

The Church - Part 4

by Les Wheeldon

Les Wheeldon's sermon emphasizes that the Church is built on the revelation of Jesus Christ and the transformative power of the Holy Spirit.

Duration: 1:05:58

Topics: "Church"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher reflects on Mark 14 and the story of Jesus raising a little girl from the dead. He emphasizes the tender and beautiful nature of Jesus' actions and highlights the importance of the church as a place for the Holy Spirit to dwell. The preacher encourages listeners to be thirsty for the resurrection power of God and to trust in His ability to bring them out of their misery, disappointment, and aimlessness. He emphasizes the need to seek the voice of God above all else and to rely on His supernatural intervention in our lives.

Transcript

We're on our fourth talk on the Church and we're still on the foundation of the Church and I want to turn you again to Matthew chapter 16 and we'll read again these verses verse 13. When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am? They said, some say that you are John the Baptist, some say you're Elijah, and others say you're Jeremiah or one of the prophets. He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, You are the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the Living God.

And Jesus answered and said to him, Blessed art thou Simon, son of Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed it to you but my Father who is in heaven. And I say also to you, you are Peter, a little stone, and upon this bedrock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven and whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Then charged he his disciples, they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ. From that time forth began Jesus to show to his disciples how that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him and began to rebuke him saying, Be it far from me Lord, this shall not be to thee.

But he turned and said to Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan, for you are an offence to me, for you do not savour the things that are of God, but those that are of man. And then he speaks the famous words about the cross and said Jesus to his disciples, If any man will come up to me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily I say to you, there be some standing here who shall not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom. And after six days Jesus takes Peter, James and John his brother, and brings them up into a high mountain apart, and was transformed before them, and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

And behold there appeared to them Moses and Elijah talking with them. And so it goes on. Now here we are again at one of the foundational statements regarding the church.

And Jesus says that you are a stone, and on this bedrock I will build my church, and the bedrock is of course Christ himself. And also we have to add here the revelation of Christ. The church is built on Christ revealed.

And that's an obvious statement when you think about it. It's not built on Christ, on the idea of Christ, simply on the teaching about Christ. It is built on Christ himself through a revelation of him to your heart.

Now if I said to you, have you ever seen an angel? You would say, like me I'm sure most of you, not all of you, no I haven't seen an angel but I would like to see one. I'd like to see one but I don't know whether I ever shall. I rather think that God doesn't particularly want us to see angels.

One or two times people see them, even in the New Testament they were seen. But if I said to you the church is built on the revelation of angels, ooh, that would mean you would have to have an encounter with angels in some way or other in order to be a true church. But I praise God the Bible doesn't say it's built on me, on the revelation of angels.

It is not built on it, it's built on the revelation of Christ. And if I say that, that means that you have had a direct living revelation of Christ to your heart and that is what makes you a member of the church. Now remember what we're saying here again is all this is going to be tied in with the experiences we have of God through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

God who is going to build his church through an outpouring of the Holy Spirit and through the Holy Spirit he reveals Christ and what Peter was here experiencing was the ministry of the revelation through the Holy Ghost that was to be foundational in his life. Now when we say these things we're not simply saying that this is a doctrine that is simply to be understood. It is to be the very pattern of life of the church.

The church exists by and for the revelation of Jesus Christ and because of that the church begins to take on the ambassadorship of the Lord Jesus Christ because we are true ambassadors of him, because we know him and because we have encounters with him and we are walking with him. It is not enough to say I have had a revelation, it is that I am in a relationship of revelation with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. Now there it is, that's the foundation and I've read this passage because you can see here that he also links the revelation and also the founding of the church with the cross because the cross in our experience

is a doorway into the things of God.

You know that man always puts things the other way around, God always puts them in their true order. Man believes that through much preaching about the Holy Spirit we will have the Holy Spirit but God knows that it is only through the exaltation of Christ and him crucified that there will be an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Not just teaching on the Holy Spirit but an exaltation of Christ and him crucified.

