

Elijah and Elisha 03 ~ Keswick Conference 1970

by Harold Wildish

The story of Elijah and Elisha reminds us of the importance of seeking God's face in times of need and trusting in His sovereignty and power.

Duration: 52:38

Scripture: 2 Kings 3:17, Matthew 28:19-20, John 14:16-17, Acts 1:8, Romans 8:26-27, Ephesians 5:18, Revelation 22:17

Topics: "Keswick"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the story in 2 Kings chapter 3 where the Israelite army is in a waterless land. The speaker emphasizes the importance of digging ditches to receive the flow of water from God. He compares this to digging into God's word and being willing to deepen our understanding of it. The speaker also highlights the blessings and joys of being a Christian, including a future reign with Christ and an eternal future with him.

Transcript

Now, my dear chairman, his wife there, racing with my wife and myself toward the golden wedding day. He's a little ahead, you know. I can't catch him up.

But isn't it wonderful to have a life partner for over forty years, and feel that it's sweeter as the days go by in married life, and then to look into the face of our lovely Lord and say, my, just a picture of eternity. Christ loved the church and gave himself for it, to be his bride, to share his affections through eternal ages. Now a great marriage is coming up.

Did you know that, Christians? Yes. In the terms of a marriage, the bride makes herself ready and is united to that lover Lord, and the great future begins. I tell you, I'm thrilled about it, aren't you? We're going to have a honeymoon, did you know that? A honeymoon with Lord Jesus, just for a thousand years, a little honeymoon reign, to see him bring the world under his sway and restore it to its father.

Then, when the honeymoon's over, we are stepping out into the eternal future with Christ, co-heirs with him in the great universe, expanding universe. Wonderful thing to be a Christian. Oh, if you're not, we just wish you were.

But we believe that most of you here love the Lord, and it's just a Bible conference for us to strengthen each other's faith and cheer each other's hearts and dig into the Word of God. Now, you know where to turn to, don't you? 2 Kings, chapter 3. We are taking these little panel stories and seeking the help of God to open them up that they might be illumined to teach us lessons. Over chapter 1, we wrote the little title, Man of God.

Over chapter 2, we wrote the title, Take the Mantle. And in this story I'm going to read to you, you can write over it, chapter 3, Dig the Ditches. Dig the Ditches.

Well, let's read the story. We'll start at verse 4 of chapter 3. And Meshach king of Moab was a sheep master, and rendered unto the king of Israel a hundred thousand lambs and a hundred thousand rams with the wool. But it came to pass when Ahab was dead that the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel.

And king Jehoram went out of Samaria the same time and numbered all Israel. And he went and sent to Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, saying, The king of Moab hath rebelled against me. Wilt thou go with me against Moab to battle? And he said, I will go up.

I am as thou art, my people as thy people, and my horses as thy horses. And he said, Which way shall we go up? And he answered, The way through the wilderness of Edom. So the king of Israel went, and the king of Judah, and the king of Edom, and they fetched a compass of seven days' journey.

And there was no water for the host, for the cattle that followed them. The king of Israel said, Alas, that the Lord hath called these three kings together to deliver them into the hand of Moab. And Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the Lord, that we may inquire of the Lord by him? And one of the king's servants answered and said, Here is Elisha, the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah.

Jehoshaphat said, The word of the Lord is with him. So the king of Israel, and Jehoshaphat, and the king of Edom, went down to him. Elijah said to the king of Israel, What have I to do with thee? Get thee to the prophets of thy father, to the prophets of thy mother.

The king of Israel said unto him, Nay, for the Lord hath called these three kings together to deliver them into the hand of Moab. And Elisha said, As the Lord of hosts liveth before whom I stand, surely were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee. Now bring me a minstrel.

It came to pass when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him. And he said, Thus saith the Lord, make this valley full of ditches. Thus saith the Lord, ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain, yet that valley shall be filled with water that ye may drink, both you and your cattle and your beasts.

And this is but a light thing in the sight of the Lord. He will deliver the Moabites into your hands. And ye shall smite every fenced city and every choiced city, and shall fell every good tree, and stuff all wells and water, and mar every good piece of land with stones.

And it came to pass in the morning, when the meat offering was offered, that, behold, there came water by the way of Edom, and the country was filled with water. God will bless to our hearts the reading of his word together for his namesake. At a quiet moment bowed over God's word.

