

# Presence

by David Ravenhill

---

*David Ravenhill's sermon emphasizes the necessity of pursuing a deep relationship with God's presence over mere knowledge about Him.*

**Duration:** 52:37

**Scripture:** Jeremiah 9:23

**Topics:** "Gods Presence", "Spiritual Longing"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of prioritizing God above all worldly desires. He references King David's declaration that there is nothing on earth that he desires besides God. The speaker also mentions how David compared his longing for God to a deer panting for water, highlighting the intensity of his desire for God's presence. The sermon then shifts to the story of Moses and how he was able to change God's mind based on the covenant God had made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God reminds Moses of his promise to give the land of Canaan to the Israelites, which was the long-awaited fulfillment of their freedom from bondage. The sermon concludes with a reference to a verse from the book of Job, emphasizing the vastness and mystery of God's ways that we can only partially comprehend.

---

## Transcript

Here in the frozen north, I was thinking this morning that there has to be a very special reward in heaven. The Bible says if we suffer, we'll reign with Him. So, you know, some benefits of living in Michigan.

My wife is from Michigan, incidentally, born and bred and raised here most of her life, and from St. Joe, any St. Joe people here? Okay. So she loves Michigan. I haven't been able to talk her out of it.

Anyway, let's look to the Lord in prayer again, shall we? Father, we need you. Lord, without you, we can do nothing, absolutely nothing. And so Lord, come and build your church, pour into the lives of your people, we pray.

Lord, you're the Great Shepherd. You know all about us. You know our down sittings, our uprisings, our circumstances, every problem that we face.

I pray, Lord, today that you administer as only you can, meet every need, fulfill every longing, every desire, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. They say it is a woman's prerogative to change her mind.

It's a teacher's prerogative to do the same thing. I came with a totally different message. And during the worship time, just that one song about one thing, the very desire of the Lord, caused me to think maybe I had the wrong message.

And then I said, well, Lord, just confirm that by talking about your presence. And so that last song was about the presence of God. So God has a way of... So I want to talk to you about the presence of God this morning.

My wife and I had the privilege of raising our children, three girls, in New Zealand. We lived in the city of Christchurch, which is the largest city in the South Island of that very beautiful country. And the city is built around an old Anglican or Episcopal cathedral.

And the city sort of radiates out from that hub. And just a short distance away from that cathedral, there is an old museum called the Canterbury Museum, an old stone building that dates back to the late 1800s. And as you go through the entrance of that museum, there in the stonework, there is a verse of Scripture that is carved there from the book of Job, Job 26 and verse 14, and it says, "Lo, these are a part of his ways, but how little a portion is heard of him.

Lo, these are a part of his ways, but how little a portion do we hear of him." That may be a very fitting verse to put over a museum. I have spent many, many hours there when our children were younger on rainy days going to that museum, walking down all the corridors and admiring all of God's creation, looking in the display cabinet, seeing reptiles and bugs and butterflies and mammals and animals and so on from every conceivable country. I've seen children grab the hand of a parent and point to some bird or some reptile and say, what is that? Or where does that come from? And so on and so forth.

And yet in all the hours that I've spent in that museum, I don't ever remember anybody attributing all of that handiwork to God Himself. These are a part of His ways, but how little a portion do we hear of Him. And one of the great tragedies, certainly in the American church, is that we are focused on the parts.

I read a book a number of years ago that I've told people there is one statement in that book that is worth one entire semester in any Bible school in America. That normally gets their attention. And the statement is by Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones, and he says, there is nothing so likely to lead to error or to heresy as to begin with the parts rather than the whole.

Let me say it again. There is nothing so likely to lead to error or to heresy as to begin with the parts rather than the whole. We have a nation that has built movements around parts.

We have a prosperity movement. We have a faith movement. We have a holiness movement.

We have this movement and that movement, and there is nothing so likely to lead to error or to heresy as to begin with the parts rather than the whole. You see, if you put all those parts together, you have a person. His name is the Lord Jesus Christ.

He did not say, I am a part of the truth. He said, I am the truth. He is the fullness of truth.

And as I have studied the lives of great men and women of God, not only in the word of God, but down through the centuries since the word of God was given to us, I've come to this conclusion. There is one common denominator in every great man or woman of God, and that is an insatiable longing for the presence of God. At one longing, Paul says that I may know him.

Not about him. Paul knew about him. Paul is still confounding the experts as to what he meant when he wrote certain things and so on.

But he says, I know in whom I have believed, not just what I believe. It's good to know what you believe, but it's better to know in whom I have believed. And Paul's passion, even though he gave us the bulk of the New Testament and saw all sorts of signs, wonders, miracles, and so on, even at the end of his life after being caught up to the third heaven, he says, I press on that I may know him.

It's all about him. It's all about our relationship with him. Writing to the Corinthians, he says that he's brought us into the fellowship of his son.