And you also notice here in this passage that this foundation of the cross in the church was immediately attacked by Satan and Satan always attacks the life of the crucified one in the church. But that's really going on to a further subject. Now when we look then at the revelation of Christ in his church, I went on to read into chapter 17 because they didn't have a revelation, did you notice that? They had a revelation of Christ and in chapter 16 we read that he said you are the Christ the son of the living God and in that statement he was speaking from an insight that he had, he saw something by revelation about who Christ was.

But in chapter 17 he looked long on the face of Jesus which was like the sun. He looked long and hard on the face of Jesus shining like the sun. Now today was a beautiful day and I looked up into the sky to look at the sun I hardly glanced because you can't.

You cannot look at the sun on a clear day, it is impossible. If you try it, it will blind you. But it says here that the face of Jesus was shining like the sun and that they looked on him.

Now it doesn't mean that they gazed into his face, I'm sure they couldn't. I'm sure like the angels in heaven when they looked on the unveiled face of Jesus they covered their face with their hands just like the angels in heaven. Can you imagine that the angels in heaven who have been in his presence for, since they were created, we're not talking about thousands of years, but they still cannot look on the face of Jesus or on the face of the father.

They still hold up their hands, I'm certain the apostles did too and in a picture I'm sure they also covered their feet and felt unworthy to stand in the presence of Jesus. And the truth is that the church is built on the revelation of Jesus Christ. I want to show you three passages of scripture tonight when Jesus was revealed in a particular way which is foundational.

Three particular revelations of Jesus which are foundational to the church and which must be taking place in some way or other in the church. Now if I took you back, before I look at these three passages, if I take you back now into the old testament and you considered Moses bringing the ten commandments, now you know that Jesus, sorry Moses was on the mountain for 40 days and 40 nights and he received revelations, he received the commandments as a gift from God, he gave them those, but also on the second time he was up the mountain, he prayed this prayer, he said show me your glory, show me your glory. And the father or God said to him you cannot see my face for there shall be no man see my face and live but you shall see my back parts and I shall pass before you and I shall cover you in the cleft of the rock and I shall pass before you and you shall look on me but not my face, you cannot for no man can see my face and live.

And so he hid Moses in the cleft of the rock and Moses could not look on the face of God but he just saw the glory of God, show me thy glories and he saw the glory of God and when he came down again his face was shining and he had to cover his face because of the brightness of his face. But what we see here is the foundation of Israel. Israel was not founded only on the 10 commandments Israel, and this is one of

the mistakes people make, Israel was founded by the fact that Moses had a revelation of God, he knew what God was like and really Israel could only function when there was somebody in Israel with a revelation of God.

Israel was never meant to function simply by the 10 commandments, it was also meant to function by the revelation of God through the prophet and that is also foundational for the New Testament. The church only functions by the revelation of God through the Holy Spirit and really it's something that you are to say I want to see your glory because the church is given, it is given to the church to have the glory of God, to see the glory of God, to know the person of Jesus Christ, to see his face, to know his heart and to walk with him. You are to ask God show me your glory and he will show it to you.

And the church is only the church because it has the glory of God. When the New Jerusalem comes down from heaven it is said, this verse of the New Jerusalem, having the glory of God. The church has the glory of God and it says in Ephesians, a glorious church.

Now if I said to you what is glory? What is it? What is a glory? What is the glory? What's the glory of the church? Well we'll look at these things but the truth is that we are to be a church that knows the glory of God. We are to be personally and as a company of people in the place of the revelation of God by the Holy Spirit to us. Now we're going to come on in further sessions on this to look at the ministry in the church but I want to jump ahead to that for a moment because you know that the Old Testament ministry stopped short of the glory.

It stopped short. Do you remember the very, the great symbol and parable of this was the fact that nobody entered into the Holy of Holies, even the high priest who could only went in and out briefly once a year. And the Bible says that this was a a kind of a shadow or a parable to signify that the way in was not yet made manifest.

