

The Ministry of Restoration - Part 1

by Dick Hussey

The sermon emphasizes the importance of approaching God for restoration and deep communion, drawing from the messages in the Book of Jeremiah.

Topics: "Prayer Life", "Healing Ministry"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by describing a hot summer afternoon in a garden where people are sweating and wearing shorts. He emphasizes the importance of spending time on one's knees in prayer before God. The speaker then moves on to discuss the story of Peter and John in Acts 4, where they are challenged about the healing of a man. Peter boldly proclaims that it was through the name of Jesus Christ that the man was healed. The sermon concludes with a brief mention of Daniel in the book of Daniel, who prayed three times a day despite facing opposition. The speaker encourages listeners to seek the beauty of the Lord in their lives.

Transcript

Jeremiah chapter 30, and we'll read from 17 to 21, only five verses, 17 to 21. For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the Lord, because they call thee an outcast, saying, This is Zion, whom no man seeketh after. Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents, and have mercy on his dwelling places.

And the city shall be builded upon her own heap, and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof. And out of them shall proceed thanksgiving, and the voice of them that make merry. And I will multiply them, and they shall not be few.

I will also glorify them, and they shall not be small. Their children also shall be a support time, and their congregation shall be established before me, and I will punish all that oppress them. And their nobles shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them, and I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me.

For who is this that engages his heart to approach unto me, saith the Lord?" This book of Jeremiah is a very outstanding book. It may take you by surprise if I tell you that it's the longest book in the whole Bible. The Psalms, as you know, is the compiling of several books into one.

And although Isaiah has 66 chapters against the 52 of Jeremiah, Jeremiah's are much lengthier, so in all it is in fact the longest book in the whole Bible. His figure is a really outstanding one, and he had what we might perhaps in a human way say the most handless ministry, in that he came into the limelight at the very end of the testament of Israel, when everything was literally and virtually going to pot. The last great king, Josiah, is still there.

His revival has brought some improvement, but soon after he's gone, declension sets in again, and he has a message of condemnation, of judgment. He sees it coming from the Lord, those armies of the Chaldeans from the north, and under Nebuchadnezzar, they're simply to besiege the city, to invade it, destroy it, ransack the temple, burn it up, take all the sacred golden and silver and brass vessels away to Babylon, and leave a tale of woe and misery and sorrow and heartbreak that's almost indescribable. In the book of Jeremiah, you will find a vast majority, most of it is along that line of judgment, but however, as you study the book and as you look into it prayerfully, you'll find here and there those tremendous seeds of truth, those utterances that come from the type of man that you know that is speaking and writing and living in God.

And he says things that come by the eternal spirit with such a depth, I must say, for practically a whole month I've been drinking from this tremendous fountain, and how it's blessed me and uplifted me. And in the middle of all this tale, and he had to follow it to the bitter end, the very worst, you know, the good figs as you find around chapter 23 or 24, they're carried away captive. The bad figs, the worst of the lot, are left behind.

And again, the tale of woe, rebellion, and disobedience goes on and on and on till this remnant, when they're told, stay in the land, I'll still bless you, I'll still look after you. No, they, in utter rebellion, and of God ending up having his own way with his dear people. And these chapters are perhaps worth the closest study.

One of the things that you'll notice is that 32 and 33, with amazing promises, he received while he was in prison. As I say, in the darkest hour, and it's that God that never gives up, that having put the hand to the plow, as we heard in a prayer earlier on, he will not turn back, he will not give up, and he will have his blessed designs of good and of glory for his dear chosen people. So, we've read these verses, then, from 17 to 21, and there is much more promise, of course, in not only this chapter, but all the rest of the four golden chapters, as we call them.

But I'd like to center our attention from now on, on the second half of verse 21. I'll just read it again, and I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me. For who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me, saith the Lord? I don't know how your Bible reading, how your time with the sacred book works, but with me it works by an inner principle, as I'm reading and studying after having worshipped and loved the Lord, and refresh myself in prayer.

Something inside in my heart seems to warm up, and words stand out in sharp relief, a light is kindled by the Spirit, and I'm absolutely drawn by those words. I know God is saying something, and I must stop reading further, I must pause there, and really open my spirit, and open my ears, and open my eyes to what the Spirit is trying to say. And this happened to me, I think it was day before yesterday, it happened again this morning, or this afternoon, these words, who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me, saith the Lord? And it's preceded by the words, I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me.