Paul says, I preach Christ and him crucified. That was Paul's passion. Jeremiah says, if you boast about anything, don't boast about your riches.

Don't boast about your bank account. You know, don't boast about your mental ability. Don't boast about your physical strength and so on and so forth.

He says, if you boast in anything, boast in this that you know and you understand me, saith the Lord. You go into the life of men like David, as we sang that song, one thing have I desired the Lord. He didn't have a whole list of things, but one thing have I desired the Lord.

And that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, just to sort of bask in the presence of God. A day in your courts, he says, it's better than a thousand elsewhere. David had this longing, this insatiable hunger for the presence of God.

Who have I in heaven but thee, he says. And then he says, there's nothing on earth I desire beside thee. That's got to be one of the most challenging verses in the Bible.

Easy to agree with the first part of that verse, who have I in heaven but thee. I've got a mother there, father there, some, you know, friends, relatives and so on. But the second part of the verse is the challenging one.

There's nothing on earth that I desire beside thee. David as a king could look over that kingdom with all of its attractions. And he's able to say in all honesty, there's not a single thing that appeals to me apart from the presence of God.

Anybody there yet? When everything screams at us, you've got to have this sort of house, drive this sort of car, wear these sort of clothes. And you know, we're mesmerized with all the things that the world is throwing in our face that says you'll never be happy unless you've got this. And David was able to overlook all of that.

And he says, there's not a single thing on earth that I desire beside thee. Wow. Another place he talks about the deer and he likens his life to that deer as the deer pants for the water broke.

So longs my soul after the old. I was with a wonderful man of God a number of years ago, up in a place called Moses Lake in Washington state. His name was David Minor.

And David Minor referred to that passage of scripture, that Psalm in a way I have never forgotten. He said, David, on the early hours of the morning would be overlooking the flock, maybe sitting on a rocky ledge. And the flock is down there in the Valley.

And he said he would see the deer sort of saunter by in the early hours of the morning, go down to the brook at the bottom of the field, drink their fill, and then disappear into the thicket. But he says on this occasion, the deer is panting. And he says the reason the deer is panting is because it's being pursued.

There is a predator trying to take the life of that deer. And as David sits there, this deer just flies by. He can hear the heaving and the panting, the exhaustion of that deer as it's being pursued.

But he says that deer knows instinctively there's only one place of protection, and that's to find its way into the water brook, because there in the water brook it is protected. The predator cannot pick up the scent of the trail. And therefore, he says, the water brook becomes a place of protection.

But not only that, he says it becomes a place of satisfaction, because there in the water brook it can replenish that tired and weary and exhausted body. And he said, I believe David wrote that when he was being pursued by Saul, and Saul is hounding him, Saul is pursuing him, and David is fleeing from place to place. But he knows ultimately there's only one place of protection, to come under the shadow of the Almighty.

And there, nothing can hurt him, nothing can damage him. And yet, in the presence of God is also a place of satisfaction. In his presence is fullness of joy.

At his right hand are pleasures forevermore. And so David says, as the heart pans after the water brook, so longs my soul after thee, O Lord. And you can take all of these great men, they all had that one common denominator, that passion for God's presence.

Nothing else would satisfy. I want you to turn with me this morning to the book of Exodus. I want us to look into the life of a man like David, like Jeremiah, like all of these great men that had this burning passion for the presence of God.

In fact, as we open to chapter 32, we find that Moses here is in the presence of God. He's being called up to receive the plan of the tabernacle and so on. And while he is there in the presence of God, the children of Israel are restless.

They don't know what has happened to Moses. Forty days have gone by, over an entire month has gone by, and they're convinced that Moses is dead. And so they go to Aaron, Moses' brother, and they said, listen, we need a God that will go before us.

We need new leadership and so on. You know the story. He gathered all the jewelry from the ladies, threw it into the fire, and out popped the golden calf.

That was his explanation. It wasn't quite that simple. But they fashioned that golden calf.

And around that golden calf really was nothing more than a sexual orgy. They were stripped naked. They were dancing.

They were doing every conceivable abomination. And God was angry, to say the least. And he says to Moses, you know, you need to get down the mountain.

Notice in verse 7, the Lord said to Moses, go down at once. For your people, who you brought up from the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves. They've quickly turned aside from the way which I commanded them.

They've made for themselves a molten calf. They've worshipped it, sacrificed to it, and says, this is your God, who is Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt. It wasn't just the idolatry.

It wasn't just the immorality. It was the fact that they were stripping God of his glory that caused God to be so angry. This is the one that brought you out of Egypt.

This is the one that parted the Red Sea. This is the one that did all those signs, wonders, and miracles. They were attributing to the work of their own hands all the miraculous power of God.

And God is a jealous God. He'll share everything with us. But he said, my glory I'll not share with any man.

And it is a dangerous thing to touch the glory of God. The children of Israel touched the glory of God, and they attributed that glory again to the work of their own hands. And so God is angry.