The whole way they functioned showed everybody that the way into the glory of God and the holiness of God and the presence of God, the way in was still shut. But the truth is that most churches that are core churches in the earth are today declaring that the way into God, into the glory of God is shut because they don't go in. The way open is only declared by people who have gone in.

It is not declared by people who say they think the way is opened. It is only made known by the fact that people have gone into the glory of God and have been changed by that glory and have come forth with the glory of God. The ministry of the Holy Spirit, the whole functioning of the ministry depends on this, that the glory of God is amongst us.

We are not a New Testament church unless there is the ministry of glory. You can look at it in other passages, we will do. But the other ministry, there is either ministration of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ or there is a ministry of the letter and you can teach about the new covenant, you can teach about these things, but the point is that God wants there to be a revelation of God as he is by the power of the Holy Spirit through men and women who have entered into the glory of God.

And you are to say, show me your glory, let me hear your voice, let me walk with you, change my nature, take me in, I want to know God for myself. If I said to you, your ministry depends upon seeing an angel, and I say, you have got to pray God to see an angel, I am saying something far greater than seeing an angel. I am saying that you are to know the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ and that is what makes you a minister of the New Testament, it makes you a part of this glorious church that has come into the

revelation of Jesus.

Now the Holy Spirit is given to reveal Jesus, that is why he is given, and we will come to that another time, but let me take you now to chapter 17, because here we have got a revelation of Jesus after these things, and notice he has said an introduction to this, that Jesus said in verse 28 there be some standing here who shall not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom. And that obviously does not refer to his coming again at the end of the age, it refers to his coming in power and glory in the kingdom of God through the power of the Holy Spirit to establish a church, the day of Pentecost. And he immediately went on into chapter 17 to describe something that took place, and this is one of those foundational revelations, it is there in chapter 17.

He takes Peter, James and John his brother and brought them up into a high mountain apartment, now notice these three men are the foundational leaders of the New Testament church, the church at Jerusalem was built on these three men. Now we know that the church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, all right, now at this point we can get all tied up and we'll have to come back to that statement again and examine it further, but the truth is the church is also built on men in this respect, that of course the revelation of Jesus Christ is to men that they may become the foundation of the church. Men are foundation of the church only by virtue of the fact that they are founded in Christ, no man is in himself a foundation of the church, but of course foundations are laid in churches, and when you go and see something taking place, when you hear ministry, when you observe things, you are having foundations laid in you whether you know it or not.

And so for example if you went to a brethren church when you were younger, earlier in your Christian experience, and you heard ministry which exalted the word, but did not bring to you the revelation of Christ by the Holy Spirit, then that foundation is laid in you. Similarly if you went to a meeting where the revelation of the Holy Spirit was something like the Toronto blessing, you know some of these strange things, that foundation is laid in people and they are beginning to expect it. In other words if I see somebody jerking and shaking and somebody says that is the vital thing, then people are expecting that that is the revelation of God on his throne.

You know one of the things that makes me know that that is not right, it's simply this, thank you, well it's simply this, that when I think of heaven, I can never think of Jesus behaving like that on the throne, never. It offends my sense of God, and I know this is not the God I serve. That doesn't mean to say that in that confusion and in the mixture of carnality that God is not moving and doing things where hearts are open, but it does mean that there's something being laid in people's understanding that will actually give them problems later on, and this is why foundations have to be laid in the right way, and this is why the foundation of the church is laid by men who have given themselves to know and walk with the Lord Jesus Christ as he is, in reality.

Well let's look at this one in chapter 17 because this is one of them, this is one of the revelations, and here Jesus is taking these three men and he wants to show them something very foundational and precious, he wants these men to understand it. Here it is in verse 2, it's glory, it's brightness, it's shining living holiness, his raiment was white, this is the purity. You know that one of the themes of the the New Testament, which is it comes to the ministry of the New Testament, does not come to the ministry of the Old Testament.

