

The Four Questions of God Part Two - Two Questions From the New Testament

by John Follette

The sermon explores the significance of God's questions about provision and the importance of surrendering our limitations to Him for miraculous outcomes.

Scripture: John 6:5

Topics: "Surrender to God", "Provision"

Description

John Follette explores two profound questions posed by Jesus in the New Testament, emphasizing that these inquiries are not for His benefit but to provoke a miracle within us. He discusses the theme of 'provision' as Jesus asks Philip about feeding the multitude, highlighting the disciples' tendency to focus on their limitations rather than on Christ's infinite resources. Follette encourages believers to surrender their perceived inadequacies to God, illustrating that true provision comes from recognizing and relying on Jesus, the Bread of Life. He warns against seeking fulfillment in external 'villages' instead of bringing our needs directly to Christ, who desires to transform our offerings into abundant blessings.

Transcript

Now I want to talk about two other questions which are asked, and both of them are asked when the Lord knows exactly all about it, and yet, He goes and asks it. As we found yesterday, there is a reason why He should do that. Not for His benefit; it is not to satisfy His ignorance, but it is to do a miracle in every one of us.

This next question has to do with "provision." We have had "position" and "condition," now the third one is our "provision."

"When Jesus then lifted up His eyes, and saw a great company come unto Him, He saith unto Philip, whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" John 6:5

Whence shall we buy bread? He is so good to tell us.

"And this He said to prove him for He himself knew what He would do."

Isn't it exactly what I have been telling you for the last two questions? He knows. This He did for his sake, not for Jesus'. This He did to prove him, knowing himself what he would do.

Then, why not let him do it? No, you cannot, you have to fuss around, getting a hold of God and praying and tearing up - don't get into that confusion. By the Spirit, penetrate in past that thing and come into the possession.

He is going to ask this question and now, listen to his answer. It is so very typical.

Here, the Lord of Heaven, all supply for all eternity, is saying, "Philip, what will you do?"

"Philip answered Him, two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little." John 6:7

Immediately, Philip reverts to his natural, limited resources in the presence of the "Whole Loaf" of the Bread of Heaven. Here is the Loaf of Heaven, all supply for eternity is saying, "Now, what will you do?" He is not able to see the eternal supply, he cannot even see Jesus even in His miracle power, because he is centered in his own limited interpretation of the problem and is "counting" instead of saying to the Lord, "Oh, Jesus, we have seen You work before. This is quite impossible to us. Will you be the host and feed them?"

Philip cannot do this; he is not yet advanced enough. He has to twiddle around with his flesh - with his natural processes. The other disciples also tried to help Philip out of this difficulty.

"One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto Him, There is a lad here, who hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?" John 6:9

They all failed because they are self-conscious of their limitation.

Notice that there are seven items, five loaves and two fishes. Five and two make seven, which speaks of completion. We are not to fall back upon counting our limitations. I have "this and this," but I cannot make it come out to meet the need. We never will. We have counted our limitations, yet we did not count in "The Loaf of Bread" who is standing at our side.

Jesus was not concerned about their limitations, but He was very concerned that they recognize Him.

The next time we are tempted to count our limitations, count them in His presence, then look up and

say, "Thank you Lord, I am counting you in on this."

We tend to fall back on our seeming limitations because it brings a certain reaction. There is within each one of us a sense of justification in feeling the power of distress. Some of us are only happy when we strike this note, so self-pity can come in. Feeling sorry for ourselves will utterly defeat us.

Matthew adds a further touch to this.

"And when it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, this is a desert place and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals. But Jesus said unto them, they need not depart; give ye them to eat." Matthew 14:15-16

Jesus did not say, "Let Me feed them." Rather, He said, "YOU give them to eat."

Why is it, when instantly the need is revealed? When faced with responsibility, the disciple will seek a way of escape by projecting the need to another. They said, "Send these hungry people to the villages that they may buy bread."

What are these villages? All too often, we have sent the hunger of our heart to strange places for its satisfaction. These are distant ministries where we think we might find the answer for the need at hand. The hunger is within us, and we must do the giving, and stop sending it to the villages as an escape mechanism.

Why were those discouraged disciples so quick to leave Jerusalem and make their way to Emmaus? Because Emmaus is an escape mechanism. They felt an atmosphere of defeat and failure in Jerusalem, where their glorious idea of a Kingdom had seemingly exploded. The Messiah they followed was dead. The handful of disciples was completely reduced, with all hope, on a natural basis, swept out from under them. All the things they had desired were wrecked.

He may do this to one of us sometime, but do not despair. Anyone can receive a blessing and stand, but few can take a defeat and live, because they do not know how. This is why the Lord is not able to trust some of us with sufferings, trials, and disciplines. He cannot, because we have not been "tempered" for it. He can trust the multitude with the blessing, but there are so few to whom He can say, "Will you watch with me one hour?"

Think of the "villages" to which you have sent your heart, your mind, your spirit. Each one of us is

guilty of this. We try to project "our present hunger" into another field, lest it would cost us something to have it fed properly. We would rather have a substitute. So we say, "I will send them over there," but Jesus had said, "Give ye them to eat."

These disciples saw only their limitations and said, "We have here but five loaves and two fishes." This confession opened the door for all that follows. Jesus responded, "Bring them hither to me." This required an absolute surrender of that which they had, and placed in the hands of the Lord.

He is saying, "Would you dare to surrender all that you have to me? Will you place it into my hands?"

This is a stripping that few will take. Five loaves, two fishes, the completion of all that we have, but placed in His hands will become enough to satisfy every hunger and urge we could ever know.

One of the signs in maturity is that you have power in God to become detached. If there is still any clinging, you are only going to wreck the thing. It will only be partial. He says, "Bring them to me."

Well, here is one little fish - it doesn't look very good, I think I ---- bring them to me. Well, this little loaf looks kind of scorched - bring them to me. Please stop arguing with God.