And he says in verse 10, leave me alone, Moses, that my anger may burn against them, that I may destroy them, and I will make of you a great nation. So Moses here has an opportunity to replace Abraham as the father of a new nation. God is going to obliterate Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the memory of that, that entire nation is going to be wiped out.

He says to Moses, I'm going to make of you a great nation. You're going to be the founding father. Your name will go down in history essentially as the head of this great nation, so on and so forth.

You would have thought Moses would have jumped up and down for joy and said it's about time I was recognized and so on. But no, he is a pastor. And he begins to call out to God to spare the flock.

And he says there, remember verse 13, this is his prayer, remember Abraham and Isaac and Israel, thy servants to whom thou didst swear by thyself, and didst say to them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, all this land that I have spoken, I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever. So Moses comes before God on the basis of covenant. He says, remember the promises, the covenants, the agreements, if you like, the contracts we would say today with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob.

God, you cannot do what you said you're about to do. Why? Because we have got a contract with your signature, I being of a sound mind and so on, do hereby swear, whatever. And if you renege on your promises, God, we will never be able to trust you again.

You're supposed to be the great promise keeper. You said you've exalted your word above your very name. You said let God be true and every man a liar.

You said all the promises are yea and amen in Christ. God, you cannot do this. If you do it, we'll never know when you mean it from now on.

When you speak, we'll never know if you're in jest or if you're serious because if you don't fulfill these contracts, how can we ever trust your word? Your very name is at stake. Your very reputation is at stake. Your very character is at stake.

And God says, you got me. Notice it says, and the Lord changed his mind, verse 14, about the evil or the harm that he said he would do to his people. So on the basis of covenant, Moses is able to change the mind of God.

And then we go to the next chapter. It is now God's turn to remind Moses that he has a covenant keeping God. And he says in verse one, the Lord spoke to Moses, depart from here.

You and the people who you've brought up from the land of Egypt to the land which I swore to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob saying to your descendants, I will give it. So here now God says, I am about to fulfill my covenant. I made a promise to Abraham.

I made a promise to Isaac. I made a promise to Jacob. And I want you to go in now and possess the land because that land flows with milk and honey.

This was the news that Israel was waiting for. This, if you like, was the carrot at the end of the, you know, the stick that kept the donkey going, so to speak, all those years of bondage. There was a promise that God had given them.

One day you will be taken out of the house of bondage, out of the place of servitude, out of that place of darkness and oppression and so on. And I'll bring you into a land that flows with milk and honey. You're going to be free.

You're going to have your own nation. You're going to have these beautiful homes and houses and so on and so forth. Notice it says a land that flows with milk and honey in verse three.

Now it wasn't literally flowing with milk and honey. That was just a descriptive of all the blessings of God. You can read about those blessings in Deuteronomy where it tells us there in chapter six and verse ten, it shall come about when the Lord your God brings you into the land which he swore to your fathers, to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob to give you great and splendid cities, PS, which you don't have to build.

You realize that was a very, very important little phrase. Great and splendid cities, by the way, you don't have to build them. You see, because all they did the last few hundred years was build cities for Pharaoh.

They had to tread the mud. They had to make the bricks. They had to haul the bricks.

They had to build those cities. It was back-breaking work. In fact, the psalmist says, I've relieved your shoulder of the burden.

The margin says literally, I've lifted off the brick load. They were a nation stooped down. This was a nation where there was incredible oppression and so on.

You can't believe all that went on in that nation. God says to Moses, he says, I've seen their affliction. I've seen their suffering.

I've seen their hardship and so on and so forth. You look into the background to those words. One deals with the physical.

One deals with the emotional. One deals with the spiritual aspect. It was a nation of darkness.

There was the oppression over that nation. Darkness, as we talked about last night, there's the spiritual atmosphere. They were able to throw down their serpents or rods, rather, and turn them into serpents.

They were operating under the occult powers of darkness and so on. But then there was all the emotional pressure that they'd gone through, an entire generation that had babies ripped out of their arms and

thrown into the Nile. Can you imagine all the flashbacks, all of the emotional suffering? They were slaves.

I'm sure the day came when some, you know, master came along, looked at some young girl and said, you're coming home with me. And that father pleading with that man not to take his daughter away, knowing that she would be sexually abused and so on and so forth. I mean, they were slaves.

They were treated like slaves, like slaves were in this nation up until a few hundred years ago. And God says, I've seen all of your suffering. I've seen all of your pain.

And one day you are going to have your own nation, houses, lands, vineyards, olive trees, and so on. And so he begins to describe it, great and splendid cities. You don't have to build them.

Houses full of good things, which you did not fill. Hewn cisterns, which you did not dig. Vineyards and olive trees, which you did not plant.

And you shall eat and be happy or satisfied. And then there's the warning, watch yourself. Always a warning with prosperity.

