have the victory.

Now, going back to the Psalms. Going back to the Psalms. While you're going back there, there is just something I thought about that I really like.

It's over in, I don't know if I can get there, in 1 Peter 5-10, I think it was. But the God of all grace who has called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that you have suffered a while. God may be allowing you to go through something.

After that you have suffered a while. Remember the passage that says this too shall pass? This applies. After that you have suffered a while, make you perfect, established, strengthened, and settled you.

And maybe God's letting you get sifted and sorted. And maybe it's saddening you. Whatever.

But after a while, it's going to stop. And you're going to understand and you're going to see. Now, back to the Psalms.

In verse 8, Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is the man that trusted in Him. How do you taste? You try to get a little child to taste something.

Oh, they got something in their mind about it. They didn't like the color. They didn't like the smell.

They didn't like the way you dished it up or whatever. And they may not eat that for years. You and I have done that too when we were kids.

We wouldn't like this or that. And finally when we taste it, wow, mmm, yum, yum, that's really good. What's wrong with me? And boy, then they'll like it the rest of their life.

Oh, taste. Once you taste the Lord, you taste His loving kindness, you just taste and see how good He is to you, then it will encourage you. Thy righteousness is like the great mountains.

Thy judgments are a great deep. Oh, Lord, Thou preservest man and beast. Listen to this.

Psalms 36.7 How excellent is Thy loving kindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings. Trust Him. Learn.

Taste the Lord. Taste and see that He is good. Are you trusting Him? Trust Him.

Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good. Then what do you get? Well, you get blessed. Blessed is the man that trusteth in Him.

Verse 9 Oh, fear the Lord, ye His saints, for there is no want to them that fear Him. Verse 10 The young lions do lack and suffer hunger, but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing. How do you fear Him? It's by seeking Him.

You seek Him. What's the result? You won't lack any good thing. Well, it looked like Peter was really lacking some stuff.

No. He wasn't lacking stuff when he went through the prison sentence. Say, well, boy, God didn't cover you today.

You got thrown in jail. Well, it may look like it. So they just went to praising God and, you know, pretty soon the whole place was busted up.

And this is what you'll do. The victory of Christ in your life will bust up the situation that you're in. And, you know, you may have to pray a long time.

Praise a long time. Think about George Mueller praying for, what was it, 50-something years for this one guy to be saved. Why'd he keep on doing it? He believed God was going to save him.

And two of them, one got saved, I think it was at the funeral, and one after he died. He had the victory for their souls. You know, we need to believe that for the lost, for unsaved relatives and things, we need to believe, we need to pray the victory right into their life.

And it'll make a difference. Look at verse... You know, many times we think God's holding back a good thing from us. Back when I was in Bible college, we were living in a converted turkey coop.

My wife and I had just gotten married, been married about three months, and then we went off to Bible college. I'd switched over to another one. We were living in a converted turkey coop out in the mountains of Colorado on the edge of the foothills there out near from Denver.

But it was beautiful out there, but we just lived in basically a shack. It was clean and comfortable, and you could see winter right through the walls almost. But one day, a lady come out that was a friend of the owner of that place, and she was very wealthy.

She owned big apartment complexes in Denver. PSYDE II He that desireth life and loveth many days that he may see good, keep thy tongue from evil and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil and do good.

Seek peace and pursue it. The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are open unto their cry. You know? The Lord's saying here, you better watch your tongue.

Not only should we not complain, but we shouldn't complain against others. Speak evil of no man. Titus 3.2 The Lord told us.

And He says, if you'll seek peace, you don't, if you, you know, if you think about it, we're supposed to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. If you see somebody in trouble, pray for their peace. You pray for the peace of God to come into their lives.

If you'll seek peace, you'll find it. The eyes, the ears, and the face of God are all mentioned here. In verse 16 it says, the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

To cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. If somebody's giving you a hard time, don't focus on them. Look at the Lord.

Look in His face. You know, if you're looking at somebody that's in bad shape pretty soon, you're going to look like them. That's why you don't look in the mirror too often.

Look in the mirror of God's Word. And, you know, we're changed into His image from glory to glory. But we cry unto Him.

Verse 15, His ears are open unto their cry. The face of the Lord is against them that do evil. To cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.

And 17, the righteous cry. That's the third time we've been crying out. It's mentioned in this passage.

Verse 6, verse 15 and 17. The righteous cry. And listen.

And the Lord heareth, have you heard that before? And delivereth them out of some of their troubles. Is that what it says? Nope. That's one of them new versions.

No, it's all their troubles. If you're not getting delivered out of a trouble, then you're not believing that God's delivering you out. You have the victory.

It's up to you to take it. Wow. Isn't this stuff for you? It's for me.

And notice verse 18. The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart. And save us such as of a contrite spirit.

The Lord's near to who? Those with a broken heart. You know, it's humbling to just take it and be quiet. It was humbling to Jesus.

I mean, He could have called 10,000 angels or 10 billion angels down and they would have just blown that place to smoke around there as soon as they stuck one thorn in Him. But no, He went through the humbling of the cross. And if you'll go through the humbling of the cross, humble yourself before the Lord.

Have this contrite spirit. You know what a contrite spirit is? I believe it's being crushed to powder. Being broken where you are just nothing.

It's crushed to powder literally what that means. Isaiah 57 and verse 15. For thus saith the High and Lofty One, One that inhabited Eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high...

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