If he says bring them, then, bring them. He says, I knew you before you were born, I know all of that, but please bring them to me. That is all He wants.

I never knew what that meant, because it happen to me that I could not relate it. You see, I was not born in Pentecost. I never had seen it or heard it. I never had seen a person baptized in the spirit. The Lord has ways of isolating you when He is after you. Before He could fill me with His Spirit, before He could fill me with His marvelous spirit of life, He put me through a most grueling, terrifying consecration. He was preparing the soil. He has to have something to baptize. He shut me up until about three or four o'clock in the morning on the floor. I had not ever seen anyone get on their knees and lay down and pray. Methodists don't do that way. When the spirit moves on you, it doesn't matter about the posture of your body. You can be flat on your back, or on your stomach, or almost anywhere when prayer goes on in you. Here was this awful groaning for God. I was saved, but God wanted to do something in me before He could really fill me with His spirit. You know what it was? It was just this. I never related it before in my life. I had experiences, but I didn't know it had any relation to anything in here.

All through that evening, until two or three o'clock in the morning, down on my face before the Lord, I was conscience of the Lord, but I never knew He could talk to people, because I never had been taught that. I didn't know about that, but I knew if there was ever anything real in my life, here was the presence of God dealing with my immortal spirit.

When He began to deal with me, it was not concerning sins and failures and all of that, that had been taken care of. I was a Christian already. He was beginning with all of the legitimate issues in living. All of the right things, all of the correct things, all of the good things to which I might become attached in some way. Family. During that period of those three, four or five hours that I was on the floor before God, I buried every one of my relatives. I wept all my tears for them right then. My heart was broken for them right then. I never had any of that anguish when I let loved ones go, because that has all been taken care of. My sister was the first one to go in the family, and I was way off in college away from home. I felt God so wonderful. When they said, would you like to see Mable, I said, yes. And the first thing I did was to stand and sing. Wasn't that strange? I just couldn't help it, I just sang to the Lord. There was such a sense of victory and triumph. The undertaker came and took me by the shoulder. He thought that I was demented and took me out of the room. Brother, if you only knew what I know now, you would not even touch me. Well, he did that; all these legitimate things.

I like schooling. I was born from folks that like schooling. My father was a teacher, my grandfather, we all liked intellectual things. He said, no, that is not it. You are to surrender that. I surrendered that night things in scholarship that today Pentecost is all yelling to get. I can't understand it. Maybe our patterns are different, but when God dealt with me to separate me unto Himself, to fill me with His Spirit, He swept all that thing completely out of my life. Now I have that, I don't belittle it. I like my degrees, but you have never seen me use a degree have you? You never will. God does not want any of that in my life. Not at all. Not long ago, I came across a little box of some of my college credits, and here were all my credentials. I could have two degrees easily now. No, He says, you don't need them now. I am going to do something in you where that will never figure at all. I don't want you mixed up with it at all.

When I find our people going into that sort of thing, I don't understand it. I am not depreciating

education. I think it is splendid if you can have it and keep it where it belongs. If it is going to become a substitute in any way of a build up where God is dropped out, then I say, don't do that. I am afraid of the results of it.

He took my social life. Now you would like to get into my romances wouldn't you? Well never mind dear. I don't parade those in public. I am very human and very normal and very natural. I have my friends too. I would have liked to had a home, in the natural. He says, you are not going to be in the natural. You surrender all this to me. Let it be detached. I don't want any of these things in you. I want you!

For at least an hour or more, the only thing He said to me as I lay there on the floor was< "Would you fall into my hand? All I want is to possess you. Will you fall into my hand? All I want is to possess you." He never asked me preach or to teach or to sing or dance or pray. He never asked me any of that. Those things have come automatically as a result of something, but it was never an issue. No. I want you!

If God could actually get a hold of people in this room, this morning, without some of this religious collateral, how many know that we would not need to pray for revival; it would be present here. It would be a beautiful spiritual revival.

So, you see, that preceded even my baptism. What was He doing? He was doing this - he was detaching me from any village experience. You need not go to any village. You bring life, bread, fish, the potential; you bring that to me and let it get into my hand, that is all I ask of you. Will you let me possess it? When I surrendered, I felt that this is the most real thing I have ever found though it is wrecking my life and absolutely taking every thing I have ever thought completely out. I was as empty as a barrel with both ends knocked out of it. Now what?

So the next night, He filled me with His Spirit. Now, he had something not work on. So, since then, I have never dared, I don't want to, if you really get reality, there is not temptation to go into anything else. You just don't want it. You have seen reality. Let me take this provision. What did He do with it? He accepts it, He blesses it, He breaks it, that is a terrific thing, and He broke it off in pieces.

Well, who wants their life wrecked? Nobody! Self-preservation is too present. But He says, I can't

feed unless it is broken. And so, He breaks it all to pieces. And then, on top of it, He passes it out to a multitude. Isn't that something?

Now, get this. When He started to feed those people, He asks for this consecration and surrender which is absolute and eternal and the life is put into His hand. How many of you know He uses the identical bread and fish which you give, but it is no longer living under the power and impulse of this creature. It is bread and fish which is put into the hands of God. It is a consecrated bit of bread and fish. The crying multitudes within you; these urges and desires, fundamental, right drives, clear, beautiful and in the spirit, some of them are tremendous, that radiates from this bread and fish. He will bring a satisfaction in your heart and life if your heart and life can be consecrated, separated and filled with the spirit of God, he can bring the satisfaction out of the very elements that you have. He did it here. He did not introduce any other element. He used the identical elements, but they were blessed of God. They had become holy. They were sacred. They were the medium He is going to use, but they are in His hand.