Loving Lord, wilt thou lead us into the truth that thou dost desire us to face and have? May the Holy Spirit be our guide, our teacher. And, O, wilt thou grant that we may largely forget each other and be conscious that thou art here, and hearing thy voice and feeling thy touch may we be blessed. For thy dear namesake.

Amen. Now, the subject, Dig the Ditches, is a very practical one, but I do want you to get the picture of the illustration. You know, away in the New Testament we are told that history is His story.

That is, God allowed all these things to be written for our learning, upon whom the end of the ages have come. And God has built up in history, in Bible history, a picture book that revealed Christ and revealed the great principles and things He wants us to teach. We are very rich, as Christians, to hold the word of God, this wonderful book, in our hands.

Now, in the Bible, it's a remarkable fact that the Holy Spirit of God is pictured again and again, but always. And if I've got Bible students here, I challenge you, I want you to tell me if there's an exception. Always, the Holy Spirit is pictured as something that's moving.

You know, if you get a picture of Christ, your lovely Lord, it's always a solid picture. For instance, that great rock that Moses smote, that rock was Christ. And there's the solid rock, and you need a solid rock to stand on, your faith to rest on.

But outside the stricken rock, there came the flowing water. We know that from Calvary's striking, there came the gift of the Holy Spirit to our world to do His gracious work in this dark, old, sinful world. And the gracious waters are flowing everywhere.

Now, whether the picture is a fire, tons of fire or consuming fire, whether the picture is a dove coming down and anointing Him and lighting on Him, whether the picture is oil on the high priest that began to permeate all through His clothing down to the skirts of His garment, always, I believe, without exception, the picture of the Holy Spirit is a moving picture. You'll find the Holy Spirit from Genesis to Revelation. You can't go far in the Word without meeting Him.

In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth, and the earth was, or became, without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God moved, always moving, upon the face of the waters, brooding and moving. God said, let there be light. Right to the last picture in Revelation, where you see the Spirit now linked with the bride, the called-out company that share His affection, His love life.

The Spirit and the bride say, Come! And the last great cry is going out in the Spirit's activity. Well, you say, the Holy Spirit is a wonderful influence at work in our world. No, you're wrong.

He's a wonderful person of the Godhead in our world. God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. Not three gods, but three mighty persons in the Godhead, and there's no jealousy in the persons of the Godhead.

I've heard Christians for the hour argue about our right approach to God, and I haven't the slightest doubt that we come as children born into God's family to speak with a loving Father, and we are led by the Holy Spirit, and we come in the name of our lovely risen Savior, and that's the right approach. But for you to talk to the Lord Jesus isn't wrong. For you to commune with and talk to the Holy Spirit isn't wrong.

There's no jealousy in the Godhead. Oh, if you want to be absolutely right and do everything in order, very well. But don't every quarrel with a dear who speaks to the Lord Jesus directly.

Conscious dwelling presence and his constant companionship. Lord Jesus, help me just now. Lord Jesus, be with me just now.

Amen. If anyone's the Holy Spirit and says, Oh, Spirit of the living God, I face a task, and I'm absolutely inadequate, and fall afresh on me. Give me a fresh anoint.

Equip me for this task. No, we are talking about water, and this picture of the water in this chapter is a picture, of course, of the gracious, mighty, refreshing power of the Holy Spirit of God, and all he can mean in the battles that we have to face. Now, it's open in front of you, 2 Kings chapter 3, and I want you to settle down to it.

As we read the story through, we found three kings fighting against one king. The three kings are Jehoram, the king of Samaria, the northern kingdom, Jehoshaphat, the king of Jerusalem, Judah, and they have linked up with the kingdom. Now, shall I tell you why? Because they want to get at their enemy, who is the king of Moab, and he's rebelled, and he lives right the other side of the Dead Sea, away through the mountains of Moab.

And they realize that to attack him is not going to be easy. He was a beaten foe, he was under tribute, he had to give so much wool every year, and he's just rebelled, and they're going to try and subdue him. And they realize the only way to go is right down the western side of the Dead Sea, right past the great big shallow waters where possibly Sodom and Gomorrah lie underneath it, right round the south of the Dead Sea, and to go through the land of Edom to attack Moab.

And so they say to the king of Edom, would you come in on this? And he says, oh yes, just think, the kings of Israel, king of Jerusalem and Samaria, are asking me to be their ally. Well, they were wrong in asking him, because you know, he was a descendant of Esau, and he pictures the product of the flesh. And when people who are the Lord's people go to the flesh, and they say, you come and give us a helping hand, and you come in on this battle, you're in for trouble.