The thing that comes to the ministry of the New Testament, the ministry of Christ to form his church, it is the power of God to purge the human heart clean. This is foundational. But the foundation of your life in

the church is built not just on your purity, but that you have seen the absolute total purity of God.

You know that the belief in purity only comes when you know that there is a pure sinless place. Now I know that the Bible very plainly teaches that we are not to try and ever think of ourselves as sinless, that is not what the Bible teaches. The Bible never tries to make us think of ourselves as sinless.

We have the hope of sinlessness in our hearts. But the Bible very definitely and clearly teaches a sinless saviour. And the Bible wonderfully teaches that there is a sinless foundation to the church, and that there is a sinless foundation to my life in the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is one in whom I am brought who is sinless. And this is the power of the foundation of the church, that there is a place which we are to know which is a sinless place. And that is the person of the Lord Jesus Christ sinless.

He is brightness and holiness, and he is shining out with the glory of God in the power of his holiness. In other words, holiness is not merely a cleanness, it is a brightness, a living pulsating brightness. Holiness is that which indwells him of his nature.

Holiness is that which shines from him and shines through all things, and purges and cleanses those who are brought into him. The church is founded in the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. And here are these two things in this particular event.

Here he is, they saw his face shining as the sun, and saw his garment clean as the light. And it tells us in another verse, so clean that no fuller, no means of cleaning on earth could ever get it so white. What you have to see is that there is a place of such purity that is incomparable to anything you have ever seen on earth.

God is seeking to bring us into this absolute treasure that is ours, which is called in Hebrews, the holiest of all. Now God has opened up through revelation, through the cross, he opens up to us the holiest place of all. And one of the most amazing verses of the New Testament is this, having therefore breath and boldness to enter the Holy House by the blood of Jesus, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience with pure water, and our bodies washed with pure water.

We are to draw near with boldness. It doesn't say we are to draw near with words, we're not worthy to draw near. We're not worthy to say I deserve the holiest of all, I earn the holiest of all, I deserve it.

No, we are to say despite all my undeserving, despite all my unworthiness, despite all my sin and failure and weakness, the Bible bids me have boldness and confidence to come there and be cleansed as I enter. The Bible does not say make yourself clean enough so that you may enter. There is an element of that in that the repentant heart can only enter, but the Bible never says you are to make yourself clean enough to enter.

The Bible says come boldly and you will be cleansed as you enter. And when these three apostles, they sat there before the Lord, and all Jesus did was, he literally said just look, just look at me, have a look at me, and as they looked, as I said they wanted to cover their faces, I don't know what they wanted, they were confused, they didn't know. At this point it was, if you like, still partly outward, I think partly outward because I believe, as I said already, that this, well one week I said this, that their experience of Jesus Christ at this moment was something very similar to what we experienced with the baptism of the Holy Spirit, but they experienced this without receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

They saw and felt and knew the presence of Jesus flooding them as much as that was possible at this moment. Now that is what actually happens in the baptism of the Holy Spirit, that that glorious one floods and fills and transforms my whole nature and my being. The church is God gathering us in beyond the veil to the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and that is why the church is built on absolute righteousness.

You know that when we think of the church, you know that we can hear problems here and problems there, but the truth is the church is built on the holiness of Christ. It is built because we are made clean in heart, we are made pure of heart in Christ. There is a purging of our conscience.

The scripture speaks of this in different ways, but what it says in Hebrews is this, that if this could have purged us, or if that could have purged us, they were just, they could not purge us, but this did, this can, this will. There is a place of being made so clean in the person of Jesus Christ. The church is built on the revelation of the holiness of Jesus.

It is not built on moral precepts. You know, I was reading just this last week about Calvin's, um, um, Geneva, and he built Geneva on moral precepts. He did not build on the revelation of Jesus Christ as the Holy Ghost.