I don't tell about the tragedies. That is no ones' business. You don't publish your suffering. You mask it. Is that an exception? No. It is scriptural. If you fast, if you are denied, if you are compelled to go without, if God calls from you a denial, that is fasting. If your soul is exposed to fasting, I am not talking about going without bread and butter, if you are called upon to fast, to be denied, to go without, legitimate food, proper food, good food, not sin, good food, God ordained food, let your fasting be one here, when you come out, anoint your face with oil - how many of you see the mask? You don't come out and say I'm almost killed. No, you come out and say isn't the Lord wonderful!

People say, how do you get things from God? How do you know about the Lord? Well, you see, I come out, but you don't see me at home. Do you think I get things to peddle out to you by sitting in a little trance? You have to learn to wear a mask. It is a holy mask. It is a legitimate mask.

He didn't introduce any other element at all. He used the same bread and fish. He will use what you offer to Him. God can so work in your heart and life that these things that are in you will be satisfied in there by the very thing that you offer.

"Provision" He took you and He took me and He wrecked our lives. He just wrecks them. Do I cry

about it? Oh, no, I have something to sing about brother which I would not exchange for all the world. This plowing business - I want to read you a poem God gave me one time when He had been plowing me. You see, we have to be plowed to get anywhere. I was brought up in the country and I walked in the furrow from plowing more than once with my bare feet. I went bare footed so we could have shoes in the winter.

Dave was our man who helped dad on the farm, and he used to plow and I thought it was so wonderful to walk along behind him in that furrow. How many can smell fresh ground when it is plowed! Oh God bless you, I love every one of you! How many know we have a little secret that a lot of folks in the city don't have? Sure, that lovely fresh soil that turns to the sun. Well, now I had walked in those furrows many times, and I had noticed the soil that he would have to plow. Sometimes we have what we call running black berries. How many know there are prickles on them? Sometimes the plow would have to go right through a patch of that old rambling, running blackberries, and oh my, did they ever sting. And of course, we were awful careful walking in bare feet.

In order to gain any harvest in you and me, how many know you will have to be plowed? That is hard. Well there is all kinds of plowing? How many know what plow sharing is? You know the point? You have one for light plowing and one for garden plowing? How many know when one of those strikes you? People are plowed like that. They have a surface plowing, a semi-depth and a deep plowing. He has plowed me, I knew because I had been in it. So He gave me this one day. When I write, I don't sit down to study, but the Spirit of God releases me. I wrote this out in just a few minutes.

God's plow struck deep within my heart
And plowed long furrows one by one
Through fallow ground so hard and firm
From early morn till set of sun
The plowshare was eternal truth
Which tore the hidden roots in me
And turned them to the light and air
Till self-hood laid a field set free

I felt Him walk each furrow plowed
I knew He felt the briars sting
The field was His, it was His joy
For lo, I heard the plowman sing
He only plowed that He might sow
There must be seed to scatter wide
And then I felt His presence near
He stood in silence at my side
And so I gave Him all of me
My hopes and dreams and inner throne
All these He scattered far and near
And left me naught to call my own
They fell like seed in furrows deep
And all were buried 'neath the sod
All that I had went down in death
To wait the might breadth of God
He did not leave me then alone
To mourn the loss of earthly thing
To be thus stripped gave greater place
For life His radiant presence reigns
How could I grieve for a heart thus plowed
I covet now no sweeter thing
Than wait with Him the harvest day
And in the meantime, hear Him sing

Do you like that? How many of you feel God in it. Well, God is in that. That is truth. To do what, watch for my harvest? To have it published in a book? No, that is all God's business. If He buried it, He will bring forth the harvest. I covet now, no sweeter thing than what? Wait the harvest day and in

the meantime, hear Him sing!

He sings over us. He sang over Jerusalem. He does that.

So, with this provision, I can't go too far with it, but are you getting something? The provision. What have you offered for the provision? Now I am not talking about your services. He is not too interested in the things you are doing, but that is disappointing some people very much. He is not concerned with that. He is concerned with you and with me.

He is not after your works, He is after you. He has ten thousand angels who can work, but He has only one of you, whom He may be able to plow and bring a little harvest unto His glory. Now don't fret because you cannot get results that other people have. Be willing to be plowed and let Him gather in the harvest when He good. I think that is only right.

Now, why isn't He too concerned with my doing? He never asked me to preach, he has never asked me to teach, He has never come and said now, this or that, He never does that. He only just comes and says, I want you. I'm glad it is that way. I am temperamentally made so that I could not take it any other way. I just couldn't. I am glad He keeps it on that level. I just want you, that's all.

Why do we serve? Why do I teach? Why do I preach? Why do I write? Why do I publish books?

Why do I do that? Well, I will tell you. It is a part of the technique which He has established by which an immortal spirit may be released, cultured, educated, trained, disciplined for Him when He wants it - that is all. I will stand before His judgment someday, and so will you. He will say to me, Follette, how many souls did you win? Well, I never kept track of them. I suppose they are half Baptist, but then, He will never ask me that. He will say, how many churches did you build? He will never ask me how many books did you write. Never, never in the world. You know what He will do? He knows that already.

Do you remember how the churches in Revelation all do that same thing? What was His first salute at every church, I know thy works, not sit down and listen. I have somewhat to say to you, we are not talking about your works. How many remember that? Why, because that is the natural normal thing.

What have you to show for your Christian experience? What have you to show for this? Let us now have a great show - NO - He is not after show. He is after hearts! He is after people!

The churches did not know that, so He had to sit them down, the very first - every church - Oh God, I

have lived for you. I have won souls, I have built churches, I have written books, I have preached, I, I, I.

Please sit down. You could not have done any of that acceptably, only through me. Do you notice some of the talents and things - He never thanked any of that service? Lord, you don't even thank those people for this generous return. He said, I can't very well thank myself for the things which I have done. That settled me!