But God promised some blessing, abundance. Houses that were full of good things, not all derelict houses, not a bunch of foreclosure stuff, but just beautiful homes that were loaded. Some of the promises of the old covenant seemed to surpass that of the new.

Now I know I've been to Bible school and the book of Hebrews is about better promises, better covenants, better, better, better, better, and so on. But it's hard to beat some of these wonderful promises in the old testament. Imagine if we were the nation of Israel this morning, I'm Moses, and God says to me, listen, I want you to lead this people into the promised land.

And there's a particular area here of Rochester, some gated community where all the homes are eight or 900,000 plus, and that is our promised land. And as soon as this meeting is over, we drive into that community and God says, hey, it's yours. Just pick out the house you want.

And my wife and I wander down the street and say, darling, do you like that Tudor style there? Or do you like that ranch there? After all, we're getting old and the stairs may be a bit of a problem soon. And she says, well, this one's got a swim pool. I said, well, this one's got a tennis court.

Yeah, but this one's got a couple of Beamers. Well, this one's got a Ferrari or whatever. I said, well, you decide.

And she said, I'll take this one. And we knock on the door. I'm one of God's kids.

He's given me a promise, this house is mine. You've got 30 seconds to get out. You can't take a single thing with you.

And the guy, you know, the door begins to slam. You put your foot in the door and guess what? You got to back up. I'll send an angel before you.

Notice verse two. And I'll drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, the Jebusite, the Rochesterite. And so you say, you really don't believe me, do you? Angel, would you take care of this situation? I can't, but you can.

And he just raises his hand, they evaporate or something. And there you go. And there is the house of your dreams.

It is full of all the good things. You got your media room, you got this, you know, I mean, everything you've ever wanted. Pretty hard to beat that, isn't it? You don't have to go to the bank and convince them that even though you work at McDonald's, you know, you can afford to pay the mortgage on a \$800,000 home.

No, everything, no mortgages. I mean, it was an entire nation, great and splendid cities, houses, vineyards. I mean, these were not little houses all jammed together.

These were on acres, you know, though you had your own vineyard, you had your own well and so on and so forth. Pretty good. And so God gives them this wonderful promise and then he drops the bombshell.

Verse three, I will not go with you. I'm not going. God is still angry.

He's still upset. And he says, you're on your own. I will fulfill my covenant.

I will fulfill my promises. I will keep every contract I've made, but I'm not going. That is a frightening thought, isn't it? You see, we have movements that have found contracts.

And on the basis of that contract, if you like, they've twisted the arm of God and said, you've got to prosper me because you said, you've got to heal me because you said you've, I've got your word and your word set. And yet they don't have the presence of God. It's possible to enter into all of those blessings and not have the blesser himself.

And Moses does not buy it. Moses begins to do what Moses does so well. He begins to pray.

You see, Moses has been there and done that. As we say, Moses was raised a son of Pharaoh's daughter. Moses lived in the biggest house in town, the white house.

He was a King's kid. He had the best clothes. He rode around in the latest model chariot.

You know, he had everything that money could buy. But one day he came to the realization it doesn't satisfy him. And he chose to turn his back on all the treasures and pleasures of Egypt, the Bible says, to identify with his own people.

And he knows that there's no mansion in the world, there's no vineyard, there's no olive grove, there's no great city that can replace the presence of God. And so he begins to pray. Now, therefore, I pray thee, verse 13, if I found favor in thy sight, let me know thy ways, that I may know thee so that I may find favor in thy sight.

Consider too, this nation is thy people. Notice his prayer. I pray that I may know thee.

There's no mention of houses and lands and vineyards. God, I want to know you. I think that's the cry that God is looking for in your life and my life, where we've been able to get over all the things of the world in that sense and say, Lord, there's only one thing that truly satisfies.

You see, I have to be honest, my prayer would have been a little different. My prayer would have been something like this, Lord, let's be real. Let's talk man-to-man, face-to-face.

God, I know you're still a little upset. Body language, you know, I can tell. We really got you mad the other day.

And sometimes when we get mad, we say things we regret later. And, you know, you talked about not going with us, but now that you've had a good night's rest, you know, let's talk. God, there's a part of me that loves houses and lands and vineyards, another part of me that loves your presence.

So isn't there some way we could sort of come to some sort of agreement here? I know we get on your nerves. Listen, I'm not asking you to hang around us all the time. You know, we'll give you a break.

Sunday's good enough. You know, just, well, you know, we've got degrees. We know how to handle things.

You know, if things get bad, we've got hospitals and everything else take care of us. And so, Lord, you know, we're not putting too much pressure on you. We just, every once in a while, it'd be nice if you showed up.

Some of the great feast days that you've declared would be nice if, you know, Papa was around and so on and so forth, you know, when there's a guest speaker. No, Moses doesn't mention any of that. There's no mention of houses, lands, vineyards, just, God, it's your presence.

That's all I want is your presence. And God's response is, my presence will go with you. You know, if you're that desperate, Moses, if that's the deep longing, if you seek me with all your heart, if that's an expression of your heart, then how can I refuse? I will go with you.