And it's this that I want to major on this evening, about a life of really approaching the Lord, really getting to grips with union and communion with that God whom we so love, and to whom we owe it all, in a real deep way that will be transforming, that will be inspiring, that will be releasing, that will be life and glory to us. Some of you, I'm sure, have come across circles where it is rightly said, well, prayer, spending time with the Lord, my brother, we're always in the Lord's presence. I never go out of the Lord's presence, I'm constantly in fellowship with the Lord.

And it sounds very white, very plausible, shall I say, but I'm afraid from my observation that kind of remark is often like a subtle screen, a smokescreen, to simply hide up the fact that in terms of really being alone with your God, really getting into the holiest of all by the Holy Ghost, there is little or nothing, there's no death. I know there is a case, of course, when I'm at the wheel driving, or when I'm walking, taking a stroll after lunch, or whatever I may be doing, being in communion, sweet, with the Lord, conscious that he's around us. But, oh, there is a great difference between that and just leaving everything else to one side, and locking yourself out in that inner chamber, and drawn, drawn by those love chords, go and spend a really good long while with the one you love most, to let him love you, to love him, and to know those gushings of tender love just flow, and flow, and flow through your inner depth.

Let's have a look at this then, and I'd like us, if you please keep the page, because we shall keep returning to Jeremiah 30 and 31, but now turn to Psalm 65, and it's verse 4 we want, this lovely psalm by David, Psalm 65 and verse 4. 4 Blessed is the man whom thou chooseth, and causeth to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts. We shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple. Now, before we go on, just a little clarification.

We come across here this expression, that he may dwell within thy courts, and we'll be having a look at Moses in a few minutes, and perhaps a Daniel too, and we know, don't we, that's the Old Testament, and the language changes, and of course we're not in the outer courts. By the grace of God, by the new and living way, there's a way into that holiest of all in the divine presence. But I feel that we can break free from that, which can in a way be a bondage, and just see the Bible as a whole, and see the new in the old, and not be worried because it says courts instead of something that's perhaps more New Testament.

What David is telling us here is that if there's a man, or if there's a woman, that God sets his eyes on him or on her, and God causes them, draws him to approach unto him, and to be near to the heart of God, to be right in the Lord's presence, that man, that woman, bless his name, shall I say, is a lucky man, a lucky woman, a blessed man, a blessed woman. And he writes impersonally, he goes on then to say, we, because he has known himself to be that man, and he knows the rewards, and the rewards are that we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple. When we do that, when we live that life, we're not going to come out high and dry, and frustrated, and wondering why, and hungry, and thirsty.

We're going to come out blessed, and satiated, and filled, and really thrilled, and blessed and blessed in every way. Now, turn back for a minute to Jeremiah, and we'll have a look on that very same page, but to the right of it, at the beginning of chapter 31. 31, 3, The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love.

Therefore, with lovingkindness have I drawn thee. It is this heart of God that tells us that he's loved us. He's loved you and me with an everlasting love.

He loved us before the world began. He loved us before we were born. He loved us when we were speakeed into sin, and darkness, and rebellion.

He loved us when we were born again. He loves us now. He'll love us tonight when we fast asleep.

He'll love us first thing in the morning when we wake up, and he'll be loving us for millions and billions of years, world without end, that great, great love of God. And therefore, because he loves us so, he said, therefore, you know, love will only do the best, the highest, the kindest for the one it loves. And he tells you, because I love you, because I love you.

With lovingkindness I'm going to draw you to me, the fountain of living waters, the God of eternity. The biggest, the greatest, the sweetest thing that I can do for you is to draw you away from all errors and bring you right to my very heart, so that you'll be right by my side. And boy, oh boy, there you'll know what it is to be blessed, and blessed, and blessed, and blessed.

Still keeping the page, may we come to John chapter 6 for a minute. John chapter 6, verse 44 and 45. John 6, 44.

No man can come to me except the Father which has sent me draw him, and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, and they shall be all taught of God. Every man, therefore, that has heard and has learned of the Father cometh unto me.

And it's this word again of the Father drawing. It cannot be by effort, it cannot be by your own ability or special devotion, there is an inner drawing of the Father of all, tender but wonderful. You ask me how to explain it, it can't really be explained, but it's something that either a man or a woman asks, or he hasn't got it.