I, no. The great I, no, no, don't do that. It is completely away from the truth. You may be popular, but that is not the truth. He says, I know thy works. I know all about that. But I have something to say to you. That is the way He will do with me. He will never ask me to give a report. Most people think it is that way. When they come to that judgment you will stand there kind of nervous and scared and the Lord will say, how many souls did you win? One hundred and two backslid. He will say to the recording angel, what are souls at - well so many souls a gold crown. Well you have two gold crowns. How many churches did you build? Three - well you will have a gold fence around one of them. How many see that or don't you?

This is not scriptural at all, because He did not do it that way. Your reward is not governed that way, nor does your reward consist of a gold house because you gave to the missionary cause. That is a lot of funny stuff that got me into religion. And I hate it because it is error, it is not truth. He never thanked one of those people for a thing that they had done. What did He do? He looked at them - all He will ever do to me - He will say, Follette, turn around. I think just the vision - I don't want to feel. Yes, Lord, Yes, Lord. Look, look, look - what is He looking for? To see if any of the image of His son is traced upon my immortal spirit. That is all he will ask for. He says we are to be conformed to the image of His son. He is looking for a reflection of the Son of God in you and in me.

How? Through the discipline of the mechanism of service. Today, your services will be blotted out! You will never even know you will never even think of them. Former things shall pass away, but there is something that will never pass away. What ever likeness of the Lord Jesus is upon your immortal spirit, that will abide through the eternal ages. But all the things you ever said and did, and the glories to the work, that will be abolished! For it was purely the mechanics by which He wrought in you.

One of the most marvelous and glorious miracles that has ever been wrought - the transformation of you and me, and conforming us to the image of His Son that He might pick us up someday and release us from the bondages of this flesh and project us upon a plane with Him. With what? Something of the image and likeness of His son etched upon my spirit. How? Through the mechanism of the things which He has put into my pattern to do. All service is reactionary. It is not for the service in itself, it is for what He can get in you and through you and in me and through me, through the mechanics.

The philosophy of our early church is quite lost. That was the philosophy of Paul. That was the teaching of our lovely Lord. It was the impact of truth under which our early church moved for quite a considerable time before these encroachments had come in upon them and diverted. Do you know something? It is much easier for you to do something for God, than to become something for God. Now there is a sermon in a nutshell. Do you know it? Why? To do, does not call necessarily from you the strange plowing and searching. To become, will call forth a discipline which is not necessary always for your little services. You know, you can get by with a lot? Don't I know it! You can get by with plenty, but He will never ask about that. He will say, what did that do "to you" not what did you do for me? He will never say, what did you do for me? He will say, what did that do to you. What is the reaction in your makeup because of that? He said to that little servant, let me see you. And he looked at them and do you know what He said? Oh, you have done wonderfully well. I never could have gotten through had it not been for you. Now if any of you feel you are indispensable, please crawl in a barrel and close it up. He said, well done good and faithful servant. How many see the emphasis is on the servant. He doesn't say a thing about their reward. Through all of the mechanism, under the power of the spirit, it has wrought in you something. What is it? Well done, good and faithful servant. How many of you see that they are all abstractions and not material crowns and feathers and gold houses. No. Why? Because they are character attributes.

I have never read this in the book. I read it in life. I read it in my heart. I know it.

He looked at them and he found that here were three things He could say. Well done, good, faithful servant. Come on in. Well Lord, what about my churches? He says, that was the mechanics which the

Holy Spirit used. We are not dealing with that now. That is going to pass even out of your memory."

Former things shall be absolutely washed out, you will never even think of it. But this is one thing - you will eternally carry with you the testimony which I speak now to you. I said Lord, what is that?

Well, He said, well done means to work has been correctly motivated and wrought in the power of the spirit. Then God says, well done. Not much done, well done.

Good - that is from the same root as God, meaning a God-likeness has been wrought in you. A God-likeness has been reflected in you. Something of God, like a fragrance. Have you ever been near people you felt God or haven't you? Was it because they were handsome, good looking? No. I have been close to some people who have radiated God. He said, I see that in you. A God-likeness has come into your life and being, your character has partaken of the essence of that and that is what I see in you now. Through the prophetess over there, which I used the Holy Spirit to do. It has wrought in you the miracle that I want for still another age, well done.

You can be faithful when you cannot be what the world calls successful. But you can be so free. So he says, you have been faithful over a few things, I am not dealing with the things, the things were the thing that provoked the faithfulness. Do you get that? The doing of the thing is causing faithfulness in them. These servants did not have these qualifications when He put them in the field. This was all acquired, built up in them through the prophecy. Through that, an element I call faithfulness in you has been manifest. I will take that element called faithfulness, and I will lift it up and push it over here on another plane and you shall be faithful over many. How many see it multiply? How many see gold crowns? It isn't anything like that.

Crowns are not souvenirs, they are won. Now, of course that will be lifted up and put over there. Now perhaps another one had other elements which He is dealing with in the construction and making of the new creature in Christ Jesus.

We talk about translation and the bride of Christ and all this business and I don't know. I don't know.

It seems to be about half of it is four thousand miles off the beam. It doesn't have anything to do with what God is doing. But in the traditional thing, you can get blessed in God - hallelujah! You can do all that and get nowhere around earth, let alone in heaven.

He takes that element and multiplies it. How many see the reward was an abstraction. How many see the reward was a character quality? Faithfulness was the reward. I can multiply it now because the thing that I was after was that element. Now I can lift it up and put it over here and He does in the ages yet to come.

How many see there is the multitude - what will you do with them? What are you going to do with multitudes? Have any of you learned anything this morning? I want you to. I covet, I pray for you. I love you like spirits to me. People are not just flesh and blood. I see potential possibilities in spirit in people. I know them, and oh, some of them I just covet. I say, don't wreck this thing. Let God have it. But, some can't do it. Well, learn to pay your price.