You can't expect the Lord of Hosts to bless that battle and give the victory. There's going to be problems. And so the three kings move south around the Dead Sea, and they lengthen their lines of communications until at last they're seven days away from home base.

Now you think, these are the old days when they used camels and donkeys, and they had to carry their cows with them for milk, and a lot of the women and even children went along with the great big crowd going out to battle. And they've moved seven days away from home base, and they're in a barren land, nothing but hills and rills and sandy gullies and not a drop of water. Until at last they're famished.

They realize that the battle's lost before they fired the first shot or sent the first arrow away. I wonder how many of you have realized in your Christian life that you sometimes face a battle, you face service, and the battle's lost before you begin. If you get through the battle with your life, you're rather glad.

If you ever get back to home base again, you're rather glad. But as for a battle, there's no victory there. Oh, so much even of the service of the Lord is wrought with the arm of the flesh, with the ally of the flesh.

Oh, so often we face our battleground conscious that we are going in our strength, and we are going out to fight a battle and to subdue this enemy. And yet, somehow the Lord isn't there, and there's something lacking. We are defeated before we begin.

Well, there's the story. It's a sad story. You can underline it if you like in verse 9. And there was no water for the host, for the cattle that followed them.

They were just without water. A barren land all around them. No water.

I must just stop here and say that perhaps it's hard for some of you to realize what it is to be in a waterless land. From your childhood days, many of you have turned a tap and the water's arrived in your home, and there's always been plenty of good, clean water to drink. But you know, there's lots of lands where they have to fight this drought, just in case there's some precious soul that's hungry and thirsty today.

Let me tell you a little story. In one of those clashes in the First Great War out on no man's land, the Germans and the British were face to face in the battle, and they clashed on no man's land, and then they retreated to their trenches, leaving dying, wounded men on the battlefield. Side by side lay a German officer, a well-educated man.

Strangely enough, he had spent many years in England and spoke English fluently. By his side was an English soldier, and he didn't know a word of German, but they lay side by side, dreadfully wounded, waiting, hoping for Red Cross to come out and carry them back. And after some hours, the sun was rising over this sun-baked no man's land of mud and blood, and the Englishman was gasping and kept saying, Water, water! The German officer was seen with real agony trying to get round to his pack, and eventually he got out of his pack a little gray water bottle.

And he, with real agony, opened it and leant across, and he said, Drink this and live. The British soldier put the water to his lips and drank of it, and you can imagine the refreshing that came to that wounded soldier out there under the burning sun of no man's land that hot August day. Still the Red Cross didn't come, and the two men lay there wounded.

And after some time, the German soldier was seen trying to get something out of his tunic, and eventually he got out a little pocket New Testament, and strangely enough it was in the English language. And he opened it up, putting his finger on a certain spot, he leant across and he pushed it to the British soldier, and he said, Drink this and live forever. And his eyes fell on the words, you all know so well, For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

The Red Cross came and carried two men away, and the German officer was dead. He didn't survive, but they brought that British man down to a base hospital, and later he was brought back to England, and he never became a great preacher, but he stood up and gave his testimony often, how he was saved out on those battle fronts. As he drank of the life-giving stream that comes from Jesus, Drink this and live forever.

And the gracious Spirit of God made the Son of God real in that man's soul out on the battlefield. Now he'd never been, perhaps, on a battlefield and felt desperately in need of water, but let me tell you, these people, if you will picture it, they realize they're going to perish. They realize the battle's completely lost before the first blow is struck, and let that water, water, say, who can help us? And someone says, well, there's an Elisha here.

Now we're going back in our studies. Elijah's gone to heaven, the powerful prophet in whom the Spirit of God wrought, but the spirit of Elijah is on and in Elisha. And Elisha is now standing alone with a double portion of that spirit to face the battlegrounds, and he's right here amongst God's people, even in the hour of their distress.

And in verse 11 they say, here is Elisha, the son of Shaphat. He's used to handling water situations. For ten years he has poured water on the hands of Elijah.

Just as simple as that. If a man for ten years has gone to wells and gone to places to get water, to pour on the hands of his master to keep his master's hands clean, in the ten years of daily hundred glorious service for God, as he went to the little schools of the prophets, day after day, tramped over the hills and through the valleys, gathered them together and taught them the things of God, that was his tremendous ministry. And by his side is Elisha, pouring water on the hands of his master, keeping his master clean.