And Moses says, if your presence doesn't go with us, do not lead us from here. In other words, if I can't convince you to go, I would rather stay. Let me tell you where they are.

They're in a waste, howling wilderness. There are no cities. There's no vegetation.

It's just a place of absolute barrenness. After all, the only food they could have was supplied supernaturally. The only water was supplied supernaturally.

In the natural, you could not exist there. Again, no houses, no vineyards, no olive trees, absolutely nothing. And yet Moses said, if you don't go, I would rather be here in this waste, howling wilderness with your presence and all the blessings that you can give us without your presence.

I wonder if you're there yet. If you had to cast your vote on the way out this morning. Choice A, houses, lands, vineyards, supernatural things.

He said, I'll send an angel, not a demon. That angel will do signs, wonders, miracles, things that you can't do. He'll drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, the Hittite, Jebusite, and so on.

I mean, those are things you can't do in the natural. So you can have your signs, wonders, miracles, all the covenantal blessings. That's choice A, but no presence of God or absolutely nothing with the presence of God.

Everything stripped from you. Could you honestly say, I think I would go for choice B? Moses did. Again, I've been there and done that.

It doesn't satisfy. I've had houses and lands and vineyards. I've had all the wealth that Egypt can offer.

I've had a position in the area of politics, if you like. I was born and bred and raised in the White House, but it doesn't satisfy. And then he says this in verse 16, how can it be known that I found favor in your sight, I and thy people? Is it not by thy going with us so that we, I and thy people may be distinguished from all the other people who are on the face of the earth? That has to be one of the most beautiful verses in the Bible.

Moses said, there's only one thing that distinguishes us from all the other people on the face of the earth. It's your presence. It's not our dress.

It's not our kosher diet. It's not even the 10 commandments. It's not even the tabernacle.

As good as all of those things are, there's only one thing, your presence. I'm sure Moses was thinking, listen, we are surrounded by nations. These nations have got their gods.

Those gods have got their temples. People go in and they worship. They've got their songs.

They've got their holy days. They've got their feast days. Maybe they've got their sacred writings.

Maybe they dress a particular way and so on and so forth, but all they've got is religion, a form of godliness, but no power, no presence. And Moses said, if your presence doesn't go with us, we have a tabernacle, but there's no presence of God in it. We've got ritual.

We've got a religion, but nothing else. The only thing that makes us unique, the only distinguishing mark that we have is your presence. And that's still true, isn't it? You take the presence of God out of our midst, you know, we just have religion.

Ritual, rote, going through some sort of routine, Sunday after Sunday. Again, no power of God. He goes on to say, Lord, show me your glory.

Here is a man that's got this insatiable longing. God, I want to know everything I can about you. I want to know you in all of your fullness, all of your glory.

Now the problem with all of this is that this is a one-sided cry, in one sense. It takes two, doesn't it, to accomplish anything. You know, what if God looked at Moses and said, listen, I appreciate your cry, but I'm really not interested in you.

I'm really not interested in going with you, you know. Well, if you turn with me to Song of Solomon, we find that that all changes. Because in Song of Solomon, we find that God has this longing.

This wonderful little book that has become so prominent in recent years, it begins there in chapter 1, verse 2, kiss me with the kisses of your mouth. Your love is better than wine. She has fallen in love, head over heels with her beloved.

And she said, I just want to be held by you. Your kisses are better than the best of wine. Wine is what the world uses to drown the sorrows.

Wine, many times, is nothing more than a coping mechanism. You lose your job, you're diagnosed with some disease or whatever, you don't know how to handle it, you don't have a rock to stand on or a high

tower to flee into, you don't know the Lord Jesus Christ. And so you take your drink and for a while it eliminates, you know, gives you a little bit of a buzz, gives you a little bit of a, you know, satisfaction.

But she says, listen, I found something that is far more stimulating, far more exhilarating, far more satisfying than anything the world has to offer. Just kiss me again. Your kisses are better than wine.

And so they began to express their love to each other. You know, referring to themselves, you're my darling. There in verse 15, he says to her, how beautiful you are, my darling.

She says, you're pretty handsome yourself, verse 16. You know, and so begins this wonderful romance. You know, he takes her out to dinner, his banner over her is love.

I think that was the beginning of Hallmark. But anyway, you know, it's a little big, you know, sort of good-sized card there. Walk into the restaurant, this huge banner, you know, my darling, I love you, and so on.

And so begins this wonderful romance. And then we come to chapter 5. And in chapter 5, we have this setback in their relationship. So far, things have been going well.

But in verse 2, I was asleep, but my heart was awake. A voice, my beloved was knocking, open to me, my sister, my darling, my dove, my perfect one. My head is drenched with dew, my locks with the damp of the night.

He has shown up unexpectedly. She has already gone to bed. It's a night scene, as we will see.