One of the young men who went through college with me, I liked him very well, claimed to be a missionary in the foreign field. We shared everything together. He was a wonderful spirit. Well, the day came when we dropped out of school and finished. The Lord filled me with His Spirit and I let him know it. And here he was, he was president of one of our big colleges in the US. When he took his two or three degrees, we were both working on our third degree together, so he had finished and he knew I was in Rochester at the time teaching. He was going through to be married. His girl was in Albany and so he came through to see me in Rochester. We had dinner and spent the day visiting. Well, I knew that he knew what we had, here with Pentecost.

We had a very good service and I did pray, Lord, don't let somebody go off the handle now. Lord probably the only chance he will have of seeing or knowing anything about the Spirit of God and now, don't let somebody, one of your sweet precious children, but ignorant, go clean off the beam with something and then upset it. The Lord had a lovely meeting and he knew it. So after we sat down, we just faced this issue. I said why don't you come with us?

He says, I know it is the truth. I know this whole Pentecostal thing is the truth. He called me by my old nickname, and said, I am so glad you have it. He says I rejoice in it. I am so glad you have it. Go on with it. This is God. Well, I said, why don't you come in with us?

You know what he said? The most pathetic thing - he weighed it in its balance and considered it and he looked at me so sort of wistfully, he said, I can't pay the price. How many get it or don't you?

He was making a choice right there. I can't pay the price! Did he go to hell? No. He went on in his popular swing. He became quite missionary minded and became the president of one of our colleges. He is having his flare, he is having his day, and it is all good, and all in the name of the precious blessed beautiful Jesus, and it is all for dear God's sake, of course, he doesn't get anything out of it, of course they never do. It is all for Jesus.

All for my dear Lord's sake and you are not getting any handoff here? Oh no. Glory to God. Well owned up to it. He said, I can't pay the price that is all, and he never has. Now will he go to hell? No. He will wake up sometime to find out that he had missed the real essence of his whole Christian teaching and experience in God. He had missed it. He had missed the core of the thing. He has been dealing with externality.

He was building with his uncle a wonderful work in China; missionary work. But he had his chance - God wanted him - He wanted him. So he goes to another village with his. He took it over to another village. He didn't give it to God.

Precious Lord, we have talked so much this morning that we pray and ask that you will bless it to every heart. It is not my word, it is not my truth, you have given this truth, you have opened truth, you have laid it upon us, you have burdened us with it and we like Lord to dispense it and give it to those who are able to hear. May those who have ears to hear, listen in and if there be a need, some spiritual adjustment in our thinking and living, make us courageous enough to say, yes, Lord. Get a hold of every heart in this auditorium this morning. Don't let us go until we can face thee. You have put restlessness even in religious things upon some hearts that you might bring a revelation. Don't let them miss the day of their visitation for Jesus sake. Amen

John 21:1-11

After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he himself. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples. Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, we also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing. But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on

the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, no. And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. How many found the question? Have you any fish? Have you have any food? Have you any meat? Now, they had fished all night. They had labored oh, so hard. They have tried all the tricks of fishing. All the shoals and new places and the little coves and they knew the fishermen's techniques. They had tried all of that, but you see they hadn't gotten a thing. Not even one little sun fish. Nothing. And so, when they had been brought to this terrible condition of reduction, the Lord casually says to them, "Did you get anything?" They have to say, no. Now, I call that (position, condition, provision,) and now, fruition. That is, have you any fruitage from it? Have you got any fruit out of this mess that you are in?

What is the result of this episode of your fishing? Did you gain anything by it? Did you catch any fish out of it?

In order to understand, or appreciate this little story and the conversation, you have to go back a little bit. It is like a little drama that if you don't have your stage setting, and the scenes and your background, the drama will not say very much to you. But when you have that, then you will see why it takes exactly the turn that it does. The conversation will have to take this turn.

What is the background of this whole story?

Mark 3:13-15

"And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would: and they came unto him. And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils."

Well, to make it short, Jesus has called these disciples and He said called them that they may be near Him. Then a little later, it says, and He sent them forth. How many get two directions? Most all Christian workers forget the first one.

They always get - and He sent them forth into the harvest field. No, He did not. He called them unto Himself that they might be with Him! How many of you get it? How many of you see something in

there? The necessity of that close personal union and fellowship with Him before they are all safe to venture out from Him. He is going to send them out later, but every time He does, they always come back again. Because they don't belong there. The agitated spirit always has to move. So, he says, go on to your exhausting. You will have to come back again. But you can't take anything now, so run along to the work - and when it is all over, they have to come back again.

And so it says, He called his disciples that they might be with Him, then He sends them forth. So you see, He is more interested in that spiritual understanding and contact with the disciples before He entrusts them with anything at all.

That they might be with Him.

Now, many don't appreciate that fact until they have been thoroughly exposed to the elements. Then, they appreciate coming back to be under His shelter, with Him. But many don't know that so they come out and become quite weather beaten before they ever return.

What is the general sense of value or appreciation of the thing that Christ is bringing to these disciples?

What is their approach? How do they value the Messiah, and His message? They interpret the visitation of this Messiah and even His message purely in materialistic terms. Absolutely, how many of you see that? They accept Him purely on a material basis and they interpret His messages and they interpret even His very miracles purely in the realm of that which is material until He has to rebuke them.

In the last times that He speaks, He says, my kingdom is not of this world. It is a spiritual realm into which we are birthed - that is the kingdom.

Well, these poor Jews had come under the tradition of the elders. In the day when Jesus was here, very few understood anything of the Old Testament in its original - what it really meant - even the law. It had been so perverted and changed and interpreted and interpreted by the scribes and the rulers, that when Jesus was here, very few of them even knew about the Old Testament. They had to have somebody to read it to them. Remember that? Even when they came back from captivity, they had to institute readers to explain it to them so that they would know what it was all about.