He can handle water situations. So they approach Elisha and he says, well, I wouldn't do a thing for you. It's an ungodly alliance.

You're going in the arm of the flesh. You're actually trusting upon the Edomites to go through their country and have their support. If it wasn't for Jehoshaphat, the royal throne of Judah, I wouldn't do anything, but I will seek God's face about it.

And then he does a remarkable thing. Verse 15. Bring me a minstrel.

Let me have a little music. Now, I don't know what you're going to think of this, but, you know, music does help, doesn't it? I have to tell people, quite frankly, I'm not a musician, and I'm afraid I'm a very poor one to appreciate or criticize music. I like it all, but I'm never thrilled much by it.

I come and listen and go away and say, yes, it was wonderful, but my wife, she can, you know, weigh it all up and say, oh, that was superb, or that was second-class, or that was... She just knows. She's got music in her. It just flows.

But I want to tell you something. Again and again in our married life, we've always tried to have a piano in our home, whether it's been in Guyana or in the West Indian Islands. For her sake, she loves to sit down and play.

And sometimes when I'm all ready to go out to a battle, and we've just got half an hour to wait before we go out to the task that God has given me to be a preacher, I'll say, Marian, give us a few hymns, and she'll sit down and just begin to play. It does something to me. Or sometimes when we come back home and we are exhausted after some conference, I'll say, just let's have an hour of... you just play.

And as she plays, occasionally bursting into a little song, I sit there, the poor old fellow who doesn't know much about music, but somehow it relaxes me, somehow I feel my spirit rising, somehow as the great old hymns are played and sometimes the word bursts out, it does something. I don't know how you are. What's saying this about you, you know? It's just poor little me.

And I believe Elisha was like that. He said, bring me a minstrel. Let me get my heart settled.

I've been troubled about this situation. I thought I would avoid it and keep out of it. I can see nothing but disaster lying ahead for the people of God, but bring me a minstrel.

And as the minstrel played, it came to pass, the hand of the Lord came upon Elisha. Oh, if only we knew more of the hand of the Lord upon our lives. You know, even Egyptian magicians, after about three or four smashing judgment plagues, whispered, I say, just a minute, this is the finger of God.

Yes, the finger of God. But what about the hand of God? When we had three precious kids growing up, sometimes Mother said, you know, some of those kids need a spanking. And Daddy had to spank them, and I never used my finger.

If I'd used my finger, they'd have said, ha, ha, ha, Daddy's spanking me, ha, ha, ha. Oh. I said, they're little, of course.

There's a place to do it, a time to do it. It ought to be done more in America. You know that.

It's one of the ways America's slipping a bit. The old woodshed days have passed, and now the children run the hole. Well, that's that.

But here we are. Elisha has the hand of the Lord upon him. And he says, the solution to get water to the battle fronts, I'll give it to you.

Make the valley full of ditches. Thus saith the Lord, you shall not see wind nor rain, yet the valley shall be filled with water that you may drink, both you and the cattle and beasts. This is a life thing in the sight of the Lord.

Oh, bless God for a man who could talk like that. This is just a little job for the Lord. Do you realize, Christians, and I pause here, that your hardest adventure, your greatest job, the biggest battle you've ever had to face, you say it's impossible, it's a life thing for the Lord to do, if only the Lord is with you and in you and doing it through you.

This is the message of victory. This is the message that Keswick preaches, that there is a possibility on every battle front for the flow of the life of the water to come to the remotest trench and outpost and battleground. It can be done.

And so the prophet has made his answer. There must be the digging of ditches, plenty of water up in the hills. Oh, I say, you don't know a thing about hill country in Florida.

I've just come from the heights of Florida, Keystone Heights, about a thousand above sea level. Came on Saturday. Cold, breezy Keystone Heights, racing with winter.

Florida. Right down to hot St. Petersburg by the sea. Well, all I can tell you is this, down in Jamaica you'll get the surprise of your life when you come.

You'll see mountains seven or eight thousand feet high there, our big blue mountain range. And I've known, I've actually known in my life, are you listening, seventeen inches of rain to fall on the Blue Mountains in twenty-four hours. And this causes more trouble than the howling hurricane winds.

The winds do some destruction, but life is lost because of the water. Off the watershed, coming down, and the gullies are filled, and cutting out new coffees, and they're out of control, and the rivers are loaded, and people's homes are carried away, and families are lost in the dead of the night by the rising of the water. I dare to see it.