There comes a time when after having done the chores and all the responsibilities of the day, you left with a free hour, and some find to pick up a magazine, others switch on the telly to watch a film, and others have a social, or talking, or chit-chat, you name it. But the man, the woman that is drawn of the Father finds they can't go that way. There's a quiet, tender, almost imperceptible, and at the same time irresistible drawing that tells you that that's not your place.

Your place is to go and immerse yourself on your own with your Jesus, with your Jesus, because he's so precious. There's nothing in life, nothing, nothing that can compare with being right, right close to his blessed heart. And so this inward drawing, longing, it'll take you to your own little chamber, and there you'll shut the door and gladly bury your head, and your heart, and your whole being into that sacred, blessed presence of your Lord.

But God doesn't only do it in this tender way. You know, sometimes it's hard for God to really get hold of us, and as he loves us so, he doesn't give up. His first method is what I've just said, that tender, loving kindness that says, my dear one, I've got the best, the sweetest, the most wonderful thing in life for you.

Will you have it? Will you be drawn to me? Will you come and, oh, let me love you, and you come and love me, and come and know me real in depth? So many of us can be at times insensitive, foolish, blind, deaf. We can be attracted by this, that, and the next, and so he has other ways. And let us have a look at Hosea chapter 2, a very well-known verse, often quoted by the sisters especially.

Hosea chapter 2, and it's verse 14. Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her heart, or simply unto her, or as the margin will give you, to her heart. Now, by this we don't mean that we must seek a wilderness experience, and try and justify it, and so on.

But isn't it true that so often when we don't respond that gentle, tender way, then God will just go us to wilderness, and we'll run dry, and we'll have heartbreaks, disappointments, things will go wrong. We'll begin to thirst, and to hunger, and we'll be sorrowful, and our dreams, and perhaps our visions, just see them shatter to fragments. We'll be in a wilderness where it all seems lost and gone, and there's something in us.

We'll cry for the fountain of life, we'll cry for the God who alone, who alone can be reality, and joy, and everything to us. And there in that wilderness, and we cry to him, and we come to him, and at long last we open our heart, and we go for him, and he knows now that we're doing it with all our hearts, in real earnest. Oh God, I've traded away my time, I've wasted wonderful years of opportunity.

Lord, I've missed the way, but oh God, in this wilderness, here's my big cry, come to me, and bless his name. We cry, and cry, and he'll come, hallelujah, and he'll speak to our hearts, words that will melt us right inside, all that hard core, that harsh, hard and harshness, that thing you know, will be shattered by the warmth of his love. Something will snap inside, and that speaking of God will allure us, and draw us, and begin to change the situation.

Let's go back now, still keeping, if you have a ribbon, or a page, or a paper, whatever, on Jeremiah 30, but let's have a look at Psalm 27. We have this, Dear Spirit of David, Yes, he put his big foot in it, he went wrong in the case of our Sheba, but my, what a love for the Lord he had, what a precious spirit. And read verse 4, Psalm 27, One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.

And verse 8, When thou saidst, Seek ye my face, my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek. These were the words written by a king. He must have been a busy man, lots of things on the agenda, lots of claims on his time, a man that fought on the battlefield many, many bloody battles and wars, and yet there was something in his heart that makes him write these amazing words, One thing have I desired, that will I seek after.

You see, it's the man, it's the woman that sees that it's the one most wonderful thing above everything else, and I'm going to go for that, I'm going to seek after it, I'm not going to let the devil fool me, I'm not going to let anything else cheat me and deceive me and throw me away, I'm going to make that the target and the goal of my life, that every day of my life, I'm going to go right into the house of the Lord, and I'm going to spend a good while with him, and I'm going to just enjoy this unspeakable beauty and light. Oh, hallelujah. It's the spirit, the heart of a man that's been so won over, so captivated, that nothing, nothing, nothing will rob him of that.

He must have it, if he's to go on living and being the man God wants him to be, and being true to his conscience, and all else, he must, he must, he must have that blessed portion. Now notice, he says that I may behold, or to behold the beauty of the Lord, or as the margin gives it, the delight of the Lord. Both are very apt and very wonderful to behold, not with a natural eye, but with the eyes of the Spirit.

Last weekend we were at a retreat with the Spanish-speaking church in London, which was held in a little Catholic place near St. Albans. I think it's known as the All Saints Pastoral Center, and some very fine folk

there. I was looking at the library, and suddenly my attention was caught by the title on a book, large letters.