Look at the law, just the law. That marvelous instrument of God in itself is a spiritual matter. It is an

arrangement which God has made. Well now that law with the Ten Commandments - well - what does He do with it? They can't leave it as it is and have the leader, who is to teach and to preach, under the power of that truth until he can give it to the people with the same value, the same sense, the same concept as it was breathed and given to Moses - they can't do that. They have to tamper with it. So, the next generation that comes along, the old rabbi says, now here is the law. This is the prophet, this is thus and so and he begins to interpret that law to those people according to the level upon which they are living, and not the level where it was written.

How many know a difference between the level upon which it is written and the level where it is dropping. So, what does he do? He applies and interprets the law to these Jewish people on the level of their natural and interpreting it continually the way he thinks it should mean and what it should mean. Your next generation will take the interpretation of that leader, and give his interpretation of that man's interpretation, and the poor people are put under the yoke of that.

When Jesus came, the Jews who were keeping the law and keeping the Sabbath and keeping the feasts and keeping the all - they were all doing that. When they were keeping the law, do you know what they were keeping?

They didn't have the slightest idea of the original power of that truth at all and Jesus said so too. They had the law and the word, but they know not the power of it. They don't know the power of the thing; they know the letter of the thing.

When Jesus came, the group of people to whom he had to minister, were living under the interpretation of the interpretation, etc. etc. of the original - seven interpretations! Can you see now why it was so perverted and twisted that you could not keep it or do anything with the law to save your soul? It was such a bondage - it was such mess of a thing. Yet, that was the thing and Jesus said, you are putting yokes in everything else on their neck

You can only walk so far on the Sabbath day, or you will be breaking the Sabbath. Well, who in the world ever told that Jew that? Did God tell him that? No. God never said that. He never said anything about walking around on the Sabbath day. But the tradition of the elders had built it that way, so that when Jesus was here, they were bound under the law like a lot of dead folks wrapped in mummy

clothes, sealed up in a tomb of darkness and keeping the law.

A Sabbath's day journey - where do you get that word. We say it, oh, that is a Sabbath's day journey from here. What do you mean? It is an old tradition that was very popular and real in the time of Jesus. Those poor Jews were not permitted because the rabbi says; you will break the Sabbath if you walk farther than that.

God said, keep the Sabbath. He means it is so holy that you can't walk! Well, that is the way people - Do you remember how far they had pushed it that they couldn't even do a kindness to their neighbor who was sick? Did God ever say you could not help your neighbor when he is sick on the Sabbath? No, but they do. That law was so perverted and twisted and distorted that He says, none of you can keep it. It is bad enough as it is, but now you have made it a bondage that you can't carry and you put it on the necks of these and they can't carry it.

Wasn't it lovely of Jesus, I love Him when He becomes radical, good Lord, just go at them!

How many of you know that Jesus could have healed a man on Wednesday if He wanted to? How many think He could heal on Thursday if He tried? How many know that he didn't want to heal them on Wednesday or Thursday? What did He want to do? He wanted to heal one on Sunday! On their Holy Sabbath! And He got right in the middle of their Holy Sabbath and blew both ends out of it.

What was their reaction? They couldn't take it. If you loose a sheep, you go and find it don't you? I have come to find human beings and you condemn me for searching out for a human being and you go hunt all day for a sheep. Isn't the man worth more than a sheep?

Here is the Sabbath. I am not breaking any Sabbath that God has given. I am plowing through you miserable traditions, that is all I am doing and you are just loaded with them. Don't you like Him when He plows? I do.

I admire Him for His courage. He could have healed that man Tuesday if He wanted to, but He didn't want to. He wanted to come right in on one of their little lovely holy businesses that God had not anything to do with in the world and he just blew it apart, just like that.

People today cannot even take that. So, you see, they are bound by these traditional things - holding upon a natural plan. Jesus did not come to establish a material kingdom. He came to die. I have come

to give you life and that more abundantly. Now, Calvary is included in there and all the other things, but He doesn't mention that. He says life.

All their interpretation of the Old Testament concerning their Messiah, they gather all together concerning every prophecy that will relate to him as a king, who is coming to reign and rule - a Messiah - a nice good Messiah. They were so press, they were so horribly pressed, every nation had come in and walked all over them, taken what they wanted out of them until poor little Israel is depleted to a handful and they sit up there in Palestine, in Jerusalem, with a temple and that is all they have.

They have lost their national life. They have lost any national prestige they had with other nations, they are just nothing but a little bunch of people who have been raked over and raked over for shekels. Syria, Assyria, Egypt, Greece, now Rome - there are five that have been like a vulture on that little group of people. Raking out their substance from them. When you get down, reduced like that and God often allows it to come in the physical realm to arouse you to a need which is spiritual.

Very often, if He can't reach you in the spirit, He will reach you in the body. There is some people that He can't get until they are half killed, knocked down three times and dragged out and finally they look up and say, is the Lord in this? He says, yes dear, I sure am.

That is like Israel - he has allowed them to be hammered and hammered and hammered and every nation walking over it till they are depleted in a little handful. Now what is their remedy? The only remedy is where is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? Has He not promised to us a kingdom? Didn't he promise and promise and promise? Yes, those are all beautiful promises, now every body get these precious beautiful promises and lay them before the Lord and we will make God come to. If you get the promise or two and pry it loose, He might perform for you. Some people use promises purely as a wedge in to get God moving.

You never made God move. You never made God do anything. You didn't.

You have a satisfaction to think - I wrestled with Him and I claimed His promises and I got a hold of God and I tell you, after weeks I got Him in the corner and I made Him own up and I said, God do this and you know God came right out and did it for me. Hallelujah I got the victory!

Well, that is like people do, not in this lovely state! But in New York where I live!

This terrible depletion to which they had come, they are so pushed up there, they cannot even fly a flag. They have no recognition among the nations. They are just lost out. So, when John comes saying, behold the kingdom is at hand - how many see the ears all going up like this - why - they love that word kingdom - oh - that prophet, I like that prophet. He preaches good. He talks about kingdom. We all do that thank you. That is how we react. They don't hear the real truth.