So, for example, he made laws like this. You are not allowed to name your child after any other name other than by an Old Testament saint. I suppose, I assume it included New Testament, but it said there in this writing, Old Testament saint.

And so a man named his child Claude, and he was put into prison for three days by Geneva, by these, but there you've got one of the rules, you see, one of these, but you go on, you're not allowed to sing worldly songs, you're not allowed to, and all the other rules and regulations that made Geneva a Christian place, but it didn't make it Christian. You know, the same thing happened in this country when Oliver Cromwell, the great Puritan leader, he led the nation and enforced Puritan standards. For example, one thing was forbidden in those days, which I'm sure would all love to be forbidden today.

He forbade pornography. Wouldn't you like that? We'd all agree with that, wouldn't we? Pass the law forbidding pornography. But you know what happened? He died in 1658, I think.

All you students agree. 1658. And in 1660 Charles V was crowned king of England.

And you know one of the things that happened in the restoration of the monarchy was a flood of pornography. I don't know anything about it, but I only know what I have read, that it says that the flood of pornography was so bad it would shock people to this day. Why did the flood of pornography come? Because sin had been repressed for say 20, 30 years, and when the lid was taken off, when the Christian veneer was taken off, whoosh, out it all comes again.

And you can find this wherever that people have tried to make a Christian society by law. It simply does not work. So the church does not say you must be an upright man by law.

That is not the way you are part of these things. What the scripture is saying is you must know the revelation of this bright shining person in the very being of you, in you. The brightness, the shining, the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, shining in and through the heart of the church.

You know that there should be fear in the church to sin through the glory of God in the holiness of Christ. The fiercest sin is not because of the strictness of the eldest, but through the presence of God through the Lord Jesus Christ. And this is what he's saying, this is how I'll build my church.

The gates of hell will not prevail against this. The gates of hell can make havoc of us people who live by law legalistically. One of the effects of those little nitty, trying to be righteous through laws, is that it ends up producing total hypocrisy.

You know that one thing you must never do is pretend to be holy. I'm not saying by that that you should just give up the attempts to be holy if you find you can't. No, you do obey the laws that you know, but you are not to pretend your heart is holy if it isn't.

If you have unclean thoughts, don't deceive yourself, but go to Christ to let him cleanse your heart with this same purity. He will purge you. He is the righteous God and he wants to shine amongst us.

This is the foundation of the church, a revelation of the purity of Christ. Now let's look at another foundation of the church. You notice he revealed this to Peter, James and John.

Let's look at another one this time, very briefly in Mark chapter 5. Because when you look at these things you are seeing the way men will operate, men will act, men will expect according to what they know of Jesus. You know if there's one great cry in your heart it's this, to know Jesus, to know him. You know the Bible says in John chapter 17 that Jesus said, he said, this is eternal life that they may know you, the only true God and Jesus Christ to know us.

To know God is eternal life. In other words, eternal life is not endless time. Eternal life is the wonder of him.

It is him and to know him and he's wonderful. And the church is to have this, I don't want to say excitement because that could make it almost a kind of a superficial thing, but I want this deep yearning urge, joy and gladness because of Jesus. If we are motivated by anything other than him then we are failing.

The urge that comes through the ministry, the urge that comes through the church, the power of the gospel is him, him, him. And the name of the church is not Bracknell Pentecostal Church Assembly, that tells you certain things about your faith, but the name of the church is his, his, his. And when they come what they feel is him, him, him, not him number, him, the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

And that is why in our activities the most foundational activity of the church is to come to the place where we are listening to him. That is a discipline that is impossible for anyone but one who thirsts for him. Waiting on God is not silent.

There is a silence in the graveyard. Waiting on God is a looking up in faith to him, and there's a vast difference. It will make you silent because you will want everyone else to be quiet, stop I want to listen to what he's saying.