And here is the knocking. Maybe he had some sort of a, you know, secret knock. And she knows it's him.

You know how lovers are, they come up with these things. And she says, oh, that's him. But she's not prepared to get out of bed.

I was asleep, my heart was awake. In other words, she's just ready to go into that deep sleep, and yet she's still awake. I guess the only way you can, you know, put yourself in that picture, if you've got little kids that wake up in the night and you don't get that sound sleep, you're just still sort of, you hear that little whisper or whimper from next door.

And she's in that place where, you know, she's almost asleep, but not fully asleep. And all of a sudden, the knocking starts. And she's got to decide, do I open the door? Do I go and get out of bed? This bed is very comfortable.

Do I go and open the door to my beloved? She reasons with herself. In verse three, I've taken off my dress. I don't want to put it on again.

Or how can I put it on again? I've already washed my feet. How can I dirty them again? In other words, it's going to cost me. I'm going to have to get up.

He should have let me know he was coming and so on. This is not a convenient time for me. It means, you know, I'm going to have to get out of my comfort zone here.

I'm going to have to put my dress on again. You know, go to the door and open the door. And after he leaves, I'm going to have to clean up and go to bed and, you know, get ready for bed again.

And you know, I couldn't be bothered right now. And so she hesitates. Like I said the other day, last night, maybe it is that, you know, one thing I don't like about the word of God, we don't have the time element.

And so he's standing there waiting. He knows she's in there. He knows that this is her house.

And he's waiting patiently for her to respond. And she's, again, her mind is sort of whirling here. Should I do it? If I do it, then I've got to go through all of these things and so on.

Verse four, my beloved extended his hand through the opening. My feelings were aroused for him. And so she begins to think, well, maybe I should get up.

But you know, this bed is so comfortable, I'm not sure. And you know, she's hesitating. And maybe the minutes tick by.

Maybe she's the sort of gal that when she does get up, you know, every hair has got to be just right. And everything's got to be just perfect. And that could take five minutes.

Don't we all wish? There's a 10 back there, 15, 20, 25, 45 minutes. Eventually she gets out of bed. Verse five, I arose and I opened to my beloved.

My hands drip with my fingers with liquid myrrh on the handles of the boat. I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had turned and had gone. He's been grieved.

He's been hurt. She doesn't respond. She's left him standing there minute after minute.

And when you don't have information, you manufacture it, don't you? Oh, listen, I've been away for a few days. I told her when I got back from this trip, this business trip, I'd be over. You know, I can't wait to see her and so on and so forth.

But maybe, maybe there's somebody else. Maybe that man that she used to date occasionally. Maybe he's come back into her life.

You know how your mind woos, you know, you're trying to put everything together and he's singing, you know, what's going on here? Is there somebody else? It's, you know, rather like a couple who madly in love and they decide, listen, we're going to meet tonight and he's going to take her out to McDonald's. And so he says, listen, I'll meet you outside the golden arches there at five o'clock. And he can't wait to get there all day long.

He's dreaming of that. And he comes around the corner, there's McDonald's and sure enough, she's outside. The problem is there's another guy with her.

And the other guy is extremely friendly. He's touching her. And, you know, she's obviously happy.

She's smiling. They're in conversation. They know each other very well.

And, you know, they're just touching each other. And, you know, you know, the feeling that comes over you. You think, who is this guy? You know, if I had a baseball bat, I would supply McDonald's with some more hamburger.

You know, but that jealousy that rises up, you know, you and then, you know, you try and make the best of it and you sort of swagger up there like, you know, casually. Hi, darling. She said, oh, hi, darling.

Listen, have you ever met my cousin? You know, when you don't have the information, you manufacture it, don't you? I'm sure he stood there thinking, what's going on? I know she's in there. I've called him, my darling, my dove, my perfect one, but there's no response, no response, no response, no response. And eventually, he turns and he goes away.

The thing I love about this story is she doesn't go back to bed. She said, my heart went out to him as he spoke. I searched, but I did not find him.

I called, but he did not answer me. The watchmen who make the rounds of the city found me. It's a night scene.

They struck me. They wounded me. The guardsmen on the wall took away my shawl.

Now it's really costing her. She's been beat up. I don't know if she's got a black eye, if she's limping or whatever, but she's had her shawl taken away.

She's been struck. She's been wounded. And as she makes her way around the city, the city of Jerusalem, again, nighttime, there's no lights, maybe an odd oil lamp.

Maybe it's the light of the moon filtering through the rain as it comes down. And as she turns a corner, she comes across the daughters of Jerusalem there in verse 8. I adjure you, I ask you, I beseech you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved, as to what you'll tell him, for I'm lovesick. In other words, listen, if you see my beloved, please tell him I'm lovesick.

I'm desperate. I can't believe I did what I did. I've got to get him back.

I've got to restore this broken relationship. I can't live without him. I can't stand the thought of him not coming back, of having this relationship over and severed.