They want to have him to come as a Messiah to reign and to rule and get on the throne and establish Israel and tell all the nations where to get off. That is what they wanted.

And the motive that prompted them to gather about the Lord, was just that. The Lord exposes them once in a while. Do you think they just followed Jesus because He was such a sweet Jesus? He told them. You don't follow me for miracles. You are following me for some fish and bread. You can't fool me. Jesus knew it. He was a realist.

So when He comes, you watch them. Did you ever watch the reaction of even the disciples, let along the common people? The reaction of the disciples every time Jesus preached concerning the kingdom? Well, you will tell which way the wind is blowing if you watch that. Get their reaction when He is talking about kingdom and power. Every time He does, they interpret it on the level of their natural and the flesh, every time.

If He speaks about the kingdom, it arouses that thought - a kingdom. Why that ambitious mother.

What ailed her? That lovely patriotic mother with her two sons. She brought them down to Jesus, and said, oh Jesus, I see you have truth; you have an insight into life. You make life meaningful. It is wonderful. Here are my two sons. Will you let me bring them to you so that you can coach them and teach them and bring truth to them? Is that what she said?

Don't fool yourself. No, she is not interested in all that truth business. She is interested in getting that kingdom established and getting one on the right and one on the left hand didn't she? Can you see through that? I want you to see reality this morning. Stop reading things traditional. Read it as it is in the bible. She was not motivated by the thought that here is a wonderful word of life moving and I want my sons brought under its power and influence. That was not it. She wanted them in the kingdom. He will work a miracle, when His back is turned, and He is talking about His kingdom, the kingdom, what

did his disciples talk about? The minute his back is turned, they begin to wrangle among themselves who will be the great one in it. How many know that is in this holy bible?

What are they talking about? Are they saying, isn't this wonderful. This prophet, this Messiah, the message that He brings. Oh, I wonder if we can really get it? I wonder how much of it can we take?

How much of it can you able to take? I am getting it. No, there are wishing to heaven that he'd stop talking about this business and get to work on the throne where he belongs. That is what they wanted. He had to rebuke them for it.

When they began a little sacrifice, one of them, Peter, says to Jesus, we left everything to get in on the ground floor of this thing, now what are you going to do about it? How many remember that one?

Well, I am exposing these things, because most of you never read them.

A terrible unmasking of even the disciples. When Jesus even in the shadow of Calvary said, I must go up to Jerusalem and suffer this death and rise in three days. Oh Peter gets right a hold of him and rebukes him. In the Greek, it is stronger than that. It means to take a person like that - and Peter actually took Him and said, no, Lord, be it far from thee. Well, what is the matter with Peter? Does he love Jesus so tenderly that he does not want to get him hurt? Not at all. Peter is afraid the bottom is going to fall out of his boat, that's all. Can you see that?

I want you to know that Paul and all these people were human beings. We have them all glorified now - images and halos and all terrific looking things. Come on! How many know they are all human? I like the mistakes that they all made. Paul and all of them. Did Paul make a mistake? Yes, I could figure one out for you right now, but I don't want to. A nice fat one too. Sure, that is in the bible.

Be apart? Why? Peter was saying oh, you Messiah, we don't want to dead Messiah, we have you going along pretty good so far and you are telling about the kingdom, now for mercy sake, don't go and die on our hands. We want an alive Messiah. Isn't that what he was saying?

Jesus turned to Peter, not Jesus turned and said, get thee behind me Satan, but he turns to Peter and says, get thee behind me Satan! He is talking to Peter. I will explain that in another message. Now he is not calling him the devil, but he is resisting the power of the enemy that would push through even a human personality to destroy the thing that God wants. I will give you a message along that line some

other time.

Keep this now in mind. They are continually expecting from Him, even to the last breath, that He would establish a kingdom and bring to pass the things that they wanted. They wanted Israel established. That is a nice national feeling isn't it? Sure it is and now that they have this Messiah, why can't the Messiah, Messiah correctly? He is Messiahing very correctly isn't he? Sure. But if you can't get the slant of his visitations, you will still question. He was doing exactly the will of God. For I have come not to just what you want. I have come to die. Now please let me alone so I can die.

He was in a strait until he could accomplish it. Never think that he was scared to death of Calvary. No, he wasn't. My Lord never was. And that he got down and was afraid to die and said, don't let me die Lord. Take this cup away from me. Nonsense. Women have embraced a cross with boldness and courage, don't you think our little lovely Jesus could? I have a Christ that can do that. He is not afraid of death or Calvary. Why do we have all this lingo? Half of that stuff ought to be put out of the singing books and out of the tracts because it is not true.

Physically, there was torture and distress, but he was not dying just a physical death. He was going through the tragedy of all time and ages. Never relate it to something physical because he had pain and some blood. It is past that. The tragedy of Calvary is not colored by blood on his body. That is all there, but that is not the point. So, even the Lord has to rebuke his disciples because of their lack of insight. They had no idea, no penetration to enter into the real moving of God in him. I think personally, he was the most lonely person that ever walked this earth. I don't think any of us could fathom the loneliness of his heart. It is too deep. It is too profound. It covers such vast territory.

Why hast thou forsaken me? Why? You know, in every crisis, in which Christ was brought, God could always, somehow, break through and suffer him. The horror of that condition. There is not a crisis but what God the Father who loved His son (overwhelmed with the feelings of the Father for His son)... no one knows the love of the Father for that Son. No one knows it. He could always break through in any crisis, even when it came to Calvary, He was made sin, not bearing sin, he is made sin. How many know that the Father's face has to be withdrawn. What did He say, in the original, in the Aramaic, in the old language? "Oh Father, why have you left me on my own?" No just alone, but on my own. Up to this

time, He had NEVER been that way, but now He is.

Now these disciples can't enter into anything like that. How could they? Well, tradition won't allow them to. They are warped, baked, dried, petrified in the traditions of those elders until even the presence of the Lord Jesus in their midst could not seem to break through. It is what we call a fixation.