It's like when something comes on the radio and I want to understand it, I think, everybody be quiet, I want to hear, I want everybody to be, I want silence everywhere. But when we as a church are gathered unto him, to listen to him, to receive from him, to then we are really the church. We are most the church when we are thirsting for him, and loving him, and worshipping him, and aware of him.

We are least the church when we're only aware of ourselves. The church that has no awareness of him has liberty to squabble, but you don't squabble when he's around. One of the things that I most lament is that we aren't talking about church divisions and all these things, but the thing is this, one of the things that goes wrong in church is it moves away from him, and the result is problems.

Now of course some problems come because we're doing the right thing, some problems come because we do the wrong thing, some attacks come because we do the right thing, but sometimes all kinds of ideas start popping up, and all kinds of interests, and all that, and people start having time for worldliness, and all kinds of things, and projects, and this and they're going on, you think well why, why is all this, where is it coming from? It's this, the loss of the preoccupation with him. You know if you're a disappointed soul you need him. What does the world need? What does a drug addict need? What does a demon possessed person need? What does anybody need? Everybody needs one thing, him.

Do you know that I know that he can minister utter salvation to anyone. There is no one too far gone for him. He can do it.

Now here we are in chapter, Mark's Gospel chapter 5, and here he is, I'll just take you right to the end of the chapter. He's got Peter, James, and John again. He's gone into this home, and there's a dead girl lying there, and he's going to raise this girl from the dead.

This is a foundational experience. The very centre of the church is Jesus raising the dead. Absolute lash! This is not casting out devils, this is not forgiveness of sins, this is resurrection from the dead, and that is moving from one state totally, suddenly, completely into another state in one second of time.

That's what happens through Jesus. This is foundational. And he took them in to see it happen.

And you know that one of the things that the church must believe is that Jesus raises the dead. Do you know we do the Alpha Course in our church, and I like the Alpha Course, but do you know that becoming a Christian is not following a course, it is a resurrection from the dead. It can happen through this means or that means, but it does not happen through studying and completing a course.

Of course courses like that, they hopefully bring you into this kind of truth I'm saying. That's why I'm not against it. We do the Alpha Course, but the foundation of the church is resurrection from the dead.

Jesus Christ wants to take you by the hand and speak such life into your being that you utterly change in an instant, that you throw off the grave in a moment, that in an instant you come out and you don't know how, but you're alive from the dead. And here is Jesus ministering life from the dead. Here he is, he's ministering by the way in the context of mockery and resistance and pressure and stress.

You know that many of us want to minister in the ideal circumstances. We don't want any trouble, we don't want any mockery, we don't need any difficulty, but Jesus Christ was never put off by any of those things. He continued on his course and ministered the same.

And so here he is, he's got the mockers out now, he's dealt with all those things and conflict there, not easy, could easily upset a man, but he's still calm of course. Here there he is, he's being calm. That's a great secret for the church to know the calm in the storm.

And in the calm, there they all are I believe, we take many things for granted about Jesus, but there he is, all this and they're all gathered and they just knew he'd be calm, it's all right, just sit with him and it's just

great. They just sit with him and they watch him. They just watched him.

You know that's a great key, watch him, he will show you everything. And he takes the girl by the hand and he said to him, verse 41, Taritha cummi, which is being interpreted, my little pet lamb, I say to thee arise. And immediately the girl rose and walked for she was the age of 12 and they were astonished with great astonishment.

And he charged them immediately, no man should know it and commanded that something should be given her to eat. It's a wonderful foundation for the church. Now notice one thing here that's foundational, it's his quietness.

He didn't shout. Now, I don't know what that does for you, but what I know is this, that men believe they can only shout loud enough the devil will run away from them and death will flee. But here in Jesus, he just says, my little pet lamb, arise.

And one of the things here that is foundational that the apostles saw is the power of the word of Jesus. Do you know that, I don't know how to say this to you, but one thing is foundational, man shall not live by bread alone. But by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

And I tell you, you are living spiritually by what God says to you. Not by your Bible study, but by what God says to you. If you read the Bible 10 years and you never came away with the awareness that God had spoken to me, then you are spiritually dead.