Listen, if you see my beloved, please let him know that I'm desperate. And their response is, what sort of guy is he? Oh, it says a little differently. Verse 9, what kind of beloved is your beloved? O most beautiful among women, what kind of beloved is your beloved? Thus you adjure us.

In other words, what's so special about this guy? Now you've got to have this scene here. Here, there's a night scene. Again, he said, my hair is drenched with the dew of the night.

And so she's been out wandering around the city. No doubt her hair is all wet, maybe a mascara running all over. She's agitated.

She sees these girls. Have you seen my beloved? She's wounded, maybe got a bloody nose or something, or she's limping. And she says, listen, I need to find my boyfriend again.

What would go through your mind if you met somebody like that? Another case of domestic violence. Oh, you know, she co-dependent. She's come home or he's come home drunk, high on drugs or something.

They've had an argument. He's beaten her up and slapped her around, but she doesn't know how to break it off. And here she is, you know, I mean, what's so special about this guy? Anyway, listen, you're gorgeous.

You're a beautiful woman. You're the most beautiful woman I've ever seen. In other words, if you get your act together, you could have any guy.

What's so special about this guy? You've lost all awareness of how beautiful you are. You know, forget this guy. You know, you could have any guy you want.

I mean, that's the impression I get. And all of a sudden she opens up. Verse 10, my beloved is dazzling, ruddy, outstanding among 10,000.

She said, listen, if you were to take 10,000 bachelors, line them up here and you put my beloved in the lineup, he would eclipse every single one. He's stunning. He's striking.

You wouldn't even notice the rest of them. That's how incredible he is. His head is like gold, like pure gold.

His locks are like clusters of dates as black as a raven. His eyes like doves besides streams of water. His cheeks are like beds of balsam.

His hands are like rods of gold. His abdomen is like carved ivory. His legs are like pillars of alabaster.

His appearance is like the cedars of Lebanon and so on. Now notice what she's doing. She's describing him, not his assets.

In other words, she doesn't say, listen, let me tell you about my beloved. Ever heard of Donald Trump? Ever heard of Bill Gates? Ever heard of some other rich man? Listen, my beloved would make those guys look like porpoise. He owns the cattle on a thousand hills.

You know that mansion as you drive out of town? That's my beloved. And when I get married, I want to have another care in the world and have all the silks and linens and everything I've ever dreamed of. Listen, he is so rich.

He's got servants galore. No, it's not about his assets. It's about him.

Let me tell you about him. Let me tell you about his eyes. Let me tell you about his hair.

Let me tell you about his hands. She knows him, but she's lost him. And then verse 16, his mouth is full of sweetness.

He's wholly desirable. In other words, there's not a single thing I can fault in him. There's not a single thing I would change.

You know, we'd all like to change our spouses if, you know, if he just didn't snore as much, you know, if she'd lose a little bit of weight, you know, if this, if she was a better cook or if he was a better provider. You know, if I could just tweak him a little bit or tweak her, you know, now he's wholly desirable. It's not a single fault I've ever found with him.

Everything about him is desirable. This is my beloved and this is my friend, oh daughters of Jerusalem. Listen, this is my friend.

I've lost my very best friend. Oh, there was a time, she says, if I can embellish this, there was a time when I first fell in love with him. You know, he's a king, not only a king, he's the king of all kings.

And when I first fell in love with him, I was so enamored, and please don't misunderstand me, I still see him in that capacity. But he said to me one day, he said, you treat me more like a master and you consider yourself a servant and I don't want that sort of relationship. No longer do I call you a servant, but a friend.

And she said, something changed in our relationship and he's become my very best friend. He's a friend that sticks closer than a brother. He knows all about me.

I've told him all about my past, but he said, listen, it's under the blood. I chose you. You're my beloved.

You're my perfect one. You're my dove. I need you.

I want you. I want to come in. I want to fellowship with you.

Open to me, my darling, my dove. But she's missed that opportunity and now she's wandering the streets. But when she's asked about him, she recalls all of these things.

Listen, he's my friend. If you find him, please let him know. Oh, it begins with, what sort of a guy is he? Notice how it ends in chapter 6 and verse 1. Where is your beloved gone, O most beautiful among women? Where is your beloved turned, that we may seek him with you? Do you mind if you tag along? Oh, they've got interested.

Oh, listen, what's so special about this guy? Lady, you're beautiful. You could have anything. Forget about this guy.

You know, if he beats you up like that. Hey, do you mind if we join you in your search for him? Isn't that really the place that God wants to bring the church? Where we are so in love with him that others say, listen, I want to have what you've got. You know, you've got something I've been seeking for all my life.

Maybe these girls were coming home from a night of partying. I don't know. We don't have any details, but all of a sudden now they become aware that, listen, what we have been looking for all our life is what you've had.

Can we seek him with you? You see the problem with this girl is this. She was clean and she was comfortable. She was clean, but she was comfortable.