I could see the face of Christ. I said, oh, that must be wonderful, the face of Christ. So, I got hold of the book, and I'm not saying it in a critical way, but I couldn't believe it.

Pages, and pages, and pages. But you know what the pages were? On beautiful paintings of the imagined face of Jesus Christ. Now, that's the crown of the earthly mind not understanding the way of God, or the way of his Spirit.

If you read your Bible well, you find we've got four biographies of Jesus Christ, haven't we? Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Isn't it significant that in none of them will you find the slightest hint of any physical outward feature of Jesus Christ? We cannot tell whether he was short, tall, slim, or otherwise, whether he was fair, blue-eyed, black-eyed. God has moved those writers by the Holy Ghost to be absolutely silent, and not say one word about what our Jesus looked like.

But yet, when it comes to depicting his inner being, his unspeakable grace and glory, they really go to town. They reveal to us the grace, and the wonder, and the love, and the manhood, and the valor, and the meekness, and the glory. And we could go on endlessly of that blessed, blessed Lord.

With this in mind, will you turn to Psalm 90? And it's the last verse, Psalm 90, and let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us. Hallelujah. I feel this verse is a lovely complement to what we've just read, to behold the beauty of the Lord.

And Moses, or whoever wrote this psalm, tells us, let the beauty of the Lord shine upon us. I know that by new birth, of course, we are partakers of the divine nature, but I don't believe that it all happens automatically by new birth. New birth has to be followed by growth, by development, by fighting your battles, by proving your Lord, by moving in God, by growing and coming into full manhood in Christ.

And there is a lovely principle that when you look at something fixedly, with determination, and you set your eyes on it, that thing that you're looking at, whether you realize it or not, will somehow be reproduced inside you, for good or for evil. I remember some years ago when my dear parents, who are now both with the Lord, had been married about 70, sorry, 30 years, and I was in my mid-twenties. And we were visited by an American missionary couple who'd never met my parents before.

And you know the remark they made? Why, you, husband and wife, you look rather brother and sister, you look so alike. And I know when they started on the way, they were quite different, quite different from each other. But so much living together, looking at one another, somehow they began to grow and develop a likeness, a likeness.

It's said of Hudson Fader, who spent the best part of his life in China, that after being many years there, his eyes looked like Chinese eyes. And I tell you the truth, I see Andy Hutchins come back, and he looks no longer an Englishman to me, he looks more of a Swede. And I'd say the same about Fred Tomlinson, I hadn't seen him for years, and to me he's got, that man's got Canadian features.

I may be wrong, but to me it seems very clear. And it's just this, it's no good saying, let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me, just singing it like that, and well, it's going to happen because he sang it so brightly. How is that beauty of Jesus, that beauty of the Lord, to really shine into our lives, and shine through our faces, and through our beings, and out of our eyes, if it's not by being with the Lord, and beholding the Lord, and

his beauty in that wonderful, sacred intimacy.

Let's now move back to Exodus 34, and again this is Moses. You know, sometimes I feel a little sympathy with Moses, he seems to get it in the New Testament quite a bit. And not as Moses, who covered his face, not as a servant of Moses.

And I'm glad when we read on in Revelation, we find they sang the song of the Lamb, and of Moses, the servant of the Lord. Hallelujah, all the benefits of the new had transferred to dear Moses, and praise God, don't you worry, God won't leave him in the old. He was the lawgiver, but what a man, what a man.

Just read with me chapter 34, verse 28. And he, Moses, was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights. He did neither eat bread nor drink water, and he wrote upon the tables of the covenant the Ten Commandments.

And it came to pass, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hands, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wished not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him. And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come nigh him. And Moses called unto them, and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation would turn unto him, and Moses talked with them.

And afterward, all the children of Israel came nigh, and he gave them in commandment all that the Lord had spoken with him in Mount Sinai. And till Moses had done speaking with them, he put a veil on his face. But when Moses went in before the Lord to speak with him, he took the veil off until he came out.

And he came out and spake unto the children of Israel that which he was commanded. And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone. And Moses put the veil upon his face again, until he went in to speak with him.

Have you noticed these words? Verse 34, at the beginning, Moses went in before the Lord to speak with him. Verse 35, on the end, until he went in to speak with him. The end of verse 29, his face shone while he talked with him.