Life comes from the mouth of God. The church does not live by the book, it lives by the mouth of God. Now that does not mean that I discard the book.

It means I read the book. After all, I am preaching from the book. I'm explaining these things from the book.

But what I know the book tells me, brings me to this, it's the thirst to hear God speak. Does God have another phase for this church? Well I'm absolutely certain of it. I'm totally convinced that in God's mind there is a prophecy that he is wanting to speak to you.

A prophetic utterance that he wants to give you. Now he might bring someone in who will give it to you. That would be nice.

Or he may humble you to make you thirst and listen for it. Or you may all be knowing it already and walking and living in it. But the truth is this, that life from the dead comes at the sound of his voice.

I may have told you this, some of you will know this. We had a visitor in our home the other day, someone who's from abroad, and they told us, you'll know this story, it's about Mr North. He apparently went to this church and he said, he prophesied to this church, he said, if you don't get involved in outreach, I will raise you to the ground.

There's a prophecy, I wouldn't like that one. Do you know that what that lady told me? She told me that when the church stopped meeting, it was bulldozed, raised. I wouldn't like a prophecy like that.

But it was directional. It didn't say I'm going to raise you to the ground. It said unless you, unless you, probably a church that thought only of themselves.

Key things aren't there to worry. When God speaks, you might not like it. That's why sometimes to hear the voice of God, you have to be broken.

But what I hear is this, the power of a whisper. The Lord Jesus Christ can whisper something in the midst of a person's life, and they're raised from the dead, their life is changed, and they're, this is foundational. This is wonderful.

This is the persuasion that I have. You know, I know this, and I'm pleased I know this, that nobody wants to hear me speak. You may say, oh yes, we like you.

I know some of you like listening to Les speak. That's very lovely. But I will assure you of this, I don't like to hear Les speak.

I don't. And when I go to meetings, I'm not listening to the mind of man. I'm looking for the voice of God.

It's one of the things you discover as a preacher, you're very dispensable. Nobody really wants to know what you think. They want to know God.

They want the voice of God. That's all they want. That's everything.

That's why sometimes I say, I'm not interested in your opinion. So totally can I say that, because I am not interested in mine. I want the voice of God.

You see, what we're talking about is this, the supernatural intervention of God in the affairs of man. The church is not left to get on with the job. Doesn't mean we all sit around doing nothing.

We get on with our work, is a church. We get on with our, all that we know we ought to do. But our chief aim and thirst and heart is to know and walk with the Lord Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Ghost, knowing his voice.

How can God turn us to it? To persuade us that he will. There it is. That's the second one, isn't it? Let's go to the last one.

This is the, there's another few that we could look at, but let's just look at one more. This is chapter 14 of Mark's gospel. You know, I'm amazed when I look at that little girl, and Jesus took her by the hand.

It's so beautiful. It's so tender. And at the heart of the church is a place for a dove.

And there's this verse in the Song of Solomon, the voice of the turtle dove is heard in our land. The winter is past. Flowers appear on the earth.

The time of the singing of the birds has come. Now winter may be necessary, but God's bringing a resurrection. He is.

Be thirsty for it. Be sure of it. Be assured of it.

God wants to breathe and whisper in your heart and raise you out of your misery and night, if you're in misery and night and sin. And he wants to raise you out of disappointment and despondency, if you're in that. He wants to raise you out of aimlessness, if you're in that.

He wants to raise people from the dead. That's what the church is about. So the one day you're here, and the next day you're a totally different person.

So what's happened to him? Here we are in chapter 14, and this is the last one I'm going to deal with tonight. But well, maybe just mention one further one, but let's just look here. It says this.

Chapter 14 of Mark's Gospel, and then verse 33. He taketh with him Peter, James, and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy. And said unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death.