She said, I've washed my feet. How can I dirty them again? Jesus said, Peter, if I wash your feet or if I don't wash your feet, you have no part of me. Peter says, well, then give me a bath.

Basically, Jesus said, no, if your feet are washed, all of you is clean. She was clean, but she was comfortable. And the most dangerous place you can be in spiritually is to be clean and comfortable.

Satisfied. Don't disturb me. I know I'm clean.

I'm washed in the blood of the lamb. I'm a child of God. I've been saved for five years, 10 years, 20 years, whatever.

I know I'm clean, but I'm comfortable. We're not responding to go further. We're not responding to go deeper.

And he's pleading with us, open my darling, my dove, my perfect one. I want to come in. I want to be with you.

I want to take you into new realms. I want to give you new insight, new understanding, and so on. You say, listen, forget it.

As long as I'm clean, I know I'm okay. You see, this story is told one more time. It's repeated in the New Testament.

Revelation chapter 3. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. Open to me, my darling, my dove, my perfect one. He's referring to the church, not to the unsaved.

We've used it that way, but it's the church. And he wants to come in. He wants to sit down.

He wants to fellowship. That evening meal was a time when you would linger, and you would fellowship, and you would just converse together. Because again, there's no electricity.

There's no possibility of working. The night cometh when no man can work. And so that evening meal was that time of just, you know, relaxing, having a meal together, fellowshiping.

And Jesus longs again for that sort of intimacy. He just wants to come in and fellowship and be with us. And yet they say, listen, we don't need you anymore.

We're rich now. Increased with goods. We have need of nothing.

Listen, try that little church down the road. I understand they're struggling a little bit. You know, we're booming now.

We don't need you as much as we used to. We're not nearly as dependent on you now. You know, we've got a good income.

Oh, it's so easy, isn't it? Oh, not only corporately, but individually. Are you clean and comfortable this morning? In that place of just complacency, lukewarmness, indifference, that's the most dangerous place to be in. Because I believe God is continually knocking, wanting to take us further and further and further.

The path of the just is a shining light. It shines more and more until the perfect day. And all of these great men and women of God had that longing for God's presence.

God, I'm not satisfied. I want to go deeper. Again, Paul, at the end of his life, after attaining all the things that he did, I press on.

There's that deep, deep desire. It's the illustration is that of a runner, that he's straining every muscle as he throws himself across the finishing line, you know, in order to get ahead. And that's Paul's intensity in that portion of Scripture.

You know, I press on. I just, I want to accomplish all that I can. Is that your passion this morning? That's what God is looking for.

Let's just close in prayer. Father, we thank you that you have never changed. You're the great I am, with no shadow of turning, no variableness.

Lord, you still knock. You're still knocking even this morning, open to me, my darling, my dove. Father, we're not interested in houses and lands and vineyards.

We say, Lord, if your presence doesn't go with us, Lord, don't take us any further. Thank you, Lord. You come seeking friendship, seeking relationship.

The God of glory, the great I am, the King of all kings, and the Lord of all lords would choose to be our friend this morning. And Lord, we don't want to pause. We don't want to hesitate.

We don't want to lie there, complacent, indifferent, and say, it's going to cost me. I don't want to put on my dress. I don't want to get my feet dirty.

Father, I pray there would be a quick response this morning. Say, Lord, I need you. Maybe for some you've lost him.

Maybe over the course of the last number of weeks and months, he's been knocking and you've been too busy. You're involved in other activities, been running here and there. And you say, well, when it's a convenient time, then I'll, you know, I'll get a little more serious about following God and we can lose him.

And it's far harder to find him after we've lost him than it is when we can respond immediately to his voice. I'm asking you this morning to be honest. What's your relationship like? Can you say, I've got that passionate, intimate relationship with him? Or is it something you've got to refer to in the past tense? I used to know him.

I used to be in love with him, but I've lost my first love. I've left my first love. And Lord, I'm asking that you'd come back and knock one more time this morning.

Because Lord, I want to open that door. I want to embrace you. I want the kisses of your mouth.

I want to feel your presence in my life again. Lord, I've tried the houses and the lands and the vineyards. And I thought I'd find satisfaction, but I haven't.

There's an emptiness. There's a dryness. There's a barrenness.

Lord, I need you this morning. Let's just stand to our feet. These altars are open.

If you need to come, just say, Lord, I'm coming because I know I'm not where I should be. I can point back to a time when I had a greater passion, a greater longing for the things of God than I do this morning. Something has, you know, happened.

The Bible says in the last days, a love of many will wax cold. And when you light a candle and you blow that candle out for a while, that wax is soft and it's pliable. But then it slowly gets harder and harder and harder.

It's a process. It doesn't happen immediately. And we wax cold.

We allow that cooling, that gradual process to draw us away from God. And he's here this morning saying, open to me, my darling, my darling, my perfect one. You come as God is drawing you this morning.

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**