He'd go in to speak to his God. He'd go in to speak to his God. You know the name Moses means, drawn out.

He was in that river Nile, and he was left in the basket. He would have died, but he was drawn out. That river of Egypt, that river Nile, which was to be a parable of that immense growing of his God, right up to the mountain, right up to the glory with God.

And you see here, we're told that Moses wished not that the skin of his face, in other words, he didn't realize it. And this is typical, and this is God's love and wisdom, because you see, if you go and you have a glorious time with God, and the Lord blesses you, and you come out, and you begin to realize that now you're spiritual, now you're shining with glory, it will go sour. You will get conceited.

You'll think yourself what you're not, and you'll soon be in trouble with spiritual pride. And that's the wisdom and the love of God. He'd just shine with glory upon your face, and you won't realize it.

But others, if you really, really deem with your Lord, they'll know. They'll know that man, that woman, there's something about her, something about him. Oh, oh, they've been in that sacred place.

Let's go to Deuteronomy chapter 5, and still on Moses. Deuteronomy 5, from verse 28, And the Lord heard the voice of your words when he he spake unto me, and the Lord said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee. They have well said all that they have spoken.

Oh, that there was such an heart in them that it would fear me and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them and with their children forever. But then, verse 30 and 31, Go, say to them, get you into your tents again. But as for thee, stand thou here by me, and I will speak unto thee.

I don't know if you get it. They'd seen the glory of God, but there was something in their hearts that made them afraid, and it turned them away. And they said, Moses, we can't take this.

We're afraid. We don't want it. Will you please be a go-between? Will you go and get alone with your God, and hear all he has to say, and come and tell us? But we can't take it.

And so God says, lie if they won't have me. Tell them to go back to their tents. But then, he says, as though he put his grave eternal arms upon dear Moses and his shoulders, and put him right to his bed.

But you, my servant, stay by my side, and I'll speak to thee. O my brother, O my sister, I don't know what these passages do to you, but they touch deep chords inside me. They make me crave and say, O God, I want that, God.

I want your big arms around me, O God. I want that unspeakable drawing right into your lovely presence, my God. Whatever else I miss or I lose, Lord, let it not be this.

Oh, to have you, my God, and that you should have me for yourself, in that secret place, that wonderful place. Before going on, I know that life is practical, and some of you may think, well, it's all right, brother Dick. But you know, I'm a mum, or I'm a dad, and I've got the kiddies to see to the shopping and the scrubbing, and life is practical.

So many chores to be done, and I think I know something about it, although I'm not a clever manual man, but I've had to sort it out in the nitty-gritty of earning a living, going into West End of London, and myself out doing my job, and get back at the end of the day worn out. But even those days, I thank God, there was a yearning burning inside me, and I couldn't live without my God. And even at the lunch break in the West End of London, it was then in one of those that, strange enough, I met Mr. North for the first time.

He was with a brother, I think, named Dennis Panther, and I just spent my time at St. Peter's praying as I used to. And I was coming out when I bumped into them both, and I was very struck by the unusual handshake I was given. Mr. North took my right hand with his right one, and with his left one, he pressed my right hand ever so warmly.

No one had ever shaken the hand like that before. And I'd come out from that thing that happened every day, my midday snack, and immediately to that place to be with my God. It was, shall I say, like a physical need, a cry, I couldn't be without it.

And as I see it, the life of Jesus, busy as it was, claims on his spine, knees pressed upon him, cries of every description, but yet he always found time to be with Father. And I'm sure that his freshness, his power, his insight, his beautiful pragueness, his loveliness, his walking in the will of God to absolute perfection. Of course he was the Son of God, but he was the Son of Man too.

And it was that he knew where to drink, where to fill himself, where to keep fresh and sweet and full of the love of his Father. Bless his name so you can, even if you're engaged with many, many practical, down-to-earth chores that must be done, but if you have a heart for God, my brother, my sister, that God will draw you, and you will find that you can come into something really precious from which all the rest will be sweetened and enriched and multiplied. Now may we move on to the book of Daniel for a few minutes.

It won't be too long, but I'd like to bring two or three things from this precious man's life. In chapter 6 verse 10, I think you all know the story, Daniel chapter 6 and verse 10, Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house, and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God as he did aforetime. Then these men assembled and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God.

He is one of God's chosen ones. One of God's blessed ones. He's tried and he puts his life in jeopardy.