You just wait, stay here, and just watch. Now we could go on further, but I just want to bring this one simple thing out, that the church knows the sorrow of God. Now we're all at different stages in the church.

Some of us know more, some of us know less. I think that probably when we talk about these things, there is just general superficiality. And few people know about these things, and I would not count myself as an expert on knowing the sorrow of God.

But if I ask you this, have you ever sat and prayed for someone, and all you could do was sob, all you could do was cry? Have you ever sat for somebody and used to you? You just don't know where to turn, but all you can do is cry. And it's not a cry of hopelessness, or a cry of anger, it's a cry of sorrow, of love, for what people are doing to their lives at the church. Because the church is going in, it's passing in, it's not staying out.

The church is going into God, to the heart of God. The church has the luxury, and I use that word, that's the wrong word I know, but the luxury of knowing God. Somebody said in our meeting the other day, they said it's a luxury to receive the Holy Spirit.

You know you see somebody flash by in one of these fantastic limousines, and they open their gates, and then they go to their magnificent house, and they go in there, and they're just coming for all this, you know that's luxury I suppose. But I've got luxury in my heart. They are far greater than what they've got.

I've got, I've got the knowledge of God, I've got the heart of God, I've got the shoulder of the most high God, I've got the Father, I've got Him, I've got access, I can go into Him, and I don't have to stay one of these sad, miserable, aimless people who've got all that and commit suicide. Proving that it's nothing, it isn't worth it, it isn't anything, but I've got this, I can go into God. I can talk to Him, and hear Him speak to me.

I can feel the comfort of His love, and I can be taken through things where I am absolutely broken, and I cry, and I weep. When I cry, and I weep, I sometimes complain and say, Lord this isn't fair, why are you doing this to me? When I come through with a tender heart, and a soft heart, and I'm, and I'm realising that God's just taken me deeper in to understand Him, and what He feels. I'm the most privileged man on earth.

The church is the repository of the truth. There's no library got it. You can't find God in a library, well I don't think you can, you can find Him in a library, but you find Him in the church.

You come through the doors, and you say, oh this is God, holy, tender, loving, kind, with a word of power to raise the dead. You know when you turn to God, and you've got all this sin you've committed, one of the things that that God does, He washes your feet with His tears. He doesn't change you by telling you off.

He just washes you. One of the most transforming experiences is when you've gone and done something really foolish, and somebody loves you, and doesn't even mention what you've done. Hear the wagging finger, or the welcoming embrace.

What have you got? Well I'll tell you what God's got. He's got a great heart of love to receive people, and if the first thing they hear from you is, oh you shouldn't do that, oh dear, they've got to hear the heart of God. And I know that the church is a company of people who've heard, witnessed, something of the sorrow of God.

You know it wasn't said here that they began to cry, they slept, but Jesus said, you three, you're going to lead the church to Him. He didn't say this in His words, you're going to lead the church to Him, and I don't want the church started without this. It must know this from the beginning, that I love people, that I'm holy, that I'm almighty in my word.

You know that when you, when you stand, and you see somebody preaching, and you know, that preacher in his words, in his demeanor, in what all that he's doing, he's laying foundations in people's lives. Right or wrong, he's doing something. In many people's lives, they think of God as living behind a rail, under stained glass windows.

In some, they think of, you know, some shouting great man, saying, come on, they're going to get you doing this, and shouting at you. But there's got to be a revelation of Jesus. Are you willing to pay the price? Back to that cross, it says, they that keep their life, shall lose it.

They that lose their life. It's one of those things that when you think of these things, to have Him, you must lose. If you won't lose, you won't gain.

But all these things, the coming by without money in Christ, you can't, there's nothing you can give for it, but there is something you can hold back that will stop you having it. Have it freely, have Him. You know, the astonishing thing is that you can have Him.

He can be given to you. Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift. You could almost say gift, but it doesn't say gift.

It puts them all into one, His Son. What have I been given in the Son? I've been given everything in the Son. That's right.

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