So, He doesn't satisfy their desires. He does not make a king. He does not establish the kingdom.

What is their reaction? Of course, they are all disappointed. They think well, what is all this about?

We have given everything to following and we watched it all and now, look it. Now He is verging right up to a death. How can you ever interpret a thing like that? I suppose those disciples behind the Lord's back must have had a terrible time trying to piece this thing together.

Well, if you are still under certain traditional patterns, you will never piece together the spiritual values. Spiritual values will never mean what they should if you are still poking around under certain traditional patterns. Not sin and wickedness, no, religiosity! Religiosity! Traditions have to be put aside. You can't get into any spiritual realm or reality with a lot of these funny things hanging on. You can't do it. It is not suppose to be that way. They could not enter in either.

And so, Jesus goes ahead and says, well, I am going to die. I must die. He died. He placed into the tomb. God, the Father raises him from the dead. He never raised Himself. Don't get that. He got up and pushed the bars aside, He did no such thing. God the Father, by the eternal Spirit, raised Him from the dead. Some more singing book stuff! The devil does not care if those things are in there because it detracts from the authority of God's word and sounds sentimental. No, leave our lovely Lord in the place that God puts Him. He is the most marvelous, unique person that ever touched this earth. Leave it as God has arranged it.

So, God raises Him from the dead and He appears to them. He blesses them and He breathes the Holy Spirit upon them and says, receive ye the Holy Spirit. He comforts them. He discusses the things of the kingdom with them. God takes Him home.

Now come to the story. This is all background. What happen? When a severe jolt comes to your faith, a severe disappointment of a thing which you had hoped so much to realize, the thing that you have planned and prayed and hoped for, for years is not for you, and God is saying, "Take this step of faith

with me over this situation, this is not for you." God wants to shape before you something of real spiritual value as a divine substitute for the thing which you think you must have or die. You won't die. He doesn't want you dead. He wants you alive. You may think you will die in the process, but you won't. Folks like that never die. They always live to upset everybody else. That is right. People come to me, "I'll just die." I said, no you are not fit to die. You are not going to die. You got hysterics, sit down five minutes and I will help you. Now, be calm, drink a glass of water.

Well, what will they do? If God says here is this lovely thing. It is for you. It belongs to you. It is your next step. It is the next issue from the crisis to which I am building you. I am building you now to a crisis. I have been weeks, months, even years building some up to a crisis. Now don't be upset. I am going to let this whole thing crash, just like that because it is the way of this that I have for you. Now that is for you. I want you to have it.

Well, then He leaves you. How many have been left after He has said something and it is something terrifying? You wonder if you had a dream, or if the devil was after you, or if you imagined it, do you ever have that? Yes. Anybody who walks with God will have it.

Now what is your next step? If you are not careful and you don't have faith to stand still, just stay put - I don't seem to be get it - stay put - but He said - stay put - be quiet - everything is not done in ten minutes. Well, He shows you and you get a whiff of it every once in a while. Sometimes I see it - no - He is going to have a little testing going on in here.

When your faith is not able to bridge a cavern like that, you don't seem to be geared to it; do you know what you will do? Automatically, you will revert to your old natural position. It is more comfortable there because you are kind of used to that, but you are not quite adjusted to this. How many know the discomfort of adjustment? How many know the ease of slipping back into the thing that you did know? Isn't that so? Yes. That is so. We have all had it. How many times in God adjusting me, I said, Lord, this is pretty terrific, but I think it is easier this way. You know, it isn't bad, but it isn't that. But I am hoping for that, but I can't get that through this. How many get me now? How many of you follow me? Four. The rest of you will see it in a thousand years, you will say, my heavens sake, that man was right and now I see it. That is what you will say one hundred years from now, every one of you. Not

because it is I, but because it is the truth.

Now you will revert to your old order, in the thing which you are rather familiar. I haven't really let you down and it carried you quite a ways didn't it? It didn't really let you down, but you know inside, that it isn't that yet. How many get me now? It isn't really that and God is building you up to it. And you pray and you cry and you claim verses and you read the scripture and you consult everybody under the sun and there you are. Have you ever been stranded - it is terrible.

I talk out of my heart to you. I am preaching everything I go through, so when you have to do it, you will know what to do, see? I don't charge extra for it because I love you so much. I say, oh child, don't do it that way. Do it this way. But Follette, don't but me, don't but God, you just do it. Stay quiet. No, he can't stand there in faith. He isn't built to it yet. So what does he do? He falls back to his natural - that from which God is all the while calling him.

And he says, (I can image this conversation. I feel in my whole being that this is his heart attitude) well brethren, we have had three years of wonderful experience with this Messiah. He is called us and I know that He has called us and we have listened to Him, but evidently we have missed the bus somewhere down the line. We haven't got on to the train. He is so spiritual and mystical. He talks about the realm of the spirit and all stuff like that, and then in a little while He will say, the kingdom of God is like unto, and entering the kingdom and He goes and shows all the power under Him for a kingdom and then never operates in it. What? There is something funny isn't it? Peter says I have stopped thinking. I can't put this thing together at all. James, do you have any light on it? Thomas, what do you think? Well, Thomas says, I always was a doubter, but I don't get much out of it. What is my reaction? I think they pooled their interests, I really do. They put it together like that and they said, what will we do? Well Peter says, you know, I am the robust sanguine type, I am an extravert and I don't know if I was ever made for anything as mystical and wonderful and spiritual as this whole affair. I guess I wasn't made for a spiritual turn at all. I know fish, I know tangible things. I know a good fish when I see one and I know boats and I know that life and I went and left it all for this and now where is He, He is dead and gone up in heaven and He doesn't come back and He has not made any kingdom and where are we? Well, he says, you can do what you want; I am going back to my net.

Now he didn't say I am going fishing because the sun was bright.

cont.

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