The decree is that he should give up something that he knows he cannot give up. To save his skin, have no more fellowship and communion with his God, stop praying. He's asking the impossible.

He's asking the impossible. I dare say none of us has been tested to this degree. If it should come to the crunch, I pray that we might find a grace in our life not to betray our Lord to save our skin.

But can we look at it from this other point of view I just mentioned? It's asking Daniel the impossible. You go without that. Daniel, you can do all else you like, forbidden to pray to your God.

He heard the decree, he took note of it, but he opened his window wide to Jerusalem in the prescribed way. That was the way the exiles were to pray towards Jerusalem where the Holy Temple was. And there he knelt before the Lord three times a day just as he'd always done it.

Dear God, how the spirits of these men bless me. They touch my dead brother, sister. They speak volumes to me.

Where are the Daniels and the Davids and the Moseses of the 20th century? Men that know and love God firsthand. You know, when you know your God firsthand, you won't be an imitation or a carbon copy of anyone else. You will have received from others, but you won't have to copy their mannerisms and their style and try to prophesy and speak the way they do.

You'll have something fresh from heaven received from your God, and you'll be yourself, and you can be nothing better than what God's made you. And it will come fresh and fragrant from heaven itself. But now, a bit further.

In chapter 9 and verse 23, or in chapter 9 first, verse 3, Daniel 9 verse 3, And I set my face unto the Lord God to seek by prayer and supplications with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. You see again this word, I set my face. Here's a man who knows the way he must go, and he sets his face to it, and this is the way I'm going by your grace, God, and I shall not be deflected.

Verse 23, At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to show thee, for thou art greatly beloved, therefore understand the matter and consider the vision. And verse 11, And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved. And verse 19, And said, O man greatly beloved.

Oh, I like these words. I love them. You note the moment where it says beloved, it gives us an alternative, a man of desires.

And the two are precious to me. First of all, that Daniel, a man of steel really, a mighty man of valor, risking his life, strong, healthy, standing for years there, bold as a lion, ready to be thrown into a lion's den. But yet God knows, and God knows that inside, for all the outwards steel that there is, that man's a teddy bear.

And God says, O a man greatly beloved. Oh, it's as though Father was saying, we're gazing on you, dear one from heaven, and oh, don't we love you, Santa. Oh, you're precious, precious, precious, hallelujah, hallelujah.

And then, a man of desires, a man of passions, you know, not one of these cold calculating ones. If I go fully after my God, what will it cost me? What will I gain? What will I lose? What will they think about me? What will I have to give up? A man of passions, inflamed with a burning desire for his God. Oh, hallelujah.

Drawing for God, loving God, wanting God, burning for God. O man greatly beloved. O man greatly beloved.

Hallelujah. Doesn't that ring in your depth? Doesn't it draw you and say, O God, let me drink of these fountains, of these blessed, blessed men? Let's move into the New Testament. The Acts chapter 6, first of all, verse 2. Acts chapter 6, verse 2, Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God and serve tables.

Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business, but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the word of God. Now, this isn't to say that we're to become spiritually proud and say it's below my dignity to pick up that paper or to do this or that little chore. These were the apostles who were eminently called out by the Lord.

But nevertheless, the truth is here, and you don't need to be full-time if you really, really want the Lord, you know. He knows it. You have to do your seven hours in an office, a workshop, as a nurse, as a teacher, whatever the case may be.

And if you will give him one hour, but an honest hour, he'll increase it and enrich it. He'll count all the work you've done during the day as worship, and he'll pack into that hour that you gave him honestly the value of a full day as though you were a full-timer. You know, I consider that years ago when I was in business, I was still a full-timer.

All my energy went, of course, to earn the bread and butter and come back and be with my wife and children. But what little strength and time was left was for my God, and he accepted it was a full-time, full-time. Then after that he called me to full-time ministry.

But look, we come then to the verse, we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word. Now they knew that this was the way. They were spirit-filled men, they'd had their new birth, they'd had the baptism of fire, and they had the lot, if I may put it rather slangishly, but they had the lot, but they knew that that whole portion they had did not exempt them from giving themselves to prayer and the word.

They could have sat and said, well, I had the full blessing and I don't need to labor in prayer, it is too tough really, and I don't need to give myself to the word, the indwelling spirit will give me the work. Very often

there is that fallacy, that deception. Of course God gives you a new life, of course God gives you the spirit, but a man alive is to get hold of the word of God, and get hold of prayer, and be a man of the spirit, a woman of God.