I don't know, I'm not sure of my figures, but I would dare to say for every ten thousand gallons of water that fall on the hills of Jamaica, nine thousand and nine hundred and ninety-nine gallons just loom down into the sea and are wasted, simply because there are not the channels. There are not the ditches. There is not the control of the water to bring it to the right place.

And there are times when we have droughts down there, and they turn our water pipes off and say you can only have water for four or five or six hours in the day because the water is short in Hermitage Dam or in one of the other dams. Many of the country villages at times in the year have to travel miles to get to water, to bring water into their villages, and the cry of water, simply because it isn't controlled. Plenty of water up in the hills, said Elisha.

The rain is falling up on those mountain tops. And there's the Dead Sea, and if the water is released, it'll just down by gravity into the sea. Make the valley full of ditches.

Cut out the channels. Wherever you can collect water from the main gullies, see that the channels are there. Dig, dig, and the deeper you dig, the deeper the water will flow, right out to the sentry, right out to the camp, right out to where you keep the cattle.

Pull the more ditches you have, the more the water will flow right. So they did it. The answer? So simple, so wonderful, so lovely.

Passed, verse 20, in the morning. It all happened in the stillness of the light in their tents as they were waiting, sleeping, when they rose to offer the meat offering, and that is the wonderful whole meal offering that was offered morning by morning with the lamb, the burnt offering. And as they brought this spring, the lamb, the morning lamb that was offered with the meal, the fine flour, I don't know any sweeter picture than this of Calvary, when our Lord Jesus offered himself without spot to God as the great burnt offering, and when that just one died for us, that's the unjust to bring us to God, these two offerings that are Godward in the five offerings of Leviticus 1-6, that speaks of Calvary's work Godward when he put away sin by the sacrifice of himself and bridged the gulf between God and as the peace offering he brought to poor guilty sinners and trespassers pardon and forgiveness, and as that meat offering, that meal offering was offering, water's trickling, you can hear it, trickle, trickle, trickle, trickle, it's going out through all the channels that they have dug that last evening, it's going out to the lonely cattle, it's going out to the front trenches, it's going right out through the army everywhere, water, and according to the depths of the channels, the water is flowing.

Oh, I wonder what we should learn from this. I wonder. Well, first of all, you've simply got to clean out the earth, you've got to clean out something to get a channel, and although I never like to harp upon this, I am one who likes in my teaching to believe that the Lord comes in all his loveliness and power to capture a heartened life, and he never comes as a stone robber to say, give up this, or give up that, or give up the other.

No, the Lord doesn't talk like that. He comes with all his treasures and says, I want to come into your life, and automatically, when we know him and love him, we give up things. We can't help it.

I mean, I'm telling our young Christians down in Jamaica all the time, they come to me and they say, well, is there any harm in reading novels? And I say, no, not that I know of. Why do you ask? Well, they say, it's one of the debatable points, you know, as to, in our reading, whether we should pick up something that isn't true, it's a novel, it's just an exciting story that someone has made up, should we spend our time

reading it. I said, I don't know that I could say there's any harm in it.

They look at me and they say, do you read novels? And I say, oh yes, as often as I want to. And they say, oh, well, how many do you read? And I say, well, none. You don't read novels then? No, I don't.

I used to when I was a young fellow. I used to keep the midnight hour burning because I couldn't finish the novel. I couldn't leave it before I finished it.

I must get through to the end of this exciting story and see where it's going to end. And it became a snare in my life. It was doing me no good.

It was robbing the Lord of so much that one day I said, well, what should I spend life so short time on novels? No. And I leave them aside. But I'm not going to tell you you are wrong in reading a novel.

You're not. I'm simply telling you that I do it as often as I want to. But life is so gloriously full at the moment that I don't want it.

Now, do you know there are a thousand things in the Christian life like this? There are a thousand things in the Christian life that I could stand up and say, now listen, dear young Christian, take care. If you want to have something or do something, take care you can bring your Lord into it. People say, do you go to picture shows? I say, yes, I go in Jamaica as often as I want to.

I don't want to. You say, why? Well, I'll tell you, quite. I would love to go and see some of the pictures that are shown in Jamaica.

But they're always shown in a variety screen with filth and rubbish and all sorts of stuff. And if I was seen going in, a thousand of my precious children in the faith would say, Harold Wildish goes. We can go any time.

And to set them an example, I don't go. Now, Mr. Roy Gustafson, I believe, is going to show that amazing film on Israel sometime this week to the guests of this conference. And I shall be there right in the front seat.

Why? Because I love moving pictures. And a picture on Israel up to date and modern is something that will thrill me and edify me. And I wouldn't miss it for anything.

Anything wrong with it? Let's be real about these things. We have got to sacrifice if the water's going to flow. There's got to be the removal of the earthly things.

There's got to be some sacrifice and throwing out a lot of the sand and rock and stuff and to deepen the channels. Must be. Make the valley full of ditches.

I say, would you like the waters to flow right to the battleground? Come tell me. All of you Christians know the gospel. If I began to move to John's gospel and talk about the waters, Jesus said to a woman, a woman who's dipping, dipping, dipping, dipping, dipping from Syca's well again and again.

He said, I could give you waters within you that spring up like a fountain to everlasting life. He was speaking of the Holy Spirit. Oh, she said, give me to drink.

I can't live without this water pot and the water from Jacob's well. He said, I know it's absolutely essential to the material things of life. There must be the balance.

You'll still have to come back and get water from Jacob's well to make your cup of coffee and to wash your face and to cook your food and scrub your floor. But, there's an inner life that is far more important. And it wasn't only to a woman, he said it.

You turn a few pages and see him standing in the court at Jerusalem and quite possibly he's seeing the priests coming with their great big water pots full of water and pouring the water into the golden labor in the temple. And as he comes to the brim, the water is trickling through channels, overflow channels through the very bodies, they tell me, of the oxen that bore this great labor. And it passes through their bodies out of their mouths and the common person can go and take the water for a drink or wash their hands as it drops into the lower bowl.

And as Jesus saw the water coming through those animal bodies and out of their mouths in the labor, he lifts up his voice, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. Out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water. This they hear.

This is what we want. Is this what we want? The Spirit graciously to flow. Finding, as it were, I speak with deep respect, his own level in our lives.

Going out to the battlefield, going out to the cattle shed, going out to the schoolhouse, going to the place where they're getting the meals ready, going out to the man who's sharpening his sword and saying, let me get at those moorbikes. Yes. Is that what we want? Well, you say, what have we got to do? Well, dig a few ditches.

That's all. You say, that's all? That's all. Oh, it's hard work.

It's possibly in the evening, quite hot in the land of Moab, humidity pretty strong, perspiration on their bodies as you see the old spades at work shooting it out and digging the channel. I say, are you willing to deepen the channel in your life of digging into God's Word? Are you willing to? Oh, it's so pathetic today. Really so pathetic today.

I come from the mission field and I want to tell you I've seen things in the past year. I started as a youngster, 22 years of age, on the South American coast. I saw people converted on those lonely Essequibo and quarantine coasts of Guyana.

And I've seen Negroes, big strong Negroes who make their living and only used to get when I landed there 20, 30 cents a day for hard work cutting sugar canes. I've seen them going off to their work and I've seen them under the hot midday sun relaxing for an hour in the middle of the day, siesta. And all they could do is to lie under the sugar canes.

And I've seen them there with their little pocket testaments. I've seen them there reading the testament, lying under the sugar cane in the burning heat of the tropical sun, hungry for God's Word. I've seen them tramping 15 miles over the hills of Jamaica or Dominica or some other place to get to one meeting just to listen to God's Word.

Walking. That's why we're so long-winded, we old West Indian preachers. We can't help it when they come to hear the Word of God there.

They say, go on preacher, go on. Don't bother about the clocks or think about that. And we get into bad habits, you see.

They're hungry. I remember a dear brother in one of the lower islands got up and he was praying at the end of a meeting. And what do you think he prayed? He said, Oh Lord, he said, thank you for our brother fill his big, big mouth more and more with the Word of God to feed us.

Lord, help us to understand it. And he went on and I tell you he was mixing all his metaphors up. He said, help us to feed upon the Word of God with the teeth of our mind's eye and all sorts of things like this that you wouldn't understand.

Metaphor, picture thinking of the West Indian. The hunger for the Word of God. I meet a young fellow in America and yes, he's a weakened boy from a lovely home, Christian heritage.

He's got a Bible. Mum gave him that. He's got three or four versions.

His pastor gave him those. Great future. I say to him, now listen, tell me.

How much do you spend in time with the Word of God alone? Oh, not listening to lectures and talks, but alone. Bowed over God's Word. Help me none at all.

Can you believe this? Go to listen to preachers. Go to chapel hour. Listen to my lectures.

Take my notes. Do my preparation. And yet, utterly defeated in his own personal Christian life.

Noding. Defeated. Why? You begin to test him on this simple question of the Word of God.

How much time do you spend digging into the Word of God with your head bowed over it? Lord, speak to me. Lord, lead me. Oh, how much time? You know, the first thing I do whenever I come to America and I talk to a soul, they're really troubled.

I want to find out where they are. I say, just a minute, give me your Bible, will you? I'll show you a verse. Take their Bible and begin to look at their Bible.

And I can almost tell by the Bible their spiritual state. Especially if I say to them, how long have you had this Bible? And they say, whoa, 15 years. Mum gave it to me or something like that.

I can tell by looking at it where they are spiritually. They're not digging into God's Word. Not spending time deepening the channels for the flow of the life-giving water.

You say, is that the only channel? No, no, I've got a list here. I'm not going through it. Time is gone.

If I began to test you in my own heart about our prayer life, doesn't that need deepening? What do we know about praying in the Holy Ghost? You say, in the Holy Ghost? Yes. Jude tells us that we must pray in the Holy Ghost. It's the Holy Spirit that produces real prayer that doth business before God.

It's groaning sometimes that cannot be uttered. What do we know of this? If I turn to your service, for the Lord, I would ask, are you deepening the channels of your service that the Spirit of God can extend your service and push you out to the front trenches and make you a man or a woman of God that can touch lives in the city where you live? If I were to be practical, I could talk about your conversation. Oh, brothers and sisters, we talk about the heavy taxes and we talk about the weather and we talk about the latest cars

and we talk about a hundred... Never you tell me that you are not good talkers.

You are. I'm the old, shy, conservative, quiet Englishman they call me at times. Can't chatter, can't talk much.

You can talk. But how much do we talk about the Lord? These are the burning questions. And there is a possibility that we've got to very bravely take a spade and we've got to throw out the earth and we've got to deepen the channels for the flow of the water out to the battle front.

It's a big responsibility. And this is quite a big secret. If only we can learn it.

I'm going to leave it there. Let's pray together. Now let's picture the three kings with their thousands of followers, their supply wagons, their cattle, their trumpets, their great hopes.

We are going to finish off the enemy and fight this battle and subdue these rebels. As the first day turns to the second day, to the third day, to the fourth day, to the fifth day, to the sixth day, to the seventh day, they are being beaten by lack of water. Can't find it anywhere.

They are going to miserably retreat or die in the desert before the first blow is struck. Lord, we can't write over this picture more than conquerors. They are being defeated.

And yet the Lord of hosts was there. And yet the man of God was there with the simple secret the waters can come from the high hills. But unless there are the channels into which they can flow and flow through, it will all run down into the Dead Sea and be lost.

As we look at Thy face, Lord, we know that Thine all-sufficient power and strength and wisdom and grace for every battleground is enough and more than enough. There is the supply of Thy Spirit and to spare overflowing rivers of living water. They could flow through our lives if only we deepened those channels, the channels of Bible, quietness, study, the times of prayer alone with Thee, the careful planning of devoted service to be channels of blessing to others and all the intimate things of our lives to deepen the channels.

O Lord, by Thy gracious Holy Spirit lead us into this truth and make us hungry to be men and women who will go out to battle, not in our own strength, not allied to the flesh, in the energy of the flesh, but to go to the difficult places and be strong in the Lord and the power of His might, knowing that the Lord of hosts, if He sends us and is with us, will never forsake us. It is a life thing for the Lord to do, to send the supply of water to the battlefronts. Bless us as we finish our meditation and we disperse.

Grant that we may go out into the grounds to our fellowship, to our rest, to our games, to our conversation, to another precious day pondering the things that we have heard. I'm dismissing you just now. We are bowed before the Lord.

I just wonder if someone who's quite good at raising just a little chorus would raise that little chorus that most of us will be able to follow and know. Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me. Break me, melt me, mold me, fill me.

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me. Someone raise it. Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

Spirit of the living God, break me, mold me, fill me. Answer our prayer, loving Lord, and dismiss us with divine blessing in thy precious name. Amen.

I'll be round the front shaking hands, love to shake hands with some of you. If anyone has a problem or a question, at your service at the end of any meeting, happy day.

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