And they knew that was the way they had to go. And so the temptation came, things got complicated, trays full of widows, the Greek ones are not being looked after, there's trouble, and Peter saw, boy, we're going to get entangled with this, and we're going to waste our time, no fear. You look for seven men, full of wisdom, and of the Holy Ghost, good testimony, honest men, let them do the job.

One of them was Spirit-filled Stephen, and he, by the way, didn't see me, a mighty Spirit-filled man, going to carry trays to the old widows, find someone else. He had the meekness of the Lamb in him, bless him. But these twelve, they knew the way they had to go, and the way was prayer, and the word of God.

They were Spirit-filled, and that Spirit within them burnt with a prayer life, that was to be the powerhouse, that was to make the word of God a hammer, a sword, a mighty power, a tremendous thing. And they knew that if they neglected that, if they became slipshod, indifferent, lazy, sluggish, they'd lose their glory, they'd lose their power, their words would become hollow and empty, and they'd no longer be the man they knew they should be. So, they stuck to that way, to that life of prayer, and the word of God.

Now, turn back to chapter 4, and we'll see this beautiful, well-known passage for Peter and John. They're challenged, and we read from verse 8, Acts 4, verse 8, Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, if we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole, be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him, doth this man stand here before you whole. This is a stone which was set at naught of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

Neither is there salvation in any other. You can just see the boldness, you can see what's coming through, for there is none other name unto heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. Verse 13, Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled, and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

Hallelujah. These, the chief priests, the scribes, the elders, they weren't spiritually discerning men, but then they didn't want any particular discernment. It was clear as clear it could possibly be, and in the lovely words of Scripture, they hear these men, these fishermen, and there they stand in absolute boldness, in total command of the situation.

There is no other name unto heaven given unto men, whereby we may be saved. They disarmed, they marveled, uneducated, ignorant fishermen, speaking to us like this, and we can't say a word. And they took knowledge.

Where did they get it from? Oh, they've been with that Jesus. That's just the way he used to speak when he was around. And may I say, that's one of the things that being with your Lord will give you.

You learn to speak like Jesus speaks, with his accent. I don't mean, you know, like we can have a Yorkshire or a Liverpool or a foreign accent like mine, but it's the heavenly accent of Jesus. That's where you get it.

Being with him in that sacred place, the beauty of Jesus, the glory of Jesus, the speaking of Jesus, the tenderness of Jesus, the accent of Jesus, will come through your little life, and it will bless others beyond anything else you've ever known. I want to finish with a question and a challenge. It may take you back a little.

Let's imagine, instead of a rainy Saturday evening like we're having, it's a very hot summer afternoon, and we're not inside this place. We're in a large garden, and it's such sweltering heat that we're all in shorts and can't bear long trousers, and suddenly it becomes apparent in your life, would it, that you've got a pair of knees that are peeled or worn out. You know why? Man alive, woman alive, because you spent hours and hours and hours of your life on your knees before the God that is everything to you, before the Jesus to whom you owe it all.

I just lay that question as a challenge. I believe, my brother, my sister, with all the glory and all the wonder we've had, but there is a weakness. Somehow, something tells me there is a weakness in this realm of real prayer and getting hold of God.

My heart has been warmed and strongly moved to bring this forth with a prayer, with a cry, that God will fall upon us, dear ones, such a spirit of intercession, of worship, of love. Yes, we'll love him here, we'll stand with our arms lifted up, we'll cry hallelujah, we'll give him our loudest praise, but oh, in our own private life, we'll catch this spirit, and we'll be men and women that will engage our hearts to approach unto God, and touch God, and feel that touch of God, which will make all the difference to our life. So, here's a challenge to you, my brother, to you, my sister, in tender love.

There's no, no, no feeling of wanting to bring a lash of condemnation. Why haven't you been praying enough for this or that? But oh, to let that precious love of God, with chords of loving kindness, say, my dear one, there is a beautiful, a sacred, a wonderful place for you right by my heart. I'm waiting you, waiting for you, with arms open, and I want you to come right, right into my presence, and I want to pour into your depths floods of my love and my grace.

As you pour yourself out unto me, shall we just quietly bow, closing our eyes before God? Just for a few minutes, a few seconds, let what we've heard sink into our